

Nation's Decline in Moral Conduct IV

In Psalm 15, David began to ask and answer two questions regarding characteristics essential to a man's acceptance before God: "Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" Our previous article considered the first of David's negative answers, i.e., characteristics an individual should not have: "He that slandereth not with his tongue." In this article we will continue to address David's second negative answers: "Nor doeth evil to his friends."

Israel was warned about following a multitude to do evil in Exodus 23:2-3. There are numerous occasions in our society to get caught up in the evil actions of others. Recent events throughout our nation have given rise to protests that result in the pillage and plunder of neighborhood businesses that had absolutely nothing to do with events that generated the hostility: buildings were either burned to the ground or their contents looted. There is no other way to describe such actions except as doing evil to a friend.

In the religious realm, Christians are warned about suffering as an evil-doer. The Apostle Peter said, "If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you. For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters: but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (1 Peter 4:14-16).

The scriptures also warn the children of God that even if they do no evil, they will be charged as doing evil. The Apostle Peter said, "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God" (1 Peter 2:11-16).

As you strive to be found in Jehovah's favor, ask yourself the question, "How do I treat my friends?"

When revealing a Messianic Prophecy relative to the coming of the Lord, David said, "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; Then I could have borne it: Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; Then I

would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, My companion, and my familiar friend. We took sweet counsel together; We walked in the house of God with the throng” (Psalms 55:12-14). Have you ever reproached a familiar friend? ret