



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V27 N12 March 23, 2025

PSALMS: CELEBRATING CHRIST IN GOD'S HYMNBOOK

“Psalm 15”

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Peace

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7



What kind of person does God welcome into his presence?



What kind of person would you invite to dinner? Normally, we neither ask nor answer this question, because we obviously would not invite certain kinds of people into our homes, while we obviously would be honored to have other kinds dine with us. So who gets to dine with you? People with a measure of integrity?

Psalm 15 answers the related question who gets to dine with God – not literally but figuratively. Put differently, who does God invite to fellowship with him? One commentator writes: “In his prayer the psalmist asked Yahweh who could have fellowship with Him, namely, what kind of person. ‘Abiding in the LORD’s tent’ or sanctuary (i.e., the tabernacle David had pitched) and ‘dwelling on His holy hill’ (i.e., Mt. Zion) picture a person who is the guest of God. Guests in the ancient Near East were those who had an intimate relationship with their host, who had extended his protection and provisions to them (cf. 5:4). David meant: Whom will you accept when he comes to your house?” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Psalms,” 2025 ed., 86, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/psalms.pdf). In terms of the Creed linked to the Central Practice Prayer, people are accepted into God’s presence free from anxiety because things are right between them, God, and others – put differently, righteous people with integrity.

Integrity is a familiar word with dictionary definitions of this type: “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness or the state of being whole or undivided,” with synonyms like “uprightness” and “rectitude,” “coherence” and “completeness.”

Consider the following homespun observations on the meaning of *integrity*. *Incomplete* things, things with something key *missing* or *lacking*, have no integrity. For example,

a deck of cards with no aces, like a lock with no keys, lacks integrity. Similarly, a person with no character lacks integrity.

Things that are *flawed* lack integrity. For example, a coffee cup with a crack in it, like a boat with a hole in its bottom, lacks integrity. Similarly, a person with obvious moral failures lacks integrity – take a husband or wife who cheats on their spouse or a person who welches on a debt.

Incongruous or perhaps *inconsistent* things also lack integrity. Things that claim to do one thing but do another – people, too. For example, a medication with life-threatening side effects, like a physician who smokes cigarettes, lacks integrity. Even if smoking is not morally or ethically wrong, the physician’s conduct is certainly inconsistent with what he would recommend to his patients.

Interestingly, *integrity* does not imply *perfection*. Some imperfections – like a Monopoly game with no little dog, a chip in a coffee cup, or a medication with minor side effects – do not compromise the integrity of the object. The psalmist uses “blameless,” not “sinless,” to describe a person with integrity. On the meaning of that term in Psalm 15:2, the same commentator writes: “The Hebrew word (*tāmîm*) means genuine, free from moral or ethical spots, corruption, and inconsistencies, *though not morally perfect, since this is humanly impossible*. In other words, such a person is a man or woman who is above reproach, of upright integrity (cf. Job 1:1). The Apostle Paul began his lists of qualifications for elders in the church with ‘above reproach’ (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6)” (Constable, 86-87).

So what kind of person does God welcome into his presence? A person with peace, knowing things are right between them, God, and others.

Read Psalm 15:1-5

A psalm of David.

1 LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?

Who may live on your holy mountain?

2 The one whose walk is blameless,

who does what is righteous,

who speaks the truth from their heart;

3 whose tongue utters no slander,

who does no wrong to a neighbor,

and casts no slur on others;

4 who despises a vile person

but honors those who fear the LORD;

who keeps an oath even when it hurts,

and does not change their mind;

5 who lends money to the poor without interest;

who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.

Whoever does these things

will never be shaken.

Read another translation

A psalm of David.

1 LORD, who may be a guest in your home?

Who may live on your holy hill?

2 Whoever lives a blameless life,

does what is right,

and speaks honestly.

3 He does not slander,

or do harm to others,

or insult his neighbor.

4 He despises a reprobate,

but honors the LORD's loyal followers.

He makes firm commitments and does not renege on his promise.

5 He does not charge interest when he lends his money.

He does not take bribes to testify against the innocent.

The one who lives like this will never be shaken. (NET)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket "of David" in the *superscription*.
- Underline "dwell" and "live" in v. 1.
- Double underline "sacred tent" and "holy mountain" in v. 1.
- Circle "blameless," "righteous," and "truth" in v. 2.
- Bracket "from their heart" in v. 2.
- Underline "no slander," "no wrong," and "no slur" in v. 3.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 4.
- Circle "interest" in v. 5.
- Circle "bribe" in v. 5.
- Circle "shaken" in v. 5.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The psalmist asks questions (v. 1) in *figurative* terms (i.e., dwell/live, sacred tent/holy mountain). Put what he wants to know in *literal* terms.
2. He then answers his questions (v. 2-5a). First, he mentions three positive character traits (v. 2). *Identify* and *define* them.
3. What kind of *parallelism* do you find in verse 2?
4. Then he mentions three *negative* character traits (v. 3). *Identify* and *define* them— noting what they have in common.
5. What kind of *parallelism* do you find in verse 3?
6. Then he mentions two *positive* traits (v. 4). Explain the *contrast* (“but”) in v. 4a— noting the positive trait involved.
7. Describe the *kind* of person mentioned in v. 4b— noting the positive trait involved.
8. Then he mentions two *negative* traits (v. 5a). *Identify* and *define* them— noting what they have in common.
9. All in all, the psalmist mentions *ten* conditions in answer to his questions in verse 1. What do you make of that?
10. **Discussion:** The one who does these *ten* things “will never be shaken.” Are they actually doable? Talk about the personal application of this psalm.

Commentary On The Text

Psalms 15 is considered a wisdom psalm by many (see Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, TEBC, rev. ed., 5:179). Some consider it a temple entrance liturgy. "When a festive procession or a group of pilgrims wished to enter the sanctuary, they would ask the Temple gatekeepers for the conditions of entry (see verse 1). Thereupon the answer would be given by some priest or Levite; in Ps. 15, the reply is found in verses 2-5b" (A. A. Anderson, *Psalms 1-72*, NCBC, 135-36; cf. Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, NIBC, 91). One commentator who considers it a wisdom psalm explains: "In this psalm David reflected on the importance of a pure character for those who would worship God and have an intimate relationship with Him. Stylistically it begins with a question and ends with a promise (cf. Isa. 33:14-16). This style marks the wisdom literature, and many scholars consider this a wisdom psalm" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Psalms," 2025 ed., 85, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/psalms.pdf).

The psalm opens with two questions in verse 1, the answer to which follows in verses 2-5a, containing *ten* conditions—*five* positive and *five* negative—thought by some to mimic the Ten Commandments, even though there is no obvious correspondence between the ten. Verse 2 contains *three* positive conditions; verse 3 contains *three* negative conditions. In reverse order, verse 4 contains *two* positive conditions and *two* negative conditions. The psalm closes with the assurance, "Whoever does these things will never be shaken."

The psalmist asks "who" (v. 1), but he isn't asking for names. He wants to know what *kind* of person may, figuratively speaking, "dwell" and "live" in the LORD's "sacred tent" and "on his holy mountain." "Sacred tent" refers to the "tent" David pitched for the ark when he brought it to Jerusalem (2Sa 6:17), assuming the psalm was written by him—or to the temple that his son Solomon built for the LORD (1Ki 8:1-5), if not. Of course, coming to either signified entering into God's presence. One commentator writes: "The question is concerned with who was eligible to be a 'guest' of the Lord and **live** in the place where His presence rested. It was a spiritual question: who can draw near to God and worship in His dwelling place?" (Allan P. Ross, "Psalms," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 803).

The psalmist then answers his own questions. He lists ten conditions that must be met by those who desire fellowship with the LORD, that is, conditions

on those whom the LORD welcomes into his presence. The first two (v. 2a-b) are positive and general in nature. The person whom the Lord welcomes into his presence must be "blameless" and do what is "righteous." The two terms are nearly synonymous and do not mean "perfect" or "sinless." According to one commentator: "A blameless person lives in obedience to God and maintains a life of integrity. His activities are in harmony with God's standards, that is, they are righteous" (Allan P. Ross, "Psalms," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 803). Noah was that kind of person (Ge 6:9).

The eight that follow (vv. 2c-5a) are specific traits of the type "blameless" and "righteous." Another commentator provides the following *identification* and *definition* of each:

1. He speaks the truth sincerely, rather than being double-tongued, namely, not saying what is true some of the time and lying at other times (v. 2c).

2. He does not slander other people by saying things that are untrue and destructive about them (v. 3a).

3. He does not do evil to his neighbor (i.e., anyone with whom he comes in contact, v. 3b; cf. Prov. 14:17-24). 'If an ill-natured character of his neighbor be given him, or an ill-natured story be told him, he will disprove it if he can; if not, it shall die with him and go no further [cf. 1 Pet. 4:8].'

4. He does not initiate or propagate information that would discredit others (v. 3c).

5. He does not approve of those who turn away from the LORD but honors others when they choose to follow God's ways (v. 4a-b).

6. He keeps his promises even when it costs him to do so (v. 4c). 'His honor is more important than his wallet.'

7. He does not charge interest on money that he loans to his brethren, thus taking advantage of their weakness (v. 5a; cf. Exod. 22:25; Lev. 25:36).

8. He does not pervert justice for his own advantage and so bring hardship on others (v. 5b; cf. Deut. 27:25)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Psalms," 2025 ed., 87-88, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/psalms.pdf).

The psalmist concludes by giving his readers the assurance, "Whoever does these things will always be secure" (GNT).

Word Studies/Notes

Superscription, *of David* The phrase “of David” can be interpreted in various ways. (1) It may indicate authorship but not necessarily. (2) It may also mean “on behalf of David.” In the majority of cases the Davidic psalms may have been composed ‘for David’, i.e., for the use of the Davidic king” (A. A. Anderson, *Psalms 1-72*, NCBC, 45). (3) It may mean “belonging to David,” that is, to the Davidic collection of songs. If Psalm 15 was written by David, the reference to “your sacred tent” is a reference to the tent David pitched for the ark (2Sa 6:17) rather than the temple. Later Solomon brought the tabernacle from Gibeon to Jerusalem prior to the dedication of the temple (1Ki 8:1-5; cf. 1Ch 16:39-40) (see Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, TOTC, 209-10).

v. 1 *who* Cf. Ps 24:3-6. The question is what kind of person?

v. 1 *dwelt, live* Cf. “be a guest, live” (NET); not a reference to permanent residence but a pilgrimage (Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, NIBC, 91). “The verbs ‘dwell’ and ‘live’ are synonyms connoting a temporary residence and may be interpreted metaphorically as communion with God” (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, TEBC, rev. ed., 5:179). Again, what kind of person does God welcome to fellowship with him?

v. 1 *sacred tent* “The word *tent* conjures up two worlds: one of formal worship and sacrifice (Exod. 29:42), emphasized by the phrase, *thy holy hill*, and the other of simple hospitality, brought out by the words *sojourn* and *dwelt*. The psalms often mingle the two ideas, seeing the worshipper as an eager guest, his pilgrimage a homecoming (e.g. 23:6; 27:4f.; 84:1ff.)” (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, TOTC, 98).

v. 2 *blameless . . .* The answer opens with three positive statements. “The ‘blameless’ walk is the manner of life characterized by integrity . . . The words ‘righteous’ and faithful (NIV ‘truth’) are synonymous with ‘blameless’ . . . The righteous *do* what is right; they live in accordance with God’s expectations (see 4:1). The phrase ‘truth from his heart’ reveals fidelity between the ‘heart,’ as the seat of one’s being, and speech (‘who speaks’), which expresses one’s inner being” (VanGemeren, 183). “What this man says is one with what he is (contrast 12:2; Isa 29:13)” (Kidner, 98).

v. 3 *no slander . . .* The answer continues with three negative statements that appear to pertain to speech. The language is roomy, making the precise connotation of these near synonyms difficult; cf. “He does not slander with his tongue [i.e., gossip maliciously], Nor does evil to his neighbor [i.e., malign], Nor takes up a reproach against his friend [i.e. insult]” (NASB 1995).

v. 4 *despises . . . but honors* An example of *antithetical* parallelism. “What looks at first sight Pharisaical in 4a is in fact no more than loyalty. This man is not comparing himself with others, but giving his vote: declaring what he admires and where he stands” (Kidner, 99; cf. contrast in Ps 1:1). “He does not approve of those who turn away from the LORD but honors others when they choose to follow God’s ways (v. 4a-b)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Psalms,” 2025 ed., 87, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/psalms.pdf).

v. 5 *interest* “The lending of money and other things to fellow Israelites was viewed as an opportunity to help them in their need, and not as an occasion for making a profit out of their misfortune (cf. Exod. 22:25; 25:36; Dt. 23:19) . . . One could lend on interest (the rate is not stated) to a foreigner (see Dt. 23:30), but this law may be a provision for business transactions, and therefore the financial position of the borrower might be different from that of the needy person” (Anderson, 139).

v. 5 *bribe* “Often the poor were also cast into court and taken advantage of by the well-to-do, who could easily afford to pay a bribe to thwart justice. The law strictly prohibited bribery (cf. Ex 23:8; Dt 16:19). The godly witness or judge should refuse any bribe as being a perversion of justice” (VanGemeren, 184).

v. 5 *shaken* “Not only will he enjoy fellowship in the Lord’s presence, but also he will experience divine blessing and security” (Allan P. Ross, “Psalms,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 803).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE

A person with moral integrity is the kind of person the LORD welcomes into his presence to worship.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

Growing up, I measured success based on performance. If I did everything right, I would be rewarded; if I messed up, the consequences would be earth-shattering. (I've always been my own worst critic.) Life was so much easier when I was on the "good" side of the performance scale. So, when I became a Christian as an adult, I just wanted to know what to do next. I wondered where to find a "good Christian girl" list so I could make a decent score on God's performance review. To be honest, reading a list like the one in today's passage would have left me helpless. I'll never be good enough. I'll never measure up. I'm starting in failure. Can you see where this is still rooted in performance? Rather than looking at the internal motivator, the heart, I would focus on the output, behavior. It puts the cart before the horse, and failure is inevitable. I see parents take this behavior management approach with their kids far too often. Friends, we can't fix the output of behavior unless we peel back the layers to reveal the issues of the heart. Ask a few questions as you diagnose behavior issues. What's going on with your kids? Why are they behaving this way? What are they missing or getting too much of? Are they hungry, tired, overstimulated, lonely or bored? Do they need a hug or your attention? When was the last time you sat down to actively engage with them? It took years of rewiring my hard drive to grasp God's love and how He measures success—He looks at the heart. Shouldn't we?

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Psalm 15.

1. What questions does David ask in verse 1?
2. Make a list of the character qualities from verses 2-5.
3. Righteous living results in what blessing?

What Do You Think?

Do you think you can be all these things all the time?

What Do You Do?

Imagine you're in an earthquake. What things around you will be shaken? What will remain steady and firm? Which group will you be in?

CORE COMPETENCY: Peace

I live without worry because things are good between God, myself and others.

MEMORY VERSE: James 1:2-4

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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BIBLE CHURCH**

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.