



# Blackfoot

## Church of Christ

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### Psalm 15: Who Dwells with the Lord?

Joe R. Price

“Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?” (Psalm 15:1, NKJV)

We infer from the psalmist’s questions that not everyone dwells in the presence of the Lord. Furthermore, by merely asking, David acknowledges that it is God Himself who supplies the correct answer concerning who communes with Him. Man does not answer these questions for the Holy One of Israel. As we travel through life, the Lord opens His tent to sojourners who meet His conditions, allowing them into His presence and offering them rest, refreshment and fellowship. God’s holy hill pictures the reigning Sovereign, granting blessedness to all who wait before Him. Do you want the communion, rest, and protection of God’s presence as you travel through life? If so, give ear to the inspired answers to David’s questions in the remainder of this psalm.

“He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart.” (Psalm 15:2, NKJV)

When you were a child, did your parents ever tell you to stand up straight? Walking uprightly describes the spiritual posture of the one who abides in the presence of God. It means to be sound, wholesome, innocent, having integrity. The Holy One has ever called upon people of faith to walk before Him in blamelessness (Gen. 17:1). To walk uprightly is equivalent to walking in God’s truth (Psa. 26:1, 3). Those who “walk righteously and speak uprightly” dwell on high and escape the “everlasting burnings” of God’s wrath (Isa. 33:14-16). The standard by which we straighten our moral and spiritual posture to walk uprightly is God’s truth. So, stand up straight and walk in the integrity of your heart, with God’s word inscribed upon it (Heb. 8:10). Walk uprightly into God’s tent and find rest.

The one who “works righteousness” finds a place of spiritual rejuvenation in God’s tent. Working righteousness has a bad theological reputation due to a dramatic failure to properly demarcate works of merit (by which one earns His standing before God, Rom. 4:2, 4; Eph. 2:9) from works of faith (the obedience that completes faith, Jas. 2:17, 20, 22, 24). The apostle Peter told Cornelius and his house that God accepts all who fear

Him and “work righteousness” (Acts 10:35). We are confident He still does. God’s inspired word contains the “instruction in righteousness” that equips us “for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). John said, “He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous” (1 John 3:7). Without living in obedience to Christ’s truth, we will not be righteous nor dwell in God’s presence.

The honest of heart are given permission to enter and remain in God’s tent for the rest afforded by His holy presence and the protection that comes from His sovereign care. King Solomon counseled his son to guard his heart diligently, “for out of it spring the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23). In another place he reminds us that a person is what he thinks (Prov. 23:7). Truth proceeds from the heart of the honest person. He speaks truth to his neighbor, rather than deceit (Eph. 4:25; 1 Pet. 3:10). A deceptive heart speaks lies, whereas an honest heart has the truth written upon it. When we speak, may it always be from a heart that esteems and demands the truth. With such a heart we establish and maintain the character of honesty, integrity and trustworthiness that pleases God. “He who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend.” (Psalm 15:3, NKJV)

The ninth command God spoke to Israel from the mountain forbade them to bear false witness against their neighbor. Yet, it became a common sin in Judah, for which God rejected them (Jer. 6:28-30). The slanderous use of the tongue continues to be a common sin that prevents many souls from entering God’s presence. Backbiting draws a vivid picture of one who approaches unnoticed, from behind, to launch a deadly attack against an unsuspecting soul. Just as God receives the one who “speaks the truth in his heart,” He rejects the one who uses his tongue maliciously (Psa. 15:2-3). To remove backbiting from your tongue, drive out malice from your heart, so that kindness and compassion may take its place (Eph. 4:31-32).

It is a transgression to speak maliciously against another person. Turning those words into evil actions multiplies the wrong. Evil words and evil deeds prevent fellowship with the Holy One of Israel. Whether the neighbor is an ordinary citizen, or a more intimate acquaintance matters not; evil behavior is forbidden. Jesus said to treat others as we wish to be treated by them (Matt. 7:12). Equally destructive is a scornful criticism against a friend. We harm and hinder our fellowship with God when we spread ill reports about others. Israel was warned against circulating false reports, and God promised the destruction of the person who secretly slanders a neighbor (Exo. 23:1; Psa. 101:5). Our moral and ethical treatment of others is a condition for being received into God’s presence (where His perpetual care comforts the weary traveler).

“In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change.” (Psalm 15:4, NKJV)

As we learn “who may abide” in the restful care and fellowship of the Lord, verse 4 teaches us it is the person who hates evil and loves good (Amos 5:14-15). His moral standard is based on reverence for God and disdain for what is vile. The regard he has

for others is not based on whether they are rich or poor, prince or pauper. He exults in those who honor God while he refuses to respect what is morally corrupt. Sin is despicable to him; he is repulsed by what is vile (just as God is, Psa. 11:5). And, like God, he respects those who hold the Almighty in reverential awe. A good measure of our honor for what is good is the degree to which we also despise what is wicked in God's sight. In a world that called evil good and good evil, God knows the difference (Isa. 5:20). So does the person whom He allows to abide with Him.

There was a time when it was said, "a man's word is his bond." This still holds true for the righteous person who dwells in the presence of the Holy One. Even when he discovers that to which he gave his word damages him in some way, he continues to keep his word. The honor of fulfilling one's word is a matter of personal integrity before God and before men. The honesty of our words does not depend on whether they help us or harm us, but upon the character of our heart. God, who knows our hearts, honors honest-hearted people with the joys of His presence. "He who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved." (Psalm 15:5, NKJV) The righteous person's values are as unshakable as is his devotion to have fellowship with the Lord God. He is compassionate, not covetous, and he honors justice.

Unlike the modern sense of exorbitant interest, usury here is simply interest; the sum of money charged for a loan. The law of Moses prohibited charging interest to a brother and the poor among them (Exo. 22:25; Deut. 23:19-20). The one who abides in God's presence lends without expectation of return (cf. Lk. 14:11-14). Neither does he profit at the expense of justice for the innocent. And so, mercy and justice are among the values recognized by God as worthy of His presence. In a world driven by greedy ambition, be careful to "do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

A summary assurance is given at the end of this psalm. It is true that not everyone will abide with God. Those who love the world will not (1 John 2:15-17). Those who complain against His word will not (John 6:60-66). Those who prefer the "cares, riches and pleasures of this life" rather than the word of God will not (Luke 8:14). However, the sweet psalmist is convinced the person who does the things he advises will never be moved away from God's constant provisions and abiding care. Because his character and conduct is true, the Lord God will be his Sustainer as he abides in His tent, and his Protector as he dwells in God's holy fortress. The one who does evil has no such pledge; His every bulwark shall fail. But, the righteous "boldly say: The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Heb. 13:6). The choice is yours today and every day. You may abide in God's blessed fellowship by faithfully doing His will (James 1:21-25).

## Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Tom is scheduled for back surgery this week
- Ben Palmer is traveling this weekend; Empey's travel back today from Boise, Chad and Paxton are traveling to DC on Wednesday; Debbie & I will be going to AR on Thursday.
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- Tammy Woodward is suffering serious effects from cancerous brain tumors.
- The Christians in the Philippines.
- Bible class at Chad and Kass' postponed
- Men's meeting after services this morning

**For prayer requests, call or text**

Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

## Assignments

<b><u>Today</u></b> <b>Bible Study</b> – Ross Ward <b>Song Leader</b> – Ray Mitchell <b>Lord's Table</b> – Chad Mitchell <b>Sermon</b> – Ross Ward	<b><u>Wednesday</u></b> <b>Bible Study</b> – Ross Ward <b>Song Leader</b> – Ray Mitchell <b>Invitation</b> – Ross Ward
<b><u>Next Sunday</u></b> <b>Bible Study</b> – TBD <b>Song Leader</b> – Dave Porter <b>Lord's Table</b> – Chad Mitchell <b>Sermon</b> – Ben Palmer	<b><u>Next Wednesday</u></b> <b>Bible Study</b> – Chad Mitchell <b>Song Leader</b> – Dave Porter <b>Invitation</b> –

Blackfoot Church of Christ  
370 North Shilling Ave.  
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

### **Meeting Times:**

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM  
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM  
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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