

Nation's Decline in Moral Conduct XII

The answers to David's questions, "Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" should be of great value to any seeking to do the same. David outlined negative, as well as positive characteristics that will create in the reader a soul searching. As we consider David's fifth positive characteristic, let us not lose sight of our own condition.

Our consideration appeals to the last of the "positive" characteristics of those who sojourn in Jehovah's tabernacle, who dwell in His holy hill, namely he "That sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not."

This type of person is true to his promises and vows. The "Preacher" said, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou vowest. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands?" (Ecclesiastes 5:4-6). In like manner, Moses said, "When thou shalt vow a vow unto Jehovah thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it: for Jehovah thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee, but if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe and do; according as thou hast vowed unto Jehovah thy God, a freewill-offering, which thou hast promised with thy mouth" (Deuteronomy 23:21-23).

What we say and what we do carries a great weight before Jehovah. Solomon set forth two principles concerning the tongue, when he said, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not transgression; but he that refraineth his lips doeth wisely" (Proverbs 10:19), and "Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof" (Proverbs 18:21). When the Apostle Peter wrote concerning the use of the tongue, quoting the Psalmist, he said, "For, He that would love life, And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips that they speak no guile: And let him turn away from evil, and do good; Let him seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And his ears unto their supplication: But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil" (1 Peter 3:10-12). Can it be said of you, he "sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not"?

The Psalmist, David, concluded his evaluation of those who will sojourn in Jehovah's tabernacle, who dwell in Jehovah's holy hill with these words, "He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

The man who is upright, just, honest and truthful, who treats his neighbor properly and does not slander or reproach him, nor receives such against him, the man who properly regards the righteous and the wicked and responds accordingly, the man who is faithful to an engagement even though it proves to be against his own interest, the man who does not take advantage of the necessities of others nor, if a magistrate, takes a bribe to induce him to condemn the innocent, that man will sojourn, and dwell in the dwelling of Jehovah.

Are we true to our own selves? If so, we will be mindful of every aspect of life: "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37). ret