

# Proverbs 15:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD:  
but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

## Analysis

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God's moral preferences are stark: 'The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is his delight.' Even religious activity (sacrifice) is 'abomination' (Hebrew 'toebah'—detestable) when offered by the wicked. This echoes Samuel's rebuke: 'to obey is better than sacrifice' (1 Samuel 15:22). Reformed theology emphasizes that external religion without heart transformation is worthless. Meanwhile, the 'prayer of the upright' (Hebrew 'yashar'—straight/righteous) delights God—Hebrew 'ratson' means pleasure or acceptance. God desires righteousness, not empty ritual.

## Historical Context

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Israel's sacrificial system could become empty ritualism divorced from covenant faithfulness. Prophets consistently condemned sacrifices offered without justice, mercy, and genuine devotion (Isaiah 1:11-17, Amos 5:21-24).

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. Do you engage in religious activities while harboring unconfessed sin or unrighteousness?
2. What is the state of your heart in worship—genuine devotion or empty ritual?
3. How does this verse challenge you to examine the authenticity of your spiritual practices?

## Interlinear Text

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וְתִפְלַל תְּ בָחָר שְׁעִים תְּשׁׁׁעַב תְּ בָחָר יְהִי הָאֱלֹהִים  
The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD but the prayer  
H2077 H7563 H8441 H3068 H8605

רְצָנָן יְשָׁרִים  
of the upright is his delight  
H3477 H7522

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 15:29** (Prayer): The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

**Proverbs 21:27** (Sacrifice): The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

**1 Chronicles 29:17** (Parallel theme): I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.

**Jeremiah 6:20** (Sacrifice): To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.

**Proverbs 28:9** (Prayer): He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

**Isaiah 61:8** (Sacrifice): For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

**Ecclesiastes 5:1** (Sacrifice): Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

**John 4:24** (Parallel theme): God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

**Isaiah 66:3** (Sacrifice): He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

**Psalms 17:1** (Prayer): Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.