

- ***Read Psalm 15/Prayer*** David structures this song around an all important question...that question being, "O Lord, who may abide in Your tent?" To us, 21st century Christians, this type of language may seem very strange, but to the Jew of David's day and following, this makes plenty of sense. For many years, God's tabernacle was seen as the dwelling place of God. It was seen as the place where God dwelt among His people. Therefore David's question is, "O Lord, who may come into Your presence?" The NET Bible puts this verse in language that is much easier for us to understand which it says, "Lord, who may be a guest in Your home?"
- We don't just let any person be a guest in our homes. We expect for those that would come into our home to behave a certain way. We would expect for them to be a particular type of person. If we as humans would think like this then certainly God would be particular as to who who be a guest in His presence. We might also put this idea in this way. "O Lord, who can be in fellowship with You?" Again, this is the main point of this psalm.
- It is speculated that this psalm was written during the time when the ark of the covenant was being taken to Jerusalem. **(II Samuel 16)** Thus, it would make sense for David to ask such a question as he does and make mention of God's holy hill which very well might be making reference to Jerusalem. So who is it, that David says, that can stand in the presence of God and abide with Him in fellowship? This psalm continues on by giving the reader or singer or prayer some general truths and characteristics that are expected from God's people who might dwell in His house, and by extension for us who might seek to dwell and abide as a part of Jesus's body which is the church that He gave his life for.

I. He lives a godly life. (2a)

- A. Often we see the term "walk" used to denote the way that a person lives his life, therefore summed up, this first verse simply tells us that we must live a godly life if we expect to be able to be a guest in the house of God.
- B. Living a godly life isn't something that just happens by accident. Our human instinct is self preservation and exaltation. We naturally look to do what is best for us even if others are hurt by that. Because this is the case, it makes sense that God puts a great emphasis on His desire for us to take the focus off of ourselves and put it on Him and others. The 10 greatest commandments of the Law of Moses simplified focus on our relationship and standing before God and then how we interact with others. **(Exodus 20)**
- C. It shouldn't surprise us that this carries over into our covenant with Christ. Jesus, too, expects for us to love God first and love others in the same way. **(Matt. 22:36-40)** You might even not the fact that Jesus draws their minds back to the fact that this emphasis of loving God and others goes back far before anything He is currently saying.
- D. So how does a love for God and others help us to live godly by walking with integrity and working righteousness? Our love for God will cause us to live in the way that pleases Him. Our love for others will cause us to live with integrity and to treat all others as we would ourselves. Both of these will be expounded upon a bit more here in a few minutes, but for now, just take notice that the man who seeks to abide with God will seek to live a godly life and love God and his neighbor.

II. He uses his words righteously. (2b-3a,4c)

- A. David then moves on to a more specific part of the life of the person who seeks to abide with God and that is that he uses his ability to communicate well. Consider the 3 specific things that David mentions a person must do in order to abide with God.
- B. Firstly, David says that the man must speak truth from his heart. This gives the idea that truth speaking must be a part of his very character, that he speaks it from his heart. He doesn't just speak truth when it is convenient, but he speaks it because it is the right thing to do. Just as lying is the character of Satan, so ought truthfulness be a part of our character. **(John 8:44)**
- C. Secondly, the man who seeks to abide with God must not speak falsely about his neighbor. He recognizes that his work can carry much weight, and so he seeks to use the power of his words only for good and not to hurt others so that they might gain something from it. This man refuses to be a part of the world that seeks to cause harm to others through false words.

- D. Thirdly, David that says the man who can abide with God is a man who keeps his word...even to the point where he is hurt because of a promise he has made. Two things should really stand out to us at this point. 1) God expects those who abide with Him to be a people of truth, honesty, and integrity. 2) We really need to be careful when giving our word. We need not take our word lightly, but we ought to be careful when making promises. Regardless, God expects for His people to keep their word.
- E. Our words might not seem like they mean much at times, but surely we recognize the weight they carry and how they can affect whether or not we are able to abide with God.

III. He treats his neighbor well. (3b, 3c, 5a, & 5b)

- A. Further expounding upon the way we ought to live in this life, David then gives some specifics as to how we ought to show our love for our neighbor.
- B. He firstly says that we ought not do evil to our neighbor or bring reproach upon a friend. Much of this can be summed up by the writings of Paul in **I Corinthians 13** concerning love. Love does not seek its own. It does not act unbecomingly. It does not take into account a wrong suffered. Love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things. Love for our neighbor will help us to avoid doing harm to our neighbor. Love will help us to not seek vengeance. Love will help us to hope for the best in all people and not automatically assume the worst. Love helps us to treat our neighbor well.
- C. Additionally, we treat our neighbor well by loving them more than money. The love of money, not money itself can certainly get us into a lot of trouble. (**I Timothy 6:10**) Our desire for more and more wealth can cause us to mistreat others if it means that we gain a profit from it. It might be that we take advantage of those who are in dire need by charging them interest when they already are strapped for funds. Or it might mean lying against someone in order to gain in some way. Of course there is legitimate business where we pay interest, but what David is referring to is taking advantage of those who can't help themselves. God expect for the one who abides with Him to be better than than.
- D. God expects for the one who seeks to abide with him to treat his neighbor well and to show him the type of love that we would want to be shown ourselves.

IV. He shuns evil, but clings to good. (4a,4b)

- A. The man who seeks to abide with God recognizes that the one he desires to abide with expects a standard to be met. Because of this, this man seeks to be a part of the right things of this life and associate with the right people in this life. So often those things we find ourselves involved with are directly related to the type of people we spend much of our time with. (**I Cor. 15:33; Heb. 10:24,25**)
- B. The man seeking to abide with God must be a person who not only seeks to stay away from evil, but he also seeks to not surround himself with those who practice those very things that he wishes to not become involved with himself. His first and foremost concern about others isn't some social status but it is the content of their character. Too easily we can overlook poor behavior if we think that this person might be able to do something for us. However, here and in **Psalms 1:1**, we quickly learn that the godly individual not only avoids sins himself, but he also avoids those people who are involved in those very things we ourselves seek to avoid.
- C. But it isn't just that he seeks to avoid those bad things, but he seeks to fill his life with those things that are good and honorable. He want to overflow his cup with those things that are pleasing to God. He seeks to mediate on the Lord and His will day and night. (**Psalms 1:2**) Not only this, but he also seeks to surround himself and support those who are seeking to do the same thing. He doesn't seek to be a single and lone burning coal for the Lord, but he seeks to be a part of a group who are on fire for the Lord and His goodness so that he might be strengthened through them and their efforts.
- D. The man who seeks to abide with God knows who and what he needs to avoid and who and what he needs to be consumed with.

Again, are these the only things that we must be sure to show in our lives if we want to be a person who abides with God in His holy presence and fellowship? Of course not. There are many other specific things that we must give our attention to, but I liken this text to the list of things that God hates from **Proverbs 6:16-19**. Certainly these are things that we ought to give much effort to make sure we are displaying in our lives. However, none of us will ever display these perfect in our lives. Thankfully, there was one who was able to live these things out perfectly and that was Jesus. Thankfully, He gave His life that we might be able to live in the presence of our God even as people who have made mistakes in the past. May God and our Lord Jesus help us to strive for these things to be a part of our lives, so that we may never be shaken in this life, and may we be able to abide in His presence for all eternity when this life is over.