

“He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend; In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the LORD; He swears to his own hurt and does not change;”
Psalm 15:3-4

Guess What I Heard!

Integrity - Psalm 15 – Interpersonal Integrity

“I want to share a prayer request with you.”

Have you heard someone start out this way before? They begin to tell you, but it is hard to find the prayer request and easy to find gossip, slander, and degrading comments. Oh sure, the person being talked about needs prayer, but a prayer request mentioned is different from an opinion shared.

When was the last time you shared something that could be labeled as gossip?

Interpersonal integrity begins with what we say about others.

Psalm 15 as a whole deals with the marks of a genuinely godly person, a true worshipper. David shows us that the genuine believer has a life of inner personal integrity. But while this issue is crucial, it is not enough. In fact, you may be one who in your own thinking, you're a godly person, one who can really do business with God in that private prayer closet, but if you cannot make integrity work in your dealings with other people then you are fooling yourself. In reality, if your integrity does not carry over to interpersonal relationships, then perhaps it is even worthless.

In Psalm 15:3 David describes the person of integrity as one who “does not slander with his tongue”. In Ephesians 4:29, Paul talks about the importance of Godly communication. According to this verse, our words are supposed to be words that edify, or build up, are fit for the moment, and that minister grace to the hearers. Sometimes ungodly communication is comical, but even then it can be very harmful; in fact most of the time it is.

Have you used humor to slander someone? Why did you use it?

Interpersonal integrity is not only seen in what we say about others, but how we act toward others. In verse 3b, the genuine worshipper-of-God believer does no "evil to his neighbor." From the Hebrew, this phrase literally means that the true believer has no place for retaliation or revenge. He lets God do his job of judging.

When was the last time you wanted retaliate? Why?

Interpersonal integrity is also shown through how we respond to others. Look at the end of verse 3. The person who really knows God will not take up a reproach against his friend. What does this mean? Simply

*"Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear."
Ephesians 4:29*

that he will not even listen to malicious words or to the casting of blame or guilt on another neighbor, or friend, or brother, or sister. We are responsible for our integrity even when we are the passive party in an interaction.

How have your responses and reactions to others reflected (or not reflected) godly integrity?

Don't worry about being rude if you need to step away. It is better to upset a gossip than lose a friend.

The final area of interpersonal integrity is very important and relevant in our lives. Interpersonal integrity is seen in how we associate with others, including whom we choose to associate with.

Notice the beginning of Psalm 15:4, "In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord." Now notice the word reprobate. Reprobate means a vile person, a person with no moral standards, a morally depraved person, one who has no respect for the things of God. This word speaks especially of those who know about God but have turned away and are doing their own thing and encourage others to rebel against God. Romans 1 gives a clear description of a reprobate (Romans 1:28-32).

The man of integrity makes his estimation of people not according to their wealth, fame and fortune, or popularity. He has no concern for the lifestyles of the rich and famous. Psalm 15:4 tells us that a man or woman of integrity bases their estimation of people on one standard.

They honor, elevate, and associate closely with those who genuinely fear and reverence God. No politics involved!

And in contrast to them, no matter how popular the person is, no matter how much fortune and fame the person has, no matter what kind of following the person has; no matter how good looking the person is, etc., if the person shows no respect for the things of God, but does his own thing, that person is not the hero or associate of the true worshipper of God.

Notice in verse 4 what a genuine worshipper who really knows God does; He honors, which literally means to make honorable, to lift up, to elevate, to esteem highly, those who fear the Lord (or reverence God).

Who are your heroes?

Now look back at this list. Are they the people who honor the Lord whether famous or not, well-known or obscure?

And secondly, and as important, who are your close, intimate associates and friends?

"Do not be deceived:
'Bad company
corrupts good
morals.'"
1 Corinthians 15:33

Are these people ones who reverence God, or those who are doing their own thing?

You may be saying, "What's the significance? Does it really matter?"
Yes, you become like those you closely associate with (1 Corinthians 15:33, Proverbs 13:20).

For true worshippers there is great hope. The #1 book they are reading, the Bible, will literally transform their minds; their most intimate friend, Jesus, is capable and committed to daily transforming their lives.

And friends of Jesus will be their friends. That's who our ultimate hero should be. You can spend time with Him. How awesome! Are you? You can pray to Him! Are you?

By definition of these areas which we have discussed today, are you a genuine worshipper of God? Do you possess interpersonal integrity or are there some specific areas that you need to change?

Next time you think you hear gossip, don't wait to find out, just walk away.

You lose nothing by leaving, but you could lose integrity by staying.

Is it really worth it?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?
