

Digging Deeper: The Greater Meaning of Psalm 15:3

Saturday, October 3, 2026

*“He does not slander with his tongue,
He does nothing bad to his neighbor,
And he does not defame his friends.”
(Psalm 15:3)*

Psalm 15 asks who may be a guest in Jehovah’s tent. Verse 3 answers in part by describing how that guest treats others with his words. The day’s text reminds us that slander can ruin a reputation, and that even sharing negative speculation about a fellow believer can defame a friend.

1 “He Does Not Slander”: Going About With Harmful Talk (רָגַל, *ragal*)

The Hebrew verb רָגַל (*ragal*) is related to the word for “foot.” It can mean to go about, and in this verse it describes someone who goes about as a talebearer—passing on talk that hurts. Jehovah’s guest refuses that path. He does not use his tongue to spread what is false or damaging.

God’s Law put the same principle in plain terms: “You must not go around spreading slander among your people.” (Leviticus 19:16) James later wrote that if a man “does not keep a tight rein on his tongue,” his worship is futile. (James 1:26)

- Guarding our speech is not optional politeness. It is part of remaining welcome as Jehovah’s guest.

2 “Nothing Bad to His Neighbor”: Protecting Those Near Us (רֵעַ, *rea’*)

The word רֵעַ (*rea’*) means a neighbor, companion, or fellow. It points to the people we live and serve alongside—not distant strangers. Psalm 15:3 says Jehovah’s guest “does nothing bad” to that person. Harm is not only physical. Gossip, unfair criticism, and careless sharing of private matters can wound a neighbor deeply.

Paul urged Christians: “Let a rotten word not come out of your mouth, but only what is good for building up as the need may be.” (Ephesians 4:29) Before we speak about someone, we can ask whether our words would protect them or hurt them.

- Love for our neighbor shows up in what we refuse to say, as well as in what we choose to say.

3 “He Does Not Defame His Friends”: Refusing to Lift Up Shame (חֶרְפָּה *cherpah*)

The Hebrew noun חֶרְפָּה (*cherpah*) means reproach, disgrace, or shame. The verse pictures a person who will not “take up” that shame against someone close to him. The New World Translation footnote also renders “defame” as “shame.” Spreading a bad report—even when we are only guessing—can put shame on a friend that Jehovah never asked us to carry.

The day’s comment gives clear examples: a sister leaves full-time service, a couple leaves Bethel, or a brother is no longer an elder or ministerial servant. Speculating about why and sharing that opinion

can defame them. There may be reasons we do not know, and a guest in Jehovah's tent "does not defame his friends."

- Loyalty means giving fellow believers the benefit of the doubt and keeping quiet when we do not have the facts.

Key Spiritual Reflections

- **Check My Tongue:** Before I repeat something about another person, is it true, kind, and necessary—or could it damage their good name? (Psalm 15:3; Leviticus 19:16)
- **Protect My Neighbor:** If I hear news about a change in someone's assignment or service, do I refuse to speculate and refuse to pass along guesses? (Ephesians 4:29)

- **Honor Friendship:** Would the person I'm talking about feel safe if they overheard me? Am I acting like a guest in Jehovah's tent? (Psalm 15:1, 3; James 1:26)