

“Self-Examination”

INTRODUCTION: Every election year candidates spend bundles of money and great amounts of time trying to convince the public that they are people of *integrity*.

1. This past week we saw this very thing take place with the campaign frontrunners:
 - a) **Donald Trump** announced his plan to donate \$5.6 million to help Veterans, to counter accusations that he did not care for the military and its veterans.
 - b) **Hillary Clinton** released a statement on Monday confessing that she “made a mistake” in using a private email account for Secretary of State business, but assuring the public that “no damage” was done and “no breach of security” occurred in the period under investigation.
 - c) Both actions were designed to bolster the candidates’ image as people with **integrity**.
2. *Integrity* is very important to God, because integrity is the opposite of *Hypocrisy*.
3. Integrity may be defined as:
 - a) *The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.*
 - b) *The state of being whole and undivided.*
 - c) **C. S. Lewis**: Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.
 - d) Aging actress **Jacqueline Bisset**: Character contributes to beauty. It fortifies a woman as her youth fades. A mode of conduct, a standard of courage, discipline, fortitude and integrity can do a great deal to make a woman beautiful.
 - e) **Dennis Waitley**: Life lived with integrity, even if it lacks the trappings of fame and fortune, is a shining star whose light others may follow in the years to come.
 - f) **Henry Kravis**: If you don’t have integrity, you have nothing. You can’t buy it. You can have all the money in the world, but if you are not a moral and ethical person, you really have nothing.
 - g) **Spencer Johnson**: Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people.
4. I would add this insight: *Integrity is facing the real you, when no one is in the room except you and God.*
5. Psalm 15 is a **Wisdom Psalm** about integrity.
6. As one anonymous sage said: *Wisdom is knowing the right thing to do. Integrity is simply doing it.*
7. Integrity is **very important** to God. It forms the ground or foundation of any real relationship a sinner can possibly have with God.
 - a) The Pharisees, by and large, were rejected by Christ because they were hypocrites. They lacked integrity.

- b) Tax-collectors, prostitutes, and Roman mercenaries – “the sinners” – were loved and embraced by Christ because they were honest about themselves before God.
- c) *You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”* (Matthew 15:7-9)

8. Repeatedly, the Psalmists and the Prophets focus on how much **integrity** is the prerequisite for coming into God’s presence in worship, prayer, and fellowship.

- a) *Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.* (Psalm 24:3-6)
- b) *“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?* (Micah 6:6-8)
- c) *And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good? Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.* (Deuteronomy 10:12-18)
- d) *Hear, you who are far off, what I have done; and you who are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: “Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?” He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking on evil, he will dwell on the heights; his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.* (Isaiah 33:13-16)

9. **Psalm 15** falls into the genre of hymns and prayers: Integrity is its theme.

O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; who swears to his own hurt and does not change; who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. (Psalm 15:1-5)

10. **Hear me, please:** This focus on integrity before God is **the** deciding difference between all pagan religions and false worship, and the worship due the True God.

- a) *The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. (Psalm 14:1)*
- b) The fool denies the reality of a Holy God who requires that only holy worshippers approach Him.
- c) *Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” (Exodus 3:1-5)*
- d) **Michael Wilcock** Psalms 1-72: BST; p. 55 *It is a giant step forward from pagan religion to believe that the conditions for coming into the Lord’s tent are moral and not ritual – what you are, not the words you recite or the offerings you bring.*

11. Psalms 15 is a prayer for those who would come to church every Sunday –

- a) “A Prayer for the Parking Lot” (Like Psalm 100)
- b) “A Preparation for True Worship”
- c) “A Self-Examination in the Presence of God”

12. Psalm 15 has a unique structure:

- a) *An opening question: O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? (Psalm 15:1)*
- b) An answer: *Six Characteristics of Integrity (vv. 2-5a)*
- c) A closing statement: *He who does these things shall never be moved. (v. 5b)*

I. UNDERSTANDING PSALM 15 AND INTEGRITY BEFORE GOD

A. A Probing Question (15:1)

1. *O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? (Psalm 15:1)*

2. See also these questions:

- a) *Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? (Psalm 24:3)*
- b) *The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: “Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isaiah 33:14)*
- c) *“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? (Micah 6:6)*

3. You and I – Gentile or Jew – will **never** realize both how magnificent it was and how intimidating it was to go up to Jerusalem and enter into the Temple!

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD!” (Psalm 122:1)

4. These OT Believers were *entering into the very Presence of God!* And in a way you and I never have!

- a) The *Shekinah Glory* which went with Israel through the wilderness years, indwelt the Tabernacle, (Tent of Moses), and rested in the Holy of Holies in Solomon’s Temple!

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys. (Exodus 40:34-38)

As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house. When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.” (2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

- b) **Samuel Terrien** *The Psalms and Their Meaning for Today*; pp 93-95

The love of the psalmists for Zion reveals something more than a sentimental attachment to religious pageantry. Behind the symbolism of sacerdotal garb and ornament, above the solemnity of procession, posture, and act, beyond the aesthetic impressiveness of orchestral and choral music, the people perceived and received the sacrament of the real presence of God.

Assembled in the Temple for worship, priests, musicians, and congregation realized an experience of covenantal oneness in two dimensions: they were knit together as a sociological whole, and they felt the awesome nearness of the maker of heaven and earth who, in his gracious condescension, consented to tabernacle in the holy of holies.

Men were lifted out of the routine and mediocrity of their daily life and brought into communion with God. Theirs was a genuine experience of corporate encounter with a majestic deity, lord of nature, and controller of history, who assented to sojourn in the “thick-darkness” of a Temple made by human hands.

5. I suggest to you this truth: Imagine that in this *sanctuary building* (“sanctuary” means “holy place”) God’s visible presence dwelt.

- a) Shielded by a cloud: smoke by day and a glowing, fiery cloud by night.
- b) Imagine that a huge curtain hung down from the ceiling, right behind the pulpit. And no one could go into the choir loft by your Pastors (TE’s) – and only twice a day, to pray for all of you.

- c) Further imagine that this holy place extended back to Room 105, our “Prayer Chapel”, where this cloud of presence lived, and that only Pastor Ross could enter that place – and only one day per year, for no longer than 10-15 minutes.
 - d) Imagine how you’d feel if the Pastors told you that behind the second curtain, smoke and a fiery cloud curled around the edges of the curtain 24-7, and it had a pulsating rhythm to it....
 - e) ...as if God were there and breathing! God alive in WC 105!
6. I ask you: *Would that change the way you dressed, talked, and acted in this sanctuary?*
- a) Would you come in here with torn jeans, shorts, t-shirts, and flip-flops?
 - b) Would you sit in the back sipping a cup of coffee or a diet coke?
 - c) Would you check your emails on your smart phone or text your friends in the middle of service?
 - d) **I....Think....Not....Absolutely...Not!**

7. *Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. And all the men of Israel assembled before the king at the feast that is in the seventh month. And all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. And they brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the Levitical priests brought them up. And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered. Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the Most Holy Place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. The cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering above the ark and its poles. And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the Holy Place before the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel, when they came out of Egypt. And when the priests came out of the Holy Place (for all the priests who were present had consecrated themselves, without regard to their divisions, and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kinsmen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with 120 priests who were trumpeters; and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the LORD), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever,” the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God. (2 Chronicles 5:2-14)*

8. As much as you loved and longed for the awesome privilege of “going to church” in such a place, you would also ask this question:
- a) *O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?* (Psalm 15:1)
 - b) How do I appear before a Holy God and live?
 - c) What do I do with all my sin in God’s Presence?
 - d) Will I ever be allowed back to the Temple once God sees who I really am?

9. David answers these questions for Israel, and for us...

B. A Self-Examination (15:2-5a)

1. *He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; who swears to his own hurt and does not change; who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.* (Psalm 15:2-5a)
2. David provides a **list** of character qualities: *A moral catalogue*
 - a) A very common literary device used by ancient writers: Israelites, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Christians.
 - b) The Epistles are full of such *moral catalogues*
 - (1) *Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.* (1 Timothy 4:12)
 - (2) *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.* (Colossians 3:12-15)
 - (3) *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* (Galatians 5:22-23)
 - (4) *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (2 Peter 1:5-8)
 - c) Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount* is an extended moral catalogue
 - d) Summary lists of virtue, character, and godliness: *i.e; Integrity before God and others. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.* (Luke 2:40)
And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. (Luke 2:52)
3. How many character traits does David set before us? Answer: *Six*
 - a) Here is where we must understand **Hebrew parallelism**
 - b) In Hebrew poetry words seldom rhyme, but Concepts (ideas) do.
 - c) The poet says the same thing, two, three, or four times, but by using different phrases.
Example:
They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. (Psalm 14:3)
 - d) To *turn aside* from God, to *become corrupt* in soul, and to *not do good* are the same thing said three different ways.
4. In Psalm 15, David lists six character traits, explain each one with a *couplet*
 - a) “_____and_____”
 - b) **James M. Boice:** *Psalms: Volume 1; pp. 123, 124*

English poetry is most often marked by rhyme and meter, but neither of these is in Hebrew. There is a certain kind of emphasis in the lines, which corresponds to our meter, but there is no rhyme at all. The chief characteristic of Hebrew verse is its parallel lines. Usually the idea of the first line is repeated in the second with slight variations, but it is

not always that simple. Sometimes the lines involve mere repetition, as in the first part of verse 2.

He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous....

Sometimes they express a contrast, as in the couplet that ends verse 2 and begins verse 3.

..who speaks the truth from his hear and has no slander on his tongue...

Sometimes they have the form: Not only this, but also that. The second half of verse 4 is an example of this construction.

..who keeps his oath even when it hurts...

When we recognize that the verses have this paired construction, we see at once that there are six couplets and that each contains an independent idea. In other words, each couplet introduces a separate characteristic of the person who is approved by God. The couplets are the psalm's outline.

c) So, David presents **six issues** of Integrity

- (1) Character
- (2) Speech
- (3) Relationships
- (4) Values
- (5) Trustworthiness
- (6) Money Management

5. **Remember:** *Integrity does not mean perfection but consistency; I am the same when I am alone with God, with my friends, or with strangers.*

6. Here is David's inspired list of Integrity Virtues.

a) **First:** A person of Integrity is *blameless*.

- (1) *He who walks blamelessly and does what is right... (15.2a) (NASB: who walks with integrity)*
- (2) Note: this person **is** blameless and **does** what is right
- (3) There is both a *coherence* of soul and *consistency* of conduct
- (4) These folks are **not** sinless, but no one can *blame* them for being a hypocrite
- (5) They seek to live out that why say they believe
- (6) "Blameless": in Hebrew is the word *tamim*
- (7) *Tamim*: whole, sound, uncorrupted
- (8) **Boice:** *A person whose character, as we might say, is morally well-rounded and grounded" (p. 124)*

b) **Second:** A Person of Integrity *speaks* honestly

- (1) *"...and speaks truth in his heart; who does not slander with his tongue..." (15:2b-3a)*
- (2) Again: Inner character (*heart*) and outer conduct (*tongue*)
- (3) *Truthfulness*: is the measure of his soul and the manner of his speech
- (4) He is not always correct in what he says, but he is both earnest and restrained
- (5) *Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger. (Ephesians 4:25-26)*

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
(Ephesians 29-32)

- (6) This man seeks for truth and speaks with healing, holy, healthy words that bless others.
- (7) *For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.* (James 3:2)

c) **Third:** A person of integrity guards her *friendships*.

- (1) *“...and who does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against a friend...”* (15:3b, c)
- (2) This woman of integrity values her relationships with both friends (intimates) and neighbors (acquaintances) and does all she can to preserve good relationships with both groups.
- (3) Meaning – “casts no slur on a neighbor nor passes on some gossip about a friend.”
- (4) *“you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor... you shall love your neighbor as yourself”*
- (5) She is not what the old man called a “backbiter”; nor is she an expert in the subtle *put down*.
- (6) **Joseph S. Exell:** Psalms I; p. 227 The backbiter is so called because, like the dog, he steals behind those in whom he wishes to flesh his teeth, deals in innuendoes, insinuations, evil surmisings, significant shrugs and looks, words meaning one thing in their literal sense and altogether another thing from the tone in which they are uttered, and so destroys a good name that no open assault could have affected. In this way the weak often overwhelm the strong; the vilest the most pure. The blow from behind and in the dark accomplishes its work of ruin before danger is even suspected. The truly good man, however, will assail no man’s good name. If he cannot speak good of another he will say nothing. He thinks, and justly too, that he has no more right to insure another’s character, than he has to insure his health; to destroy another’s good name, than he has to destroy his life. If he discovers a neighbor’s faults, he does not noise them abroad, but tries to conceal them; and so, if he discovers his neighbor’s necessities, he does what he can to relieve them.
- (7) Your reputation is safe in this woman’s mouth and in her actions. To this whomever she meets, she gives a **blessing!**

d) **Fourth:** The man of integrity is known by his *values*.

- (1) *“...in whose eyes a vile person is to be despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord...”* (15:4a)
- (2) Paraphrased: he doesn’t admire bad people but makes godly men his heroes!
- (3) **James M. Boice** dug deeper into this couplet with this observation (p. 126)

This is one of the saddest things about today’s younger generation. A few years ago a government commission in Canada studied the characteristics of

today's young people, and one of the things they discovered is that the youth of today have no heroes. There are people we have looked up to and have tried to be like. But the youth of today generally have no heroes, no models. Without heroes they tend to drift along.

But there is one thing worse than having no models, and that is having the wrong ones. And I suspect that, in spite of the Canadian study, many young people are actually drifting in this direction now. They admire the rock singer who has an abominable lifestyle but is nevertheless rich and famous. They admire the crack dealer who prances around in fancy clothes and sports gold jewelry. And the upright people? People who work hard for a living? Fathers who provide for their families? Mothers who are faithful in caring for and rearing their children? People who sacrifice for others? The young couldn't care less about such people.

- (4) True? A recent survey showed that M.S. girls would rather have dinner with Justin Bieber than with Jesus Christ!
- (5) The young person who shows contempt for older people, sasses his parents, considers his pastor "weird", but who thinks pot-smoking, foul-mouthed, immoral living is "cool", has a profound integrity problem.
- (6) How so? They call evil good, and good evil!

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in fixing strong drink, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right!
(Isaiah 5:20-23)

- (7) Their young souls are so "morally backward" that they cannot possess any integrity. They are "punks".

e) **Fifth:** People of integrity are *trustworthy*...

- (1) ...Their word is their *bond*; if they say it, they do it!
- (2) "...*who swears to his own hurt and does not change...*" (15:46)
- (3) **Illustration:** The teenage girl commits to babysitting for a young couple on Friday night. When a boy she's been dying to go out with calls her and invites her to a rock concert that same Friday night, she says, "I'm so sorry, I've already made a commitment to babysit that evening." Even if she's afraid the boy will never call her back to invite her again, she keeps her word and fulfills her promise!
- (4) For the person of integrity a promise is a promise.
- (5) This, of course, does **not** apply to a *rash vow (oath)*
- (6) **H. C. Leupold:** *Psalms, p. 145*
Stated a bit more at length, this would be: He takes an oath which has as a result that he gets into a bad situation, but he still does not tamper with the oath but holds it to be binding in an irrevocable sense. This obviously implies that the original oath was not made rashly or inadvisedly. It is just a case where things take an unexpected turn to his disadvantage.
- (7) For this young lady of integrity her trustworthiness means more to her than her personal gain.

- f) **Sixth:** Persons of integrity handle *money* properly.
- (1) *The management of money and the handling of wealth does more to test character and reveal integrity than anything else in life.*
 - (2) *...who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent.* (Psalm 15:5a, b)
 - (3) **Example:** How many times have siblings and relatives turned into vicious enemies, suing one another and hating each other, over the issues of an inheritance.
 - (4) **Money is power in our fallen world**
 - (i) the power to take advantage of desperate people by means of high interest on loans,
 - (ii) the power to pervert justice by giving a bribe to a judge, official, or businessman
 - (iii) *money is a power that often corrupts*
 - (5) **Rare** is the man, woman, child or family who can handle money rather than have money control them!
 - (6) A person of integrity sees money as a gift from God to bless and help others, and not as a leverage to take advantage of the poor or needy.
 - (7) *The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives.* (Psalm 37:21)

I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread. He is ever lending generously, and his children become a blessing.
(Psalm 37:25-26)

7. Here is a portrait of a person who should feel free to enter into God's presence, on Sunday, in the "Temple", to fellowship with and to worship God.

8. *An examination of our lives*

C. A Closing Statement: A Promise (15:5c)

1. *...He who does these things shall never be moved.* (15:5c)
2. i.e., he shall not be *shaken*
3. **Meaning:** The person of integrity who asks in verse one: *Who may sojourn (visit) in your tent (Tabernacle)? Who shall dwell on your holy hill (in Jerusalem)?* may well not feel shaken by the prospect of being in God's presence.
4. We **can** come into God's presence, but only with the proper preparation.

II. PRAYING PSALM 15 AS SINNERS WITH INTEGRITY PROBLEMS

1. **Peter C. Craigie:** *Psalm 1-5-: WBC; pp 152-153*

In the history of Christian and Jewish worship, there have emerged two extremes toward which the worshipper may be tempted to move. On the one hand, there have been times when the holiness of God has been stressed so powerfully, that the ordinary mortal has felt it impossible to approach God in worship or prayer. On the other hand, the open access to God in prayer has sometimes been so stressed that admission to God's presence becomes a thoughtless and casual matter. Between these two poles, there is a proper median: there is indeed access to the Holy God in worship and prayer, but it must be employed carefully, not casually, with appropriate preparation and reverence. Psalm 15 provides a guide to such access.

2. Three problems arise here:

- a. One, we know we aren't worthy to come into God's presence.
- b. Two, we know we can't meet these standards of integrity.
- c. Three, we are prone to instability in our moral character.

3. **God offers us a remedy in the Gospel of Jesus Christ!**

4. **But...**The remedy only works if we display *integrity* in three aspects of our life with God...

5. ...The three aspects revealed in the first **3 Vows** of Church Membership.

6. **First:** we must come before God as open, honest, needy sinners

- a. *O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? Psalm 15:1*
- b. Answer: *The only people who could do so would all be fallen sinners.*

c. **Integrity** demands that we *honestly* admit this fact!

i. *Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy? Vow #1*

ii. Answer: *Yes! Without your mercy, O God, who could stand in Your Presence – even for a moment?*

iii. *If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. (Psalm 130:3-4)*

d. The **beginning** of integrity is to admit openly to God that you really don't have much integrity at all.

e. *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."* (Luke 18:9-14)

- f. The beginning of integrity is to throw yourself on the mercy of God and face what you really are – a huge, hypocritical, and unholy sinner – in His presence.
 - g. *Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. (James 4:6-10)*
 - h. **This is what vow #1 asks us to admit!** *Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy?*
7. **Second:** We must meet the catalogue of virtues listed in Psalm 15:2-5, or we won’t be welcome or survive in God’s House!
- a. *He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord; who swears to his own hurt and does not change; who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. (Psalm 15:2-5a,b)*
 - b. Here is where we turn to **Jesus Christ** to –
 - i. Save us from our lack of integrity
 - ii. Impute to us His righteousness
 - iii. Meet these standards for us
 - c. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He offered in the Gospel? (Vow #2)
 - d. Three **crucial acts of integrity**; i.e., of genuine faith
 - i. *Believe* all the Scripture says about Jesus Christ!
 - ii. *Receive Jesus as your own (personal) Savior!*
 - iii. *Rest* in Christ’s righteousness...alone!
 - e. This is why we pray, worship, sing, and worship “*Through Christ our Lord, Amen.*”
 - f. This is the **heart of the Gospel**: Christ is our righteousness; therefore He is also our integrity.
 - g. *Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Romans 10:1-4)*
 - h. So, we take vow #2 to receive integrity in Jesus. *Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He offered in the Gospel?*
8. **Third:** We can stand in God’s presence only through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.
- a. “*...He who does these things shall not be moved.*” (15:5c)

- b. So... we ask ourselves vow #3, *Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?*
- c. Jesus pointed to this reality when He said that God was looking for a new kind of worshipper.

- i. *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."* (John 4:21-24)
- ii. Key: *"God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"*

- d. In the security of the indwelling Holy Spirit we have both a power and a freedom to worship God.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (2 Corinthians 3:17)

- e. In fact: The Holy Spirit's presence makes **us** – both individually and congregationally – a Temple where the Presence of God abides with us all!

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3:18)

- f. Most importantly: *The Holy Spirit does not leave us in a state of sinful hypocrisy and lack of character, but He sanctifies each one of us so that, week after week, we enter the place of worship with more integrity than the week prior. The glory of His presence in our lives makes us better people.*

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

- g. And so we confidently take vow #3 and rely on the Spirit's grace to enhance and enable our personal integrity.

Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ? (Vow #3)

- 9. In the end, Psalm 15 drives us to God in repentance, faith, and humility.
 - a. Asking for God's mercy
 - b. Trusting in Christ's righteousness
 - c. Living in the grace of the Holy Spirit

- 10.And, as a result, becoming true people of integrity!

O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart. (Psalm 15:1-2 NASB)

