

Nation's Decline in Moral Conduct VII

Psalm 15: "Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?"

These two questions should be a continual reminder to our personal conduct and walk in life. The godly should always be aware of the consequences of one's conduct. The apostle Paul stated that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man" (in 1 Corinthians 2:14-15).

As David reveals the fifth negative characteristic, he states that the man who will "sojourn in thy tabernacle," and "dwell in thy holy hill" is he that does not take "reward against the innocent."

The Law of Moses was explicit when it came to the matter of bribery. Moses said, "Thou shalt not wrest the justice due to thy poor in his cause. Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked. And thou shalt take no bribe: for a bribe blindeth them that have sight, and perverteth the words of the righteous" (Exodus 23:6-8). Bribes do two things: they blind them that have sight, and pervert the words of the righteous.

As noted by Moses, injunctions against bribery may best be seen among judges and magistrates, for Moses said, "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, according to thy tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. Thou shalt not wrest justice: thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a bribe; for a bribe doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee" (Deuteronomy 16:18-20). Though such may be the case, all who desire to sojourn in the tabernacle of Jehovah, or dwell in Jehovah's holy hill, must take great care not to sell out their neighbor.

When dealing with others, remember the words of the Prophet Amos, as he pronounced judgment against the leaders of Israel, and the house of Joseph, saying, "They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not

drink the wine thereof. For I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins--ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate from their right. Therefore he that is prudent shall keep silence in such a time; for it is an evil time. Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate: it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph” (Amos 5:10-13). As we endeavor to be found in Jehovah’s favor, ask yourself the question, “do I wrest justice through bribery?” ret