

# 15 | PSALM 15

## FIT FOR FELLOWSHIP

*Understanding How to Grow in Your Relationship with God*

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*Giving is from the Heart*

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## **Songs, Psalm 15: Fit for Fellowship**

All Creatures of Our King

In Christ Alone

Psalm 15 Who Will Abide in Your Tent?

Lord you are more precious than silver

I Stand Amazed in the Presence

### **Call to Worship:**

PSALM 95:1-3, 6 | Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! <sup>2</sup>Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! <sup>3</sup>For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods... <sup>6</sup>Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

### **Announcements**

1. Welcome visitors!
2. Thanks to all the VBS workers who made this past week a success!
3. Spaghetti Dinner, tomorrow, Aug 5, as a fundraiser for Brian Nelson's Eagle Scout project, a fence for Living Hope play area by the road. Held at Bethel Baptist in Schaumburg, Aug 5 from 5-7pm. Cost and other info in your bulletin.
4. Men's BBall: The last Basketball gathering for the season will be this Tue, Aug 6, 7:30 PM.
5. Father-Daughter Campout: Our father/daughter campout will be Fri-Sat, Aug 16-17 at Waterfall Glen.

### **Introduction**

Open your Bible if you will to Psalm 15. The title of our message is "Fit for Fellowship". There is a difference between our standing and our relationship with God.

#### *Fellowship Like Marriage*

Fellowship with God is the most wonderful thing on earth. It is where true joy comes from (1 Jn 1:3-4; Psa 16:11). **Fellowship is a lot like marriage.** Thomas Goodwin put it this way. He said here are a husband and a wife walking down the street together. They're married. Then all of a sudden, one of them takes the other in their arms. One turns around and says, "I love you," and grabs and kisses them. At that moment, they're not more married than they were five minutes ago. Their legal relationship hasn't changed a bit, but their enjoyment of and their experience of that relationship has just gone through the roof. There may be a time when I am not right with my wife, for whatever reason. When I am not right with her, I am still married. My marital standing hasn't changed. I'm married. But if I want to walk closely with my wife, I need to be in right relation to her.<sup>1</sup> That's a bit of what Psalm 15 is talking about.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Goodwin. *The Heart of Christ in Heaven towards Sinners on Earth* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1831), 251.

### ***Justification vs. Sanctification***

When we are born again, God justifies us before his throne. We are righteous, and our record is absolutely perfect. No one and nothing can accuse you or condemn you before the Almighty. **You are as righteous right now as a Christian as you will ever be.** That is to say: you are perfectly righteous before God.

That goes against some of our experience as a Christian. There are times in the Christian life when our walk with God is affected negatively, and our fellowship is broken. While our righteousness is perfect, because it is attained by Christ, our fellowship needs constant maintenance. This is a Psalm of yearning for closeness to God. We must prepare ourselves for his presence.

### ***Scripture Reading***

Let's stand and read Psalm 15:1-5,

**15:1-5** | O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? <sup>2</sup>He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; <sup>3</sup>who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; <sup>4</sup>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; <sup>5</sup>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.

*This is God's Word.*

So many clearly understand the Gospel and the way of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. Praise the name of the Lord. But I ask you, what effect does the Gospel actually have on your life. Are you truly a Christian, through and through? Or are you a Christian in name only?

I don't mean that we should use this Psalm as a law to bring fear and terror upon true Christians. My concern is that there are truly born-again Christians in our congregation who love God but feel very distant from him and have no real power for holiness, or at least are not exercising the resurrection power that all who know Christ possess.

Your position with Christ is perfected. It cannot be improved upon. You are justified. Praise his name. But how about your fellowship and your relationship? A true believer longs to walk closer with God. How can we walk more closely with our amazing God?

I believe we can ask three questions from this Psalm that will bring us back into a healthy fellowship with God if you sincerely answer these questions.

### **Outline**

How's Your **Worship?** (1), How's Your **Walk?** (2-4), How's Your **Wealth?** (5)

These three questions say so much because wherever your heart is, that's the direction of your life. Your worship, walk, and wealth say everything about you. These three things pinpoint your heart. Do you love God? Let's find out.

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## 1. HOW'S YOUR WORSHIP? (15:1).

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How is your worship? What a great indicator of your heart. David asks Yahweh, his God and ours, some very important questions:

15:1 | O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

David's question presupposes both the **existence** of God and the necessity of **salvation**. After all, in the last psalm he made it clear that in the eyes of God, there is **none righteous, not even one**. There are none who seek after God. Salvation is much more than forgiveness of sins. For David, salvation is ultimately about dwelling with God.

David's desire, more than anything else, was to move in with God. That's what the word "sojourn" and "dwell" indicate. He doesn't just want to spent the night. He wants to live life together with God. He doesn't just want an event. He wants an experience.

### THE TABERNACLE EXPERIENCE

Specifically, David wants to lodge in God's "tent". In David's day, in order to experience the manifest presence of God, you would go to the Tabernacle which was a **tent**. Every day David could see for miles where the Tabernacle was. It was at **Gibeon**, the city of the Gibeonites, just 5 and a half miles northwest of Jerusalem. It was a large hill, very similar to Mount Moriah, that the Temple Mount rests on. And there, during the days of David, the Ark of the Covenant rested there. David would have been able to see the glory cloud from his palace in Jerusalem (1 Chron 21:29-30).

David longed for the presence of God, both his indwelling as well as his manifestation at the Tabernacle. But God only allows certain people to **lodge in his tent**. The picture comes from the ancient Near Eastern image of hospitality to strangers. In this case the question is "Who may be a guest in God's tent?"<sup>2</sup> How can you be the kind of person God invites to lodge with him? Calvin said the meaning is clear: Only those who live a holy life, separated unto God, can dwell in his presence (1:205).<sup>3</sup>

The picture of "tent" and "your holy hill" suggests the background of a pilgrimage to Mount Zion, God's holy hill. There David had first placed a tent for the ark of the covenant (cf 2 Sam 6:1-19). On that site the tent was later replaced by the magnificent Temple of Solomon.<sup>4</sup> David's point: I want such a close relationship with God that it's like moving in with someone. I want to lodge in his tent. I want to live a life of worship.

So many Christians want help with every area of their lives. We seek wisdom about so many things: singleness, marriage, children, work, finances. The real answer for all wisdom is to seek the Lord. "**Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you**" (Mt 6:33). We get it all when we surrender to God completely.

Are you ready to surrender your whole heart? If you want to fellowship with God, you need to be careful how you **worship**, how you **walk**, and what you do with your **wealth**. These are key indicators of what your heart is worshipping.

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<sup>2</sup> Briggs, 1:113; Dahood, Psalms 1:83, or NEB, "Who may lodge in thy tabernacle?").

<sup>3</sup> Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 148.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

## THE GLORY CLOUD AT THE TABERNACLE

15:1 | O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

### *The Presence of God at the Tabernacle/Temple*

The presence of God was centralized, in the Old Testament and in Jesus' time, in the Tabernacle and Temple. The Tabernacle symbolized God's presence among his people. The people were responsible to prepare themselves to meet with God in Jerusalem during the three great pilgrimage festivals (Passover, Firstfruits, and Tabernacles). As the pilgrims approached Jerusalem—the city of God, where his “sanctuary” was located on the “holy hill”—they had to examine themselves before entering the courts of God's sanctuary.<sup>5</sup> They could see the fiery pillar of God's presence hovering over the Tabernacle and later Solomon's Temple (all the way to the time of Ezekiel, when “*Ichabod*” was written over the Temple – the glory of God departed, Eze 10:18).

### *Baptisms and Cleansings at the Temple*

Later on, when you went to the Jerusalem Temple, there were baptism baths right outside the Temple that are still on the Temple Mount today. Everyone who entered the Temple had to be cleansed. This is a picture of the holy life a person is to live. Before we worship God, we are to examine ourselves of any spiritual uncleanness. Though we stand righteous in Christ in our position before God, we are to be cleansed from all practical unrighteousness that would hinder our fellowship with God.

Are you keeping short accounts with God? How long has it been since you walked with the Lord? How long since you've been touched and moved by the Holy Spirit with joy and richness in your soul? Examine yourself. Is there sin in your life that the Holy Spirit is not willing to cleanse right now? Pray with David...

## SLIDE

PSALM 139:23-24 | Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! <sup>24</sup> And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

In other words, it's not enough just to clean up to go to church. We need to be clean inside. And it's not enough to be coming to meet God at some tent or church building. He wants you to lodge with him and move in with him.

## TABERNACLING WITH GOD

Do you want to worship God not just in a casual way, but do you want to lodge and dwell in God's tent? Do you want to worship him on his holy hill? Are you ready to say, “Whatever it takes Lord, I want you more than anything!”

We are not to think of worship as Christians as merely coming to assemble on Sundays. Worship is every day. God wants us to lodge with him, move in with him. How's your worship? Is the Lord the very center of your joy in life? Is he directing and moving and speaking to you not only on Sunday, but on Monday and Thursday afternoons? Are you abiding in Christ? Are you walking in the Spirit?

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

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## 2. HOW'S YOUR WALK? (15:2-4).

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How is your walk? Who gets to walk with God? Who's the one who gets a close fellowship and friendship with God? We have a simple list of traits. What we find is that worship is not just on Sunday morning. It's what we live Monday through Saturday. It affects every area of our lives.

**15:2-4** | He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; <sup>3</sup>who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; <sup>4</sup>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...

### OUR LIFE

Are you walking blamelessly and practicing real Christian growth in your life?

#### *Practice of Life*

**15:2a** | He who walks blamelessly and does what is right...

Blamelessness means that you are living a life of integrity. Your heart is sincere. Blamelessness comes from a heart that sincerely wants to please God in all of life.

Blameless living does not happen by accident. You have to hold yourself accountable. Are you living life in genuine accountability with others? The blameless life is not a superficial life. You let others in. You bring counselors into your life. You examine your life and let others examine your life.

### ***Without Blemish***

The word blameless is often translated, "**without blemish**." Here, for instance, is an Israelite who wants to bring a special burnt offering to God. He finds a fine, full-grown ram, one of his prize breeding stock, the very best in his flock. He runs his eye and hand over it to make sure it has **no hidden blemish**. He takes it to the priest who also gives it a careful examination. The ram is then slain and the priest exposes all the inward parts, sharply watching for **any imperfection**. But it is a perfect sacrifice, a ram "without blemish." That is exactly what the word "blamelessly" means here. Translated into spiritual terms, the person who would be a guest in God's house must be **without blemish**; he must be blameless. His works must stand the test of the scrutiny of God.<sup>6</sup>

The beauty of our sanctification is that if there is anything between your soul and the Savior, you can confess it, and he is "faithful and just to forgive" your sins, and to cleanse you "from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn 1:9). In order to have sweet fellowship with God, we have to have a blameless heart, with no known sins between you and the Savior.

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<sup>6</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring Psalms 1-88: An Expository Commentary*, vol. 1, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Ps 15:2a.

### ***An Oak Tree's Limbs Equal Its Roots***

Transition: How is it possible to have such a blameless **practice of life**? How can a live a blameless life? Whenever you see a blameless life, think of a tree. The oak tree can grow very large. But as large as an oak tree's branches are, so large is the root system. If you want to have a blameless life, you have to have a blameless heart. How do we get a blameless heart? It's through **preaching to ourselves**.

#### *Preaching to Self*

The one who lodges in God's presence is constantly preaching the truth to his own heart.

15:2b | He... speaks truth in his heart.

Are you "speaking truth in your heart"? This is self-talk or self-counsel. Do you self-counsel? Listen to Martin Lloyd Jones in his book on Spiritual Depression:

### **SLIDE**

The main trouble in this whole matter of spiritual depression in a sense is this, that we allow our self to talk to us instead of talking to our self... Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? <sup>7</sup>

We have to preach to our selves with God's Word. We can't just listen to the stray thoughts that come from our bent and broken minds. We have to instruct ourselves with the truth. When you feel depressed you can say: "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation <sup>6</sup> and my God" (Psa 42:5-6a).

The blessed man is one who "delights in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night" (Psa 1:2). The word "meditate" means to *mutter* and to repeat God's Word over and over. Is your life one of blamelessness of life and heart?

A mighty wind blew night and day  
It stole the oak tree's leaves away  
Then snapped its boughs and pulled its bark  
Until the oak was tired and stark

But still the oak tree held its ground  
While other trees fell all around  
The weary wind gave up and spoke.  
How can you still be standing Oak?

The oak tree said, I know that you  
Can break each branch of mine in two  
Carry every leaf away  
Shake my limbs, and make me sway



<sup>7</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans's Printing Company, 1965), 20-21.

But I have roots stretched in the earth  
 Growing stronger since my birth  
 You'll never touch them, for you see  
 They are the deepest part of me

The secret of my strength and fruit  
 Are found beneath the ground: my roots  
 The same is true of my Christian walk  
 The secret is a heart for God.

### ***Artificial Lungs / Heart Pump***

Have you ever seen artificial lungs and heart pump machine that keeps a person's body alive? I've seen this where a person is brain dead, yet they still are able to breath and blood pumping, because the machines are pumping. There are some who really don't desire the presence of God. They don't have a real heart for God. They are on the spiritual respirator, but are really dead. They go to church but really don't want to lodge in God's presence.

What about you? I know you have a true heart for God that is driving you to holiness, driving you to enjoy the presence of God, which is the greatest joy in the universe.

How's your life? Are you walking blamelessly from your heart? Are you preaching the truth to yourself on a daily basis? **Are you refreshing and renewing your heart to pump stronger and stronger for God?**

### **OUR LANGUAGE**

What comes out of our mouths can make or break our fellowship with God. If you have a problem with your mouth, and you're not actively dealing with it, it's going to be a big drag on your walk with God. Listen to David, the man who dwells with God in his tent is one who guards his language.

**15:3** | ...who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend.

You know what out to come out of the mouths of God's people? Praise!

**EPHESIANS 5:18-20** | Be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**PSALM 150:6** | Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

**1 CHRON 16:28** | Praise the Lord, all people on earth, praise his glory and might.

### **SLIDE: COMMUNICATION STATS**

What a powerful tool we have in our tongue. Those who study words tell us that words are important. But one study says how we use those words is even more important. In fact, the researchers concluded that all our communication consists of:

- 7% Words

- 38% Tones
- 55% Non-Verbal Actions

### *Words are Powerful!*

As Jesus said in Matthew 12:34: “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” How can we apply this to our lives? We need to realize the power of our words.

*Words can kill and make alive!* Proverbs 18:21, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue...”

*Gracious, kind words are powerful!* Proverbs 16:24, “Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.”

*Rash words are powerful!* Proverbs 12:18, “There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

*Self-controlled words are powerful!* Proverbs 15:1, “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

*Words Encourage!* Proverbs 25:11, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.” Words spoken at the right time give hope and encouragement to the soul like a beautiful piece of art work.

### *Words of Gossip*

We should not be people who destroy with words of gossip.

15:3a | ...who does not slander with his tongue...

The word “slander” literally means “to spy out”, in the sense that one goes looking for things in the life of another to use against them. It means “gossip”. The godly person who loves God’s presence uses their tongue with honor. The only way to tame the tongue is to tame the heart. The tongue is so small, but it is a powerful instrument. Consider James’ words.

## SLIDE

**JAMES 3:3-8** | If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. <sup>4</sup>Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. <sup>5</sup>So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! <sup>6</sup>And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup>For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup>but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

If you like to get into the business of others, but you are not part of the solution, then you are gossiping. Be careful because you can really hurt your brother or sister with your tongue. You may say you love God, but if you are spending time in his presence, it will show by your tongue.

## Words of Goodness

15:3b | ... does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend.

Instead of tearing down our neighbor, we guard our words. We do good with our language. Is there goodness in your tongue?

Common ways of speaking can really hurt your neighbor.

### ***Say no to Gossipy words.***

Don't **take up a reproach against your brother or sister in Christ or anyone**. Say no to gossip. If you are not part of the solution, then speak to the person directly. Don't go behind their back! If you have an offense with someone, **go to them directly** according to the principles of Matthew 18.

### ***Instead use Edifying words.***

What should be coming out of the mouth of a Christian? Edifying words!

EPH 4:29 | 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.

## SLIDE

### OUR LEGACY

15:4 | ...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

What is your legacy? You are leading your family, your church and your co-workers somewhere. You are setting an example for everyone around you. The question is: is it a good or bad example? Who do you honor? Who do you mirror your life after? Who are you following? For the Christian it must be Jesus Christ and those who love him.

### *A Legacy of Fellowship*

What kind of people are you attracted to? The person who loves the Lord is attracted to those who love to fellowship with the Lord. The church is our **forever family**.

The center of a Christian's life is friendship with Christ and his followers. The one who lodges in God's presence loves those who love the Lord.

15:4a | ...in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord...

You become like your friends. You become like those you honor and look up to.

### ***Not Self-Righteousness***

David says a righteous person "despises" the "vile person". What does that mean? It **doesn't mean** there is **no compassion or care**. We are never to stand in self-righteous condemnation. You are "in the world, but not of the world" as Jesus said. You love sinners, but you hate the slavery they are in. You see they are blinded by the wicked one. You see

they are in bondage. You hate the way of life the sinner promotes, because they are controlled by the wicked one.

The godly person will never honor or esteem the rebellious world's way of living. We rightly despise the wicked person's way of life. We stay far away from participating in it (Psa 1:1).

Of course, a righteous person loves the sinner, like Jesus loves the sinner. But we despise the enslavement of sin that the vile person promotes. We stand against them in that, though we pray for the Lord to have mercy. We despise the vile person's idols. We have no king but Jesus.

We long to be taught by those who fear the Lord. Are you teachable? **Fear** indicates humility and awe. Are you humble? Are your friends followers of Christ?

We are like a man helping people up from a deep pit. In order to help them up, we need to stand on the high ground. We cannot get into the pit in order to reach them. Only on the high ground can we pull people out.

Some of you need to cut off your friends until you are strong enough to reach them.

### *A Legacy of Faithfulness*

Are you faithful in all your business? Are you faithful in keeping your word? Are you faithful at home, at work, at church, and at play? Do you keep your word? A person who abides in God's presence has a predictability and faithfulness as part of their reputation. We keep our word. If you are lacking there repent, and be enriched by God's presence.

15:4b | ...who swears to his own hurt and does not change...

A person of integrity fulfills their promises. Being true to one's word, especially when doing so is costly (in terms of money, convenience, physical welfare, etc.) is a core characteristic of the integrity of a child of God. Simple things can disrupt our fellowship with God.

- Do you show up to your appointments on time?
- Do you keep your promises with people?
- Be careful what you say yes to. Don't just say yes to please people. A righteous person wants to please God.
- A godly person is reliable. If you say you are going to be somewhere, be there. If you sign up for a ministry commitment, keep that commitment. Keep your word no matter what.
- If you don't keep your word, people are not going to respect you or take you seriously. If you don't take your word seriously, it shows you don't take your walk with God seriously.

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## 3. HOW'S YOUR WEALTH? (15:5).

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How is your wealth? Are you truly fit for fellowship? Are you the one ready to surrender all to Jesus? That's the cost of fellowship? Have you surrendered your wealth to God? "**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**" (Mt 6:21). How you spend your money tells me where you are in your fellowship with God. Are you fit for

fellowship? How's your wealth. Look at verse 5. The Spirit-filled believer doesn't give out money in order to get it. He's a generous person.

15:5 | ... 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.

### ARE YOU GENEROUS WITH MONEY?

15:5a | ... who does not put out his money at interest...

The one who dwells in God's presence isn't overly concerned about God's provision for him. He gives to the Lord first, and then the Lord provides. We don't give to get. That's what interest is all about. We give to the Lord first and then we give to others freely.

#### *We Give to the Lord First*

The Spirit-filled man or woman is generous. He doesn't have lend his money with interest. Even the **Old Testament people tithed to the Lord**, and the Lord blessed them. If they got a blessing from putting the Lord first, how much more should we get a greater blessing?

### SLIDE

Malachi says to the Lord's people: "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it" (Mal 3:10). How many of you know of the blessing of giving to the Lord first?

### SLIDE

If you are giving first to the Lord, you will not be tempted to get money in a greedy or deceitful manner. We are called to give sacrificially, **trusting the Lord** with our wealth. "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Lk 6:38).

#### *We Give Freely to Others*

A Spirit-filled man or woman is blessed by the Lord, and so the Lord gives so much blessing we are able to give freely to others. We don't give to get: that's what interest is. We give not wanting to receive anything in return.

When you live in God's presence, you realize money is just that: it's money. Use it for the kingdom. Give to those in need. You don't give to get. You give to help others. Let your treasure reflect your heart for Jesus. What is money in comparison to the Cross of Jesus? What is earthly treasure compared to his compassionate sacrifice of his own body and blood on our behalf?

### SLIDE

*We Remember Jesus' Generosity*

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9).

Are you walking consistently in God's presence? If so, you'll be generous to the needs of others.

**SLIDE****ARE YOU HONORABLE WITH MONEY?**

15:5b | ... who... does not take a bribe against the innocent.

How do you get your money? The one lives in God's presence will not handle money dishonestly. A Spirit-filled person cannot be bought. There's an honesty and compassion that **looks out for the innocent**. If you are in a position of power, do you misuse your authority when it comes to money.

- Maybe you don't take bribes, but do you gamble to get money?
- You may not take bribes, but do you give first to the Lord and his local church? Do you let Satan rob you of the blessing of generosity to God's kingdom?
- Are you trusting the Lord with your finances, walking by faith? When's the last time God worked a financial miracle on your behalf? So many times when we refuse to give generously with our finances, he cannot entrust us with his money to disburse. “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much” (Lk 16:10).

We must be honorable with our finances. We can't short change others or the Lord.

PRO 3:9:10 | Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; <sup>10</sup> then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

**SLIDE****ARE YOU STABLE WITH YOUR MONEY?**

The Bible says something about someone who honors God with their money and with their whole life.

15:5c | ...He who does these things shall never be moved.

*Giving is from the Heart*

A heart controlled by God will never be moved. Moved from what? Most likely, the promise is that this individual will never cease to “sojourn” in God's “tent” or fail to “dwell” on God's “holy hill”. You see, giving has to be from the heart. It can't be because someone tells you to give. You have to do what you do in order to dwell in God's tent. It's honoring to God to be stable with your money. Put God first, and he will bring you stability.

**SLIDE**

## *You Must Love God Above Money*

My Bible still says, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you” (Mt 6:33). Are you consistently seeking God first above all things? You cannot imagine you will experience God’s presence if you love money, or anything more than God.

### SLIDE

You cannot serve two masters.

**MATTHEW 6:24** | No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

If you love God above money, when you lose your money (or whatever your idol is), you are going to be like sinking sand. But if you love God above all, you’ll never be moved. The idea is: “God’s child shall never be moved for all ages.” The man who lives according to the dictates of Psalm 15 will be God’s guest, assured of a permanent welcome.<sup>8</sup> You are fit for fellowship now, and for all ages!

### **Conclusion: Big Hugs**

As children of God we don’t just say Christ is Lord with our lips. We live Christ as Lord with our lives.

### *Big Hugs*

I heard the story recently of Linda, a young woman, was traveling alone up the rutted and rugged highway from Alberta, Canada to the Yukon. Linda didn't know you don't travel to Whitehorse alone in a rundown Honda Civic, so she set off where only four-wheel drives normally venture. The first evening she found a room in the mountains near a summit and asked for a 5 A.M. wakeup call so she could get an early start. She couldn't understand why the clerk looked surprised at that request, but as she awoke to early-morning fog shrouding the mountain tops, she understood.

Not wanting to look foolish, she got up and went to breakfast. Two truckers invited Linda to join them, and since the place was so small, she felt obliged. “Where are you headed?” one of the truckers asked.

“Whitehorse.”

“In that little Civic? No way! This pass is **dangerous** in weather like this.”

“Well, I'm determined to try,” was Linda's gutsy, if not very informed, response.

“Then I guess we're just going to have to hug you,” the trucker suggested.

Linda drew back. “There's no way I'm going to let you touch me!”

“Not like *that!*” the truckers chuckled. “We'll put one truck in front of you and one in the rear. In that way, we'll get you through the mountains.”

All that foggy morning Linda followed the two red dots in front of her and had the reassurance of a big escort behind as they made their way safely through the mountains.

<sup>8</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring Psalms 1–88: An Expository Commentary*, vol. 1, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Ps 15:5b.

Caught in the fog in our dangerous passage through life, we need to be “hugged.” With a heavenly Father who knows the way and can lead safely ahead of us, and with his presence behind us and all around us, encouraging us along, we, too, can pass safely through life. We need to stay close to him, or we will not be fit for fellowship.