



Empowering People to Change the World

**The Marks of Integrity
Psalm 15
Steve Holt**

This morning I want to open with one of the great and earliest creeds of The Church, The Apostles' Creed.

“The ecclesiastical use of Latin *symbolum* for "creed"—in the sense of "a distinctive mark of Christians," first occurs around the middle of the 3rd century, in the correspondence of [St. Cyprian](#) and [St. Firmilian](#), the latter in particular speaking of the [trinitarian formula](#) as the "Symbol of the [Trinity](#)," and recognizing it as an integral part of the rite of [baptism](#). The term *Symbolum Apostolicum* appears for the first time in a letter, probably written by [Ambrose](#), from a Council in [Milan](#) to [Pope Siricius](#) in about AD 390. "Let them give credit to the Symbol of the Apostles. Ambrose's term is here referring to the [Old Roman Creed](#), the immediate predecessor of what is now known as the Apostles' Creed. The narrative of this creed having been jointly created by the Apostles, with each of the twelve contributing one of twelve articles, was already current at that time.”

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day He rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of the saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Eight Marks of Integrity

Psalm 15

Psalm 15 is quite short, only 5 verses, but it is power packed with foundational truth. David had been around many people; he warred and worked with so many different types of people. And in our Psalm, he is giving us “the marks of integrity,” what he has seen as the characteristics of a man, a woman of integrity.

- Many people call themselves “Christians,” and many people in America “go to church;” but whom are those we can truly trust?
- How can we tell those who use the name *Christian* and those who are truly *Christ disciples*?
- How can we know those who *go to church* and those who are *the church*?
- In business, whom do you trust? What kind of people do you need to be looking for?
- What kind of friends should you keep? We all know that people you hang out with define your life.
- In a recent study, they found that you can determine within 80% accuracy a person’s success by looking at the success of the people they consider friends.
- If I were looking for the best check list for staff and leadership at The Road, I would be hard pressed to find a better list than Psalm 15.

Verse 1

- David is not asking the question of whom he can hang out with, but whom, what kind of person, can God hang with? Who can dwell in God’s presence? Who is it that can enjoy God’s friendship? Who can be around God, and God wants to be around them?
- This is the question: with what kind of person does God like to have a friendship?

Psalm 5:4-7

**“For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness,
Nor shall evil dwell with You.
The boastful shall not stand in Your sight;
You hate all workers of iniquity.
You shall destroy those who speak falsehood;
The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.
But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your
mercy;
In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.”**

Verse 2a

- God is looking for men and women, “who walk uprightly” in their affairs.

New American Standard: “who walks with integrity”

English Standard Version: “blamelessly”

- Integrity doesn’t mean sinless, but it does describe a Jesus follower who “sins less.”
- It has the meaning of wholeness, completeness, sound.

Cambridge English Dictionary: Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles that you refuse to change.

- Integrity is living by God’s standards, whether seen or unseen.
- Who we are when everyone is looking is the same as who we are when no one’s looking.

Eight Marks of a Person of Integrity

Verse 2b

1st Mark: A Person of Righteous Dealings with People

- They are good with people and work to have right relationships with all people. People of integrity keep right relationships as much as they can.

- The emphasis is in “doing” the right thing. “Works righteousness.” Not just talking a good talk, but doing what is right!
- Doing what is lawful; doing what is righteous is eminently pleasing to God.
- Being honest and good toward people in private and public brings pleasure to God.

Proverbs 11:1

**“Dishonest scales are an abomination to the Lord,
But a just weight is His delight.”**

Proverbs 20:10

**“Diverse weights and diverse measures,
They are both alike, an abomination to the Lord.”**

What is so horrible as to be called *an abomination to the Lord*?

- The writer is referencing an ancient practice of unscrupulous merchants who would weigh out a purchase, let’s say five pounds of sugar. The merchant would place on one side of the scale a stone supposedly weighing five pounds. He would then pour out the sugar until the scales were balanced evenly. In point of fact, the merchant was only using a stone that weighed four pounds, thus cheating the person out of a pound of sugar. Such deceitfulness was and is an abomination to the Lord.
- God is concerned with the little things no less than the big things in our life. It might be stunning to us to realize that God views things in our life as either an abomination or a delight.

Verse 2c

2nd Mark: A Person Who Speaks Truth in One’s Heart

- That is to say there is a correspondence between what we say to ourselves in our heart and how we act.

Proverbs 23:7, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”

- Meaning that as one thinks, one speaks in his heart, so he becomes. The person doesn't resort to hypocrisy, feigned praise, or flattery.

Ephesians 4:29

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

- When you speak, you speak with truth!

Verse 3a

3rd Mark: A Person Who Does Not Slander Others

- The word “slander” literally means to “spy out,” which means the person goes looking for things, spying out things, to use against someone.

Verse 3b

4th Mark: A Person Who Is Not a Gossip

- Both sentences are related—not taking up evil against someone and doesn't listen to gossip about someone. They are one in the same.
- The point is the person of integrity will not contribute to slander, listen to gossip, or do any evil against someone.
- Charles Spurgeon once said, “If there were no gratified hearers of ill-reports, there would be an end of the trade of speaking them.”

Verse 4a

5th Mark: A Person Who Gives No Esteem to the Vile, but Honors the Godly

- A person of integrity doesn't esteem vile people. A vile person is one who is unrepentant of their sins and hardened in doing perverse things.

- Whom do you admire? God admires the persons who fear Him and love Him. And so should we.
- What would happen if we all ceased to admire, honor, or reward or give special privileges to the vile people of this world—in business, sports, and politics?

Verse 4b

6th Mark: A Person Who Keeps Promises Even if It Hurts

- The NIV reads, “*Who keeps an oath even when it hurts.*”
- In other words, honor is more important than one’s wallet.
- Integrity has no price tag. This is a person who is willing to sacrifice financially or physically to do the right thing, to be honest.
- Sam Storms writes, “One will never know if what motivates you is moral conviction or moral convenience until you are forced to suffer loss for standing your ground or keeping your word.”

Verse 5a

7th Mark: A Person Who Doesn’t Take Interest on Borrowed Money

- The primary aim of this Old Testament legislation was to protect the poor. It was motivated by compassion.
- The purpose of making loans in our world is to make money, to develop industry, to expand capital.
- But for an Israelite to charge interest on a loan made to a fellow Israelite was to aggravate the crisis that had produced the need, driving him into further debt.

Verse 5b

8th Mark: A Person Who Won’t Take a Bribe

- Often the poor were taken to court, and the wealthy could bribe the judge to get off.
- A person of integrity just won't do that.

And what profit does a person of integrity derive? It often seems the people who lie, cheat, and manipulate the system get off scot-free. And the person who is honest, loving, kind, and caring gets the short end of the stick.

Verse 5c

A person who lives with integrity is immovable, unshakeable!

- They are immovable and unshakeable from the tent of the Lord.
- They will never lose the presence of God.