

MOUNT SINAI MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Psalm 15

Rightly Approaching

Quote

“Holiness is not something to be received in a meeting; it is a life to be lived in detail.”

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Rightly Approaching the King

MAIN IDEA: David describes the moral integrity and personal holiness of the person who worships God.

A the Searching Question (15:1)

SUPPORTING IDEA: Believers should search their hearts to determine if they are prepared to approach God in **worship**.

15:1a. This psalm begins with David asking a single question which is posed in two parts. It is a searching question about who is eligible to come before the Lord and **worship** him: **Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary?** The issue addressed here is the question of who may come before God and remain as a guest in his **holy** royal house.

The sanctuary was the appointed place where God chose to show his glory to Israel. This question may have been asked by a worshiper as he arrived at the gate to enter the tabernacle court to **worship** God, perhaps in one of the four great annual religious festivals. Or it may have been asked by a parent or teacher instructing children about those who might participate in the **worship** of God. This heart-searching question expresses a genuine question to anyone who wants to **worship** God. Who may enter God’s house and be welcomed by the Lord as a guest in his house? It is a question that calls for meditation upon one’s spiritual condition.

15:1b. The same searching question is asked a second time: **Who may live on your holy hill?** It is addressed to God by the person who came to **worship** him, asking who could draw near to him with acceptable **worship**? Who may come and abide in God's **holy** presence? God's "**holy hill**" refers to Mount **Zion**, on which the city of **Jerusalem** was built, the city of David where the temple would be built by David's son and the future king of Israel, Solomon. Who can come to this **holy** place in **Jerusalem** and have a living **worship** experience with God? Or put another way, Who may enjoy communion with God? Who may converse intimately with a **holy** God?

B the Spiritual Qualifications (15:2–5b)

SUPPORTING IDEA: Personal holiness in the life of a believer is a prerequisite for worshipping God.

15:2a–b. The sobering answer comes, and it is an answer that contains twelve injunctions. In reality it is six couplets. The answer is that the person who approaches God's **holy** hill must seek to be as **holy** as God is **holy** (cp. Heb. 12:14). Follows is a representative list that defines the life of a person who may **worship** God.

The first couplet focuses upon the **holy** conduct required of the worshiper of God. He must be one **whose walk is blameless**. The word *walk* describes the daily pattern of a person's life and the direction of a person's lifestyle. His ways must be marked as blameless, meaning whole or sound. A blameless person is one whose character is morally well-rounded. This person is not strong in certain areas of his life and weak in others. Every part of his life comes together to form a complete and balanced life of godly living.

Stated another way, the requirement of a worshiper is to be one **who does what is righteous**. Such moral integrity expresses itself in right actions that pursue what is right in the eyes of God. This is another way of saying obedience to God. The word *righteous* describes a person who leads a life marked by consistent conformity to the Word of God. He is not just a hearer of the Word, but one who does what is right, putting the **truth** into practice.

15:2c–3a. The second couplet focuses upon the tongue of the worshiper. It asks who may vocalize acceptable praise to God. Positively, he **speaks the truth from**

his heart, meaning he is one who speaks what is consistent with his heart (cp. Matt. 12:34–35; 15:18). God despises hypocritical **worship—worship** that is given by the lips but from a heart that is far from him (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:8). As the **truth** of God stirs in his inner being, the genuine worshiper speaks to others nothing but the **truth**. He means what he says without being a double-tongued falterer who talks out of both sides of his mouth.

The true worshiper **has no slander on his tongue**, or he does not attack others maliciously with his mouth. The word *devil* means “slanderer,” and a person is never more like the **evil** one nor more used by the prince of darkness than when he verbally attacks another person. If someone is to go into the presence of the Lord in **Zion**, he must be an obedient, **truth**-speaking servant. The double-tongued slanderer does not belong in the Lord’s sanctuary.

15:3b–c. Furthermore, a genuine worshiper must maintain right relations with others, not harming or hurting them. Both parts of this couplet are presented in the negative, stating what the worshiper does not do. In order to be a guest in God’s house, he must be a person who **does his neighbor no wrong**. In other words, he does not bring harm to anyone. His neighbor is anyone with whom he associates. Certainly doing the positive is implied. Likewise, he **casts no slur on his fellowman**; he does not discredit his neighbor in the eyes of others. Instead, he lifts up others, saying what is truthful and affirming.

15:4a–b. In this fourth couplet the psalmist identifies the true worshiper in terms of the people whom he rejects or accepts. He is one who says no to the wicked and yes to the godly (cp. Ps. 1:1–3), rejecting those whom God rejects and accepting those whom God accepts. He is one **who despises a vile man**. A vile (Heb. *maas*) man is one who is worthless, polluted, dirty, or morally depraved. A genuine worshiper rejects the sinner, in the sense of rejecting his defiling influence, associations, and partnership. “Bad company corrupts good character” (1 Cor. 15:33). “A little leaven leavens the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6 NASB).

The true worshiper must reject all that is false and **evil** not only in his own life but specifically in the life of the vile man. The person who worships God in a close, vital relationship **honors those who fear the Lord**. This means that he affirms and associates with those who reverence God with a life of **faith** and obedience.

15:4c–d. The fifth couplet advances this profile of purity further, noting the firm, unwavering commitment of the person who genuinely worships God. A person who is allowed access to God is one **who keeps his oath**. He maintains the integrity of his word, standing for what he has promised to do, resisting the urge to bend or buckle under pressure. He keeps his word, meaning he holds fast to his commitments, no matter what the cost. This he does, **even when it hurts**, meaning he keeps his word when it means personal loss and pain.

15:5a–b. Finally, David lists the sixth couplet, focusing upon how the person who brings his tithe to God in **worship** uses his money. A genuine worshiper is one **who lends his money without usury**. He is a believer who does not take advantage of the person who must borrow. Taking interest from fellow Israelites was strictly forbidden by the Mosaic Law (Exod. 22:25; Lev. 25:36). Strict regulations on borrowing and lending money were instituted by the Lord (Deut. 23:19–20; 24:10–13). A genuine worshiper worships God by using his money to help others in need. At the same time, he **does not accept a bribe against the innocent**. True worshipers cannot be bought by this world's system. They do not let the potential for personal gain influence matters of principle.

C the Strong Assurance (15:5c)

SUPPORTING IDEA: The person who walks in personal holiness will never be shaken because he has a refuge in God.

15:5c. He who does these things will never be shaken. The correspondence of living one's life in the context of God's presence is that he is "like a tree planted by streams of water" (Ps. 1:3). The roots of a righteous and blameless life cause a person to stand secure and not slip or shake when the storms of life rage. Jesus noted this principle when he spoke of the wise and foolish builders (Matt. 7:24–27; Luke 6:47–49).

MAIN IDEA REVIEW

David describes the moral integrity and personal holiness of the person who worships God.