

# The Old Paths

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## “Studying Psalm 15”

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**P**salm 15 is a great psalm reminding folks about what is necessary for living in fellowship with the God of Heaven. We recognize that in order to be a Christian (a child of God) today, we must be born again through faith, repentance, and baptism (Jn. 3:3, 5; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Pet. 3:21). At the same time, if we want to know what is necessary for an on-going relationship or fellowship with God, then the Bible has this answer as well. One such passage which speaks of fellowship with God is Psalm 15. Let us examine this psalm and learn the truth (Rom. 15:4).

**“A Psalm of David. LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” (v. 1)**

This first verse reveals the subject of the psalm. David is asking an important question; a question that men have asked throughout the generations. He wants to know what is necessary to “abide” or “dwell” with God. In other words, what is it that will result in having close fellowship with God? This fellowship with God was lost in the garden after Adam and Eve sinned (Gen. 3:6). Yet, even in the garden, God promised a savior through whom men can be saved (Gen. 3:15). Now David, an earthly ancestor of Mary, cries out again for the answer to this question. Thankfully, being inspired of the Holy Spirit

(II Pet. 1:20-21), David can give a detailed answer, telling us how this is possible. This answer is given in the rest of the psalm.

**“He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.” (v. 2)**

Here, three things are listed as necessary for man to be in fellowship with God. These things point toward our attitude toward God. One who walks “uprightly” can only do so if God says his actions are “upright”! (I Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17). Working “righteousness” is again based upon God’s revealed will. David himself said, “all thy commandments are righteousness” (Ps. 119:172). Today, we see that in the gospel “...is the righteousness of God revealed” (Rom. 1:17). The third point made is that one must speak the truth. Again, this points us to God’s word, for Jesus prayed, “thy (God’s) word is truth” (Jn. 17:17).

Notice also that the emphasis placed upon our attitude toward God involves both outward action, and inward action. We need to act (be obedient), speak the truth, but also remember that this truth must be spoken to ourselves (heart).

**“He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor.” (v. 3)**

This verse emphasizes our words and actions toward others. One who will “abide” and “dwell” with God must not speak evil nor treat others cruelly. The need for men to

treat others in a righteous manner has been taught almost since the beginning. No less than nine times in the Bible God says, “love thy neighbor as thyself.” In fact, James writes that this is the “royal law” (Jas. 2:8)! Jesus emphasized the need for being a neighbor to folks when He taught the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37). There, we see that our “neighbor” is anyone.

In addition to this, read Psalm 15:3 again as it condemns speaking evil against others. This is similar to what James recorded when he wrote about the dangers of the tongue and said, “Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be” (Jas. 3:9-10). If we want to have true fellowship with God, it demands we treat others in a godly way, in both words and deeds.

**“In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoreth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.” (v. 4)**

The word “contemned” in the King James is translated as “despised” in several other versions. The point being that one who will be in fellowship with God is one who will not condone error. At the same time, this one in fellowship with God loves and honors the righteous. David also wrote, “I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts” (Ps. 119:63). In like manner, those of us today who will be in fellowship with God must be like Christ who “loved righteousness and hated iniquity” (Heb. 1:9).

In addition to this, one whom God accepts will have the integrity to keep his promises regardless of the personal

cost. He takes responsibility; he is faithful to his promises even when it seems like he will not benefit from them. This one is conscious of Solomon's words when he said, *"When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay"* (Ecc. 5:4-5).

**"He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved." (v. 5)**

The wording of this last verse might not make sense to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but the verse focuses upon one's attitude toward money (i.e., covetousness). David is basically saying do not be a "loan shark" and do not take bribes. If we are going to be right with God, we must show care and concern for those who are weaker than we. God has consistently condemned those who would take advantage (physically, monetarily, etc.) of folks who were weaker than them (orphans, widows, poor, etc.). This is the point of the passage. Let us examine ourselves and see whether or not we have been guilty of such sins. In the New Testament, we are assured that *"the love of money is the root of all evil"* (I Tim. 6:10). Let us pay heed to this fact!

### Conclusion

How wonderful it is to *"abide"* in God's *"holy hill."* Let us be mindful of the things necessary to be in fellowship with God, and remember that in its proper context (Ps. 119:160), Psalm 15 sheds light upon the subject of faithfulness that cannot be found anywhere else!

## 21 Reasons Why You Should Be Scripturally Baptized

Kenneth Thomas, Pekin, IL

1. Because God commands it. (Acts 10:48)
2. To fulfill all righteousness. (Matt. 3:15)
3. To be a friend of Christ. (Jn. 15:14)
4. Because you love God. (I Jn. 5:3; Jn. 14:15)
5. Lest you reject the council of God against yourself. (Lk. 7:30)
6. To COMPLETE the "new birth." (Jn. 3:3-5; Titus 3:5)
7. To enter the kingdom. (Jn. 3:5)
8. For remission of sins. (Acts 2:38)
9. To receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)
10. In order to be saved. (Mk. 16:16)
11. To wash away your sins. (Acts 22:16)
12. To get into the death of Jesus

where blood was shed. (Rom. 6:3)

13. To be buried with Christ. (Rom. 6:4)
14. To be raised with Christ. (Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1; 2:12)
15. To rise to walk in the newness of life. (Rom. 6:4)
16. To be a child of God by faith. (Gal. 3:26-27)
17. To get into the body, which is the church. (I Cor. 12:13; Col 1:18)
18. To have a good conscience. (I Pet. 3:21)
19. To get INTO Christ. (Gal. 3:27)
20. Because *"baptism doth also now save us."* (I Pet. 3:21; Mk. 16:16)
21. To be *"reconciled unto God in one body by the cross"* (Eph. 2:13-16)

### Editor's Note:

To this list, we could add the nine cases of conversion in Acts in which every case records folks being baptized in order to be saved. I would hope that one Bible "reason" is enough to convince us of the need for being baptized. However, may these 21 reasons be believed and obeyed in order to save us.

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