



## **Psalm 15:1-5**

(1) Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? (2) He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. (3) He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. (4) In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. (5) He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

*King James Version*

It was surprising to discover two new things in this passage. The first is that while Christians usually choose Psalm 23 as their favorite psalm, Jews often choose Psalm 15. The second is that the Hebrew of the phrase "who shall dwell" does not suggest "living in," but rather "visiting with"—that is, being acceptable to come into God's presence. In other words, the psalm has at least an equally strong present tense application as it does a future one.

It is essential, therefore, for us to consider whether [God](#) allows us to visit Him, and thus whether He hears our prayers. The person who has these qualifications most certainly will be heard. In him is no false way at all, no pretense, no deceit, no [gossip](#), no guile, and no hypocrisy. He has no hollow friendships, nor does He give vain compliments. His heart, hand, and tongue are in unison in believing and doing truth. This is a model for all of us to strive to reach.

[Proverbs 25:19](#) instructs us, "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint." [Faithfulness](#) always indicates a person who deals truthfully; he can be trusted. Yet, dealing with unfaithful people is usually painful because one never knows whether they

will come through. Thus, our evaluation of ourselves comes down to this question: How can God trust us if we are not striving to be honest *now*?

[II Corinthians 4:1-2](#) sets a standard:

Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Paul's proclamation fits right into the description of the acceptable person in Psalm 15. Our responsibility is to manifest truth. We must make honest and diligent use of God's gracious gifts without craftiness. Is our way Christ's way and therefore acceptable to God? Can we say that we have nothing to do with hidden and shameful methods?

Paul is not saying that we act with unscrupulous cleverness, but that we do not adulterate truth in any form at all. By making truth clear, whether in word or deed, we commend ourselves both to human conscience in the sight of God and please Him at the same time. We should be childlike and open, leaving as little room as possible for people to misinterpret our motives, misunderstand our actions, or twist our words out of their real meaning.

Does it make any difference what people think of us? Some take the approach that "I'm going to do what I want to do, and what others think doesn't matter." However, it matters very much to God. If it did not, He would not show such concern in His Word regarding being a good witness for Him. Nor would He warn us about protecting our reputation—or His—because much of our effectiveness in witnessing depends on our being trustworthy.

Keeping the ninth commandment begins with not letting our deceitful heart trick us into doing anything less than what is honest and true in God's sight, regardless of what we think men might discern from what we say or do. To do this, we may have to override strong internal drives to make ourselves look good, but doing what is right is something that must be done to remain pure and glorify God.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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