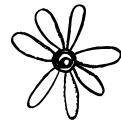


to
DWEELL
&
ABIDE
with God

PSALM 15



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

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

(3) He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

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

(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.

INTRODUCTION:

I'm sure that the question David asks in this Psalm is one we all have in our minds at times. We are most comfortable with action: give me something to do and I'll know when I have done it. We like having boxes to tick off, and the truth is that we do need this kind of self-examination at times. It helps to give us focus and purpose instead of a vague notion of goodness, but at the same time, we have to remember that righteousness is not a checklist, it is a gift. Doing things God's way is the better way, but we will not always get it right, and so we don't keep track.

So, although this Psalm does provide tangible examples of the kind of person that can abide and dwell with God, it also seems to get to the spirit of the matter. These aren't just outward forms to display our righteousness, they involve the inner workings of the heart and mind.

This will be a little study that hopefully provides opportunity for examining ourselves to see that we are doing what needs to be done. You will need a Bible App for this study if you are using a phone, or access to online Bible software. I recommend the free Blue Letter Bible App, also available online at www.blueletterbible.org. You will also need a notebook and pen to take notes as you go along.

- Read through the whole Psalm. Take a coloured pencil and underline the questions. Using a different colour, highlight each verb you come across. Circle the “not” and “nor” in black.

The Psalms are in many ways a summary of all that we need to know as far as religion is concerned, but they approach it in a very practical way. In the Psalms, the law of God is presented as extremely important in bringing together God and His people. Some may feel that this is no longer true now that the old covenant has passed away and the new covenant is in effect. However, this was never the perspective of Jesus. He said that far from being destroyed, he came to fulfil the law.

- Find Matthew 5:17 in the Blue Letter Bible App (BLB) and then tap on the verse and choose Interlinear/Concordance from the options that pop up. Scroll down to the word “destroy” and tap on the Greek word on the left hand side. This will give you lots of information on this word. Read through the definitions under Outline of Bible Usage. Write down a summary. Tap the little arrow on the top right of your screen which will take you back to the list of words, and find the word “fulfil”. Tap on the Greek word to the left on your screen. Read through the Outline of Biblical Usage and write down a summary for this word. What does this tell you about the law of God?
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- The difference between the testaments is not law and no law, but the function of the law. The law has never been able to save anyone because no one has been able to keep it perfectly except for Jesus. In the Old Testament, the law pointed towards Christ and provided a way to walk before God in a righteous way dependant on His forgiveness, but also made clear what sin was. Jesus Christ came to show us that sin could only be defeated by a life totally submitted to God. He upheld all of God's ways and did His will, yet still was cursed under the law by his manner of death. What effect does 1 Peter 2:21-25 tell us that the life of the Lord Jesus should have on us?
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VERSE 1:

1. What was the tabernacle? When Israel left Egypt, and began their wandering in the wilderness, God gave Moses plans for building a tent of meeting - a place where He would dwell with His people. It was a sanctuary built with offerings from the people according to a very specific set of instructions. You can read about this in Exodus 25 and 26. List some of the items that were to be part of this building. You may want to discover the meaning behind many of these items at another time.

2. What does God say is the purpose of this tabernacle in Exodus 29:43-45?

3. Was just anyone allowed in the tabernacle? Read through Numbers 18:1-7, 21-24.

4. What is the “holy hill”? Open Psalm 15 in the BLB, tap on verse 1, and then choose “Cross-References”. Tap on the section labeled “holy”. Read through these verses and write down what the holy hill is referring to.

5. Go back to Psalm 15, tap on verse 1, and choose Interlinear again. This time explore the two words “abide” and “dwell”. How are these words similar? How are they different? Is there any significance in their difference?

6. Why do you think there would be a question of whether someone could dwell and abide in God’s presence or not? (1 Peter 1:13-16)

7. Can we abide or dwell with God today when we don't have a literal tabernacle or holy hill? Do a little word search on the words dwell and abide. Tap on the magnifying glass icon at the top of the screen. Type in the word "dwell" and tap on search. Scroll through the verses and write down anything you find helpful. Do the same for the word "abide".

8. I haven't suggested using commentaries in this study but there are several commentaries on the BLB app. Use them as a last resort to see what others have to say but with a bit of caution. Often they can give you a little bit of a different perspective or insight, but they are interpretations and not necessarily always correct. Here is an example of a bit of extra insight on verse 1 from Alexander MacLaren (a Scottish Baptist minister 1826-1910). *"In the gracious hospitality of the antique world, a guest was sheltered from all harm, his person was inviolable, his wants all met. So the guest of Jehovah is safe, can claim assylum from every foe and share in all the bountiful provision of his abode."* How does this help to understand why someone might want to dwell or abide with God?

9. Ask yourself questions: Do I want to abide or dwell with God? Am I willing to do what makes that possible? Write down some good reasons to do so.

VERSE 2:

1. There are three verbs in verse 2. Write them down. They have to do with three basic modes of living: how we think, what kinds of things we do, and how we speak.

2. Look up the word "upright" in a dictionary. Webster's 1828 Dictionary is a good one to use for definitions that are closer to the time that the KJV was translated (webstersdictionary1828.com). Write down the definition given (#3).

3. Go to Psalm 15 in the BLB, and tap on verse 2. Tap on Interlinear/Concordance and tap on the Hebrew word to the left of “uprightly”. Read through the Outline of Biblical Usage. Scroll down to the Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon. Tap to view the entire entry and take notes.

4. What word might we use today to describe someone who walks uprightly? This word has to do with a person’s character - what they truly are inside.

5. Proverbs 28:6 gives us the opposite of an upright person. Find this verse on the BLB and tap on it. Open the Interlinear/Concordance and tap on the Hebrew word on the left of perverse. Write down what it means. If you were going to draw an upright and a perverse man, what would you draw?

6. Go back to Psalm 15 on the BLB, tap on verse 2, and then tap on Cross-References. Tap on the section under “He” and read through it. What else does it tell you about this word “uprightly”? Whose example are we told to follow in our walk?

7. Do I see myself as an upright person? Do I live by godly principles or am I easily swayed off the path by things that are easier or more attractive? Write down where you feel you do well and where you may need to improve.

8. Go back to Psalm 15 on the BLB, tap on verse 2, and then tap on Interlinear/Concordance. This time choose the Hebrew word to the left of “righteousness”. Read through the Outline of Biblical Usage and then scroll down to the Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon. Tap to view the entry and read through it. Jot down what righteousness is.

9. So along with being an upright person, there has to be action. This is very similar to the thoughts in James 2:14-17. What are the two words that James uses that need to go together?

10. Tap on the arrow on the top left corner of the App to go back to the list of options for verse 2. Choose Cross-References. Tap on the section under “worketh”. Read through the list of references and note down any that you find interesting. Make a list of what you think works of righteousness might include.

11. One of the references was Ephesians 2:10. Find that verse in the App, tap on it to bring up the list of options, and then tap on Cross-References. Tap on the section under “good”. Scroll through these verses writing down any examples of “good works” that you come across.

11. Working righteousness does not have to be huge efforts of time and money, often they are little things worked out in daily life with the people you are closest to. In fact, it is often these little things that are the hardest to do sometimes. What are some ways you work righteousness within your own family?

12. Go back to Psalm 15 in the BLB App, and tap on verse 2. Choose the Interlinear/Concordance and tap on the Hebrew word to the left of “speaketh”. This is an interesting word so it is worth exploring it a little. Scroll down to the Gesenius’ Hebrew Chaldee Lexicon and tap to view the entry. Read through points 1,2 and 5 and write down the various meanings. Although this word has the simple meaning “to speak”, it gives the impression of thoughtful and prepared speech.

13. Tap on the back arrow at the top right side of the screen to go back to the Interlinear/Concordance. This time, tap on the Hebrew word to the left of “truth”. Read through the Outline of Biblical Usage, and scroll down to the Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon and read through the definitions given. Take notes.

14. Truth is an elusive thing these days. But don't you appreciate the other senses of this word - that of firmness, faithfulness, and unchanging. This verse could have said "speaketh truth" and left it at that - that we speak only truth - but it adds the phrase "in his heart". If you are still in the BLB, go back to the Interlinear/Concordance and tap on the Hebrew word to the left of "heart". Read through the Outline of Biblical Usage and write down what "heart" is referring to here.

15. Although speaking the truth in our hearts probably also means that we will not tell lies, we have to speak the truth to ourselves before we can ever speak it to others. Look up the following passages and write down what we need to speak into our hearts: Proverbs 23:20-23; Matthew 12:33-37. What can you do to be sure you are filling your heart up with good things?

VERSE 3:

1. While verse 2 provides three positive actions a person can develop in their lives, verse 3 gives three negative actions that should not be part of one's life. The first action is "backbiting". This is an interesting term in English. Look it up in a dictionary, such as www.webstersdictionary1828.com. It creates a picture in the mind of someone being attacked from behind so that they are unable to defend themselves. Go to Psalm 15 in the BLB app and tap on verse 3. Tap on Interlinear/Concordance and then on the Hebrew word to the left of "backbiteth". Read through the Outline of Biblical Usage 1 and A. Then scroll down further to the Concordance Results. Scan through the other verses that contain this word. What do you notice? How would you say backbiting is connected to the idea of spying?

2. Go back to the list of options for verse 3 (use the back arrow on the top right if you are in Interlinear, or find it by tapping on verse 3) and then choose Cross-References. Tap on the section under backbiteth, and write down some of the connecting thoughts in this list of verses. It is definitely not a pleasant thing to have those who enjoy backbiting around us.

3. Solomon compared a talebearer as wood that allows a fire to burn, and as wounds that affect one's innermost being (Proverbs 26:22-24). In contrast, what is Solomon's solution in Proverbs 11:13. What would you draw to illustrate this?

4. Go back to Psalm 15, tap on verse 3, and then on the Hebrew word to the left of "neighbour". Who could this neighbour be?

5. Does this remind you of the Golden Rule? Write down what Jesus has to say about conduct towards our neighbours in Luke 6:27-36.

6. Go back to Psalm 15 and tap on verse 3, and then on Interlinear/Concordance. Tap on the Hebrew word to the left of "taketh up". Read through the Outline of Biblical Usage (1, A). Who is doing the "taking up"?

7. Tap on the back arrow to get back to the Interlinear/Concordance section for verse 3, and tap on the Hebrew word to the left of "a reproach". Read through the Outline of Biblical Usage, and the Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon entry, and write down the additional information about this word.

8. In contrast, we can read a parable Jesus told that is similar to this. Read through Luke 18:9-14. What is the basic problem that would cause someone to despise someone else?

9. Ask yourself some questions: Am I careful to not go about seeking slander about other people, whether I speak it to others or not? Am I careful that anything I say about others is actually based on truth - have I first thought the best about that person? Am I careful that my actions are not hurtful to others? Do I speak scornfully of others or try to shame them? Do I blow up contention, or blow it out? Write down what you feel you do well in and where you might need to improve.

VERSE 4:

1. The Psalm has given us three positive actions to incorporate into our lives, and three negative actions to remove from our lives. Verse 4 goes on to tell us that if we want to abide and dwell in the presence of God, then we will be like our God in some particular ways. Go to Psalm 15 in the BLB App and tap on verse 4. Tap on Interlinear and then the word to the left of “vile”. Scroll down to the Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, tap on view the entire entry, and read through the first section. How is this word most often used?

2. Tap on the back arrow at the top right of the screen three times to get back to the list of options for verse 4. Tap on Dictionaries, and then tap on the word “Vile, Villany” under the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. Read through the article and take notes.

3. Tap on the back arrow twice to get back to the list of options and then tap on Cross-References. Tap on the section under “a vile”. Read through the verses given and take notes. How does the reference from James help us to see a difference in how God judges people and how we may sometimes be inclined to judge people?

4. Tap the back arrow to get back to the list of options and choose Dictionaries, and then tap on the word “Fear” under the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. Take notes.

5. Go back to the list of options for verse 4 and choose Interlinear/Concordance, and tap on the Hebrew word across from “contemned”. Write down the definition given. Does this mean we are to treat badly those who are not interested in God? Write down how Matthew 5:43-48 answers this question.

6. Go back to the Interlinear/concordance and tap on the Hebrew word to the left of “honoreth”. In this instance, the proper definition under Outline of Biblical Usage is “C”. Go back to the list of options and tap on Cross-References. Tap on the section under “but”. Who did Jesus honor? How do we know that we have “passed from death unto life”?

6. What rules do I usually go by when I befriend people? It is often so true that we are attracted to people with similarities to us in general interests, social standing, or abilities and are less interested in those who may have faith in God but are harder to get along with, but God sees people simply based on whether they fear Him or reject Him. Read through 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 and take notes.

7. The last section of this verse demonstrates another way we can be like God: in His trustworthiness. Go to Psalm 15 on the BLB App and tap on verse 4, then Interlinear/Concordance and tap on the Hebrew word to the left of “swear”. Scroll down to the Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon and read through the entry. Write down the various explanations of the word.

8. What does Jesus have to say about swearing in Matthew 5:33-37. One commentary suggests that swearing an oath gives the impression that there is no sin in a lie unless it has been sworn to when our word should be enough. “If lies were not so common, oaths would be needless.”

9. What do these verses have to say about God: Numbers 23:19, 1 Samuel 15:29, Hebrews 6:18, James 1:17, Malachi 3:6.

10. Do I try to be like my God and recognize a difference between those who fear Him and those who do not? Do I give honour to those who are my fellow followers of Christ and see them as my family whether or not they are people I would ordinarily choose to spend time with? Am I someone who can be trusted to keep my word no matter what? Write down where you feel you do well, and where you could improve.

VERSE 5:

1. This final instruction in how to be a person who can abide and dwell in the presence of God is an interesting one. Certainly our lives unavoidably revolve around earning, saving, giving and spending money. Go to Psalm 15 in the BLB App and tap on verse 5. Tap on the Hebrew word to the left of “putteth out”. Read through the Outline of Biblical Usage. Scroll down to KJV Translation Count. Notice how this word is most often translated. Go back to the list of options for verse 5 and choose Bible Comparison. This will give us this verse in a number of different translations. Notice that the word putteth out is often translated “lend”. Use your back arrow to get back to Psalm 15, and tap on the magnifying glass at the top of the page. Type in the word “lend”. Tap on the first verse (Exodus 22:25), and then tap on verse 25 and then Interlinear/Concordance, and the Hebrew word to the left of “thou lend to”. You will see that this is a different word that has the idea of joining in a borrow/lend relationship that implies repayment. What is the difference between giving and lending?

2. Go back to Psalm 15, tap on verse 5 and then Interlinear/Concordance. This time tap on the Hebrew word to the left of “usury”. Scroll down to the Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon and write down what it literally means. It’s like giving but keeping something back.

3. Tap the back arrow until you are back at the list of options for verse 5. Tap on Cross-References and then the section under “putteth”. Read through the verses provided. What were the results of usury? What is given as the reason for this behaviour in the verse from Ezekiel?

4. Go back to the list of options and choose Concordance/Interlinear, and then the Hebrew word to the left of “reward”. Go back to the list of options and choose Cross-References and the section under “nor taketh”. What are the effects of this kind of reward? Who is an infamous example of doing such a thing?
