

The background features a repeating pattern of organic, watercolor-style shapes in three colors: a deep navy blue, a warm terracotta brown, and a soft, dusty rose pink. The shapes are scattered across the white background, creating a textured and artistic feel. A central white rectangular box contains the title text.

D W E L L I N G

WITH GOD AS OUR SOURCE OF PEACE

Getting Started

Overview of the Week:

Our theme for the week is dwelling with God as our source of peace. This week, as with last week, our primary focus is application. Our goal is to apply what we have been learning about the Lord in our previous weeks of study.

How Do I Prepare?

This week, we're going to look at only one psalm: Psalm 23. We will study it for 4 days, and, as always, on day 5, you will have the opportunity to reflect on the studies. You will then dig into this passage on your own using PERCH on Day 5.

Memory Verse of the Week:

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalm 23:6).

On the next page, write or “Scripture doodle” your memory verse.

Prayer of the Week:

On the next page, write out a prayer to the Lord, committing yourself to Him in times of good and times of bad. Use Psalm 23 to guide you as you write this prayer.

Songs of the Week:

“Broken Bones,” Travis Agnew; “Valleys Fill First,” Caedmon’s Call; “The Ninety and the Nine,” Andrew Peterson; “Raise a Hallelujah,” Bethel Music; “Psalm 23,” Brooklyn Tabernacle Choice (feat. Shane and Shane) Link to playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3BEh5j9yeffgIo4EbmvRqW>

Scan the QR code to go directly to the playlist on Spotify.



Week Ten Memory Verse:

Week Ten Prayer:

Day One: Psalm 23: Contentment in Our Shepherd

1. Pray

Before we begin reading and examining God's Word, let's ask the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word.

2. Examine

This week, we'll look at Psalm 23 everyday. Go ahead and read Psalm 23 in its entirety before moving on.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.

³ He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (ESV)

The Context:

Psalm 23 is probably the most well known and most loved Psalm, if not passage of Scripture, in the entire Bible. In *Treasury of David*, Charles Spurgeon quotes American minister and abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher on this passage: “It has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world. It has remanded to their dungeon more felon thoughts, more black doubts, more thieving sorrows, than there are sands on the sea-shore. It has comforted the noble host of the poor. It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick, of captives in dungeons, of widows in their pinching griefs, of orphans in their loneliness. Dying soldiers have died easier as it was read to them; ghastly hospitals have been illuminated; it has visited the prisoner, and broken his chains, and, like Peter’s angel, led him forth in imagination, and sung him back to his home again. It has made the dying Christian slave freer than his master, and consoled those whom, dying, he left behind mourning, not so much that he was gone, as because they were left behind, and could not go, too.”

The exact context of the psalm is unknown, but some have speculated that David wrote it while fleeing from his son Absalom. The psalm is best classified as a song of confidence, meant to encourage its hearers and readers to trust God during difficult times. This short psalm is written in 4 stanzas, with verses 1-3 as the first, verse 4 as the second, verse 5 as the third, and verse 6 as the fourth and final stanza. God Himself is the focal point of the entire psalm, as evidenced by the *inclusio* found in the first and last verse: David begins with “The Lord” and ends with “the Lord.” Thus, it is clear that the benefits received from this psalm are found only in fixating our minds and hearts upon Almighty God.

The psalm uses the metaphor of God as the Good Shepherd, an idea that is seen throughout the Scriptures. David sets up this metaphor of God as the shepherd and David (or all of God’s children) as sheep in the very first verse. David’s reflection upon God as the Good Shepherd allows Him to be content and at peace.

A shepherd tends his sheep day and night, guarding them from danger, feeding them, caring for them, and seeking after them when they stray away. David knew very well what it looked like to be a shepherd because he grew up tending his father's sheep. David himself, though only a boy, protected his father's sheep from wild animals such as bears and lions. He put himself in between the sheep and danger in order to ensure their safe keeping. He brought them to green pastures to graze and led them to fresh waters to drink from. And this is the image that David paints for us of God in this passage. As David reflects on God being His shepherd, he realizes that he is content and lacks nothing, for God as shepherd is a good caretaker and tender of David, his sheep.

Something crucial to note about the first verse of this psalm is that it depicts an intimate connection between God and David. He doesn't merely say that God is a shepherd; he calls God "my shepherd," showing that God closely and intimately watches over David in a personal way.

This statement of "I shall not want," as pointed out by David Guzik, is "both a declaration and a decision." David declares that He lacks nothing because all of His needs are supplied by God. He is making a declarative, truthful statement of fact. At the same time, though, David is deciding to be content with whatever the Lord supplies. David saying "I shall not want" means, "I decide to not desire more than what the LORD, my shepherd gives" (Guzik).

Day Two: Psalm 23, The Restoration of Our Souls

1. Pray

Before we begin reading and examining God's Word, let's ask the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word.

2. Examine

As we continue studying how to dwell with God as our source of peace, we'll return to Psalm 23. Read this psalm again in its entirety before moving on.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.

³ He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (ESV)

The Context:

“He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters” (Psalm 23:2, ESV). Note the way that David writes these verses. He doesn’t say God allows Him to occasionally go to green pastures or that He watches as David goes to find some water to drink. Rather, he says that God *makes* Him lie down in green pastures and that He *leads* Him beside still waters, showing that God desires good things for His children.

In *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, Phillip Keller explains that sheep are reticent to lie down and rest. In fact, he mentions that they will only do so if four conditions are met: they must be free from fear of predators, be at peace with one another, be free from the annoyances of flies and parasites, and be filled and satiated from hunger. So, David’s comment that a shepherd must *make* the sheep lie rings true.

David draws on this analogy of sheep being made to lie down because followers of God must be made to do the same thing. Everyone requires rest, but all too often, we do not stop and take the time to actually rest for a myriad of reasons. Perhaps it is that we, too, are in fear of predators and so cannot be at peace enough to lie down and rest. At other times, we may have a conflict between us and another that is causing us to have difficulty genuinely being at rest. Or perhaps we are bothered by small frustrations and bothers of life. Or maybe we, like sheep, are simply hungry and in need of sustenance. Whatever the reason, we, too, oftentimes refuse to stop and rest and must rely on the Shepherd to force us to do what is best for us.

The image that David draws here is one of rest and refreshment, of restoration, that God alone can provide. But this rest and refreshment isn’t just a sense of serenity. Rather, God is leading David in “paths of righteousness for [God’s] name’s sake” (Ps 23:3, ESV). There is a greater purpose behind David’s rest and refreshment and that is to bring glory to God’s name.

Reflection and Application

I find it especially interesting that David writes that God “makes” us lie down in green pastures. I’m not sure about you, but one of the things I fight against the most is rest. I often feel incomplete and unworthy unless I’ve worked myself to almost the point of breaking. I think I do this because I want to feel “good enough” on my own. Time and time again, though, the Scriptures show that there is nothing we can do, no amount of work we can complete, that will make us good enough before the Lord. While initially this may be disheartening, it shouldn’t be. Rather, because of the work Christ has done for us on the cross, we are not required to have righteousness of our own but are bestowed freely with Christ’s righteousness. What a beautiful and marvelous gift that we in no way deserve! This truth should fill us with peace and should encourage us to allow our souls to find their much-needed rest and refreshment in Christ, our Good Shepherd.

1. What is the state of your soul today? Is it refreshed in God, or are you in need of restoration?

Day Three: Psalm 23: Walking with God through the Valley of the Shadow of Death

1. Pray

Before we begin reading and examining God's Word, let's ask the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word.

2. Examine

We return again to Psalm 23 as we seek to dwell with God as our sources of peace. Read the whole of Psalm 23 to begin the day.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.

³ He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (ESV)

The Context:

The imagery in verse 4 stands in sharp contrast to that in the preceding verses. We go from a scene full of serenity with pictures of green pastures and still, refreshing waters to “the valley of the shadow of death” (Psalm 23:4, ESV). This shift in imagery, however, is not the only significant shift that we see in the psalm. Note the personal pronouns David uses for God in verses 1-3; they are all “He.” Beginning in verse 4, however, David changes them to “you.”

As David enters into this valley of difficulty, the intimacy He has with God intensifies. David here is talking directly to God rather than talking about Him. John Piper comments on this shift in pronoun usage: “I think the switch to the more intimate ‘you’ precisely when he enters the valley of the shadow of death is a universal experience among God’s people, indeed among all men in one form or another. The crises of life draw us closer to God. We are more prone to talk about God when we are in the green pasture and more prone to cry out to God when we enter some fearful ravine” (Piper). In this verse, David is in that fearful ravine, crying out to the Lord and being reassured due to His reflections on past times outside of the valley that God is with him and will remain with him throughout this valley.

Because David knows that God is present with him, that he has not been abandoned, David is able to be at peace in difficulty. It is not implied here that David is in difficulty due to sin in His life; rather, it appears he is here as a natural part of his journey through life. Valleys are a part of the human experience here in our fallen world. Without valleys, there can be no mountains, but the good news is that every valley requires two mountains. The structure of this psalm reflects this truth: David begins the psalm with words of peace, serenity, and restoration, and he ends it the same way. It is in the middle here, though, that we see him in the valley of the shadow of death.

Note the way that David describes the valley as well: he refers to it as *the shadow of death*, not death itself. Peter C. Craigie, in *The Word Biblical Commentary*, explains that this phrase could mean either “a very deep shadow” or “total darkness” (207). So, this shadow is intense and fearsome; it could even be the fear or possibility of physical danger that could bring death. Even in such severe circumstances, David understands that he has nothing to fear, for the Almighty God is with Him and is there with His “rod and His staff.” Shepherds generally carried a rod, which could be used to ward off predators, and they used their staff to guide the sheep. David’s use of these images shows us his full and complete view of the situation he is in. Yes, he is in deep, deep darkness in which most would be tempted to be anxious, likely to the point of despair. But David knows that there is more than meets the eye here. Even if he can’t see God, he knows he’s there with him. And he knows that God is working in the dark. He’s protecting David from evil and guiding David in the way he should go. He also knows that any physical death is but a shadow, as believers will go on to live eternally with God -- in a much better life than is offered here on earth.

Reflection and Application

Generally, as I've heard people talk about going in and out of times of suffering or difficulty, I've heard this description: "You're either in a storm, coming out of one, or going into one." While it is true that we do experience our fair share of suffering in this life and that God uses suffering to grow us and make us more like Him, this psalm seems to suggest a different perspective. Here, David shows that there are two mountains to every valley. Not only that, but he also points out the deep, sweet, intimate fellowship he is able to have with God while going through the valley. Even in the midst of suffering, David is able to be at peace with God and is not removed from the care and protection of his Shepherd.

1. How does knowing that valleys generally come more sparingly than mountains encourage you in your walk with the Lord?

Day Four: Psalm 23: Dwelling in the House of the Lord Forever

1. Pray

Before we begin reading and examining God's Word, let's ask the Lord to lead us in the study of His Word. Ask that the Lord would give you a grateful heart before Him today.

2. Examine

Today, we will finish our study of Psalm 23. Read this psalm once more before moving on.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.

³ He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (ESV)

The Context:

We come to the last part of Psalm 23 today, and here again, we see David showing us the beauty that comes from being in the presence of the Lord, even in the midst of great difficulty. Yesterday, we saw David going through the valley of the shadow of death. Here, he is likely still in that valley, but he is sitting down to eat with the Lord “in the presence of [his] enemies” (Psalm 23:5). Though things look dark and bleak around him, David stops to commune with his God. He allows God to anoint his head with oil, which in this verse provides a picture of God refreshing David (similar to restoring His soul, as mentioned in the first part of this psalm).

David goes on to say that his cup overflows while he sits at the table that God has prepared for him. Here, we have a picture of the overflowing hospitality God offers to His children. He has prepared a feast for David. In the midst of evil that is around him and in the midst of being pursued by his enemies, David is able to stop, to pause, to commune with God, to eat with Him and feast upon His goodness. This time of feasting restores David’s soul in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death. And God is there at the table with David.

The last verse of this psalm is one of the sweetest Scripture has to offer. Here, we see David, after being refreshed and renewed in the Lord, focusing His mind on His full, true reality. He turns his eyes to the truth that God desires goodness for His children. Even the suffering that David is experiencing is being used for His good. And he knows that God will continue to work all things for good in His life. He knows that God offers goodness and peace in the midst of strife and suffering. Thus, even in hard times, David believes that he continues to experience the goodness and mercy of God. And if he is experiencing this goodness and mercy now in the valley of the shadow of death, how much more will he experience it when he is on the mountaintop?

David ends by reminding himself of eternity: “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalm 23:6, ESV). We began with the idea of dwelling with God richly in Psalm 1 as we planted ourselves by streams of water. In week 1, we also looked at Psalm 84, which proclaimed the glorious experience of dwelling in God’s house. The psalmist declared, “For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere” (Psalm 84:10, ESV). This is the message David is sending out in verse 6 of Psalm 23. He is better off at God’s table in the presence of his enemies than any other place he could be. And regardless of where the valley led him, David knew that he had a glorious inheritance to look forward to, one filled with the presence of God where he could dwell with God day after day for eternity. It is on this truth that we must build our hope and peace.

3. David ends by proclaiming that he will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Why should this focus on eternity bring David ultimate peace?

Day Five: Week Ten Debrief & PERCH Study

Peace. There is nothing better than genuine peace, but oftentimes peace is difficult to come by. How often have you found yourself saying or thinking, “If I could just get a moment of peace!” Many times, we think we need to get through our difficult circumstances before our souls will be able to be at peace. We look to retreats, “self care,” girls night, or other special occasions to help restore our souls and to bring us peace. While all of these activities are fine and good, they cannot bring genuine, lasting peace. The peace that God offers us is found even in the midst of the everyday chaos of life. We don’t have to wait for things around us to settle down to have the peace that Christ brings. As we see here in Psalm 23, David was able to commune with God and feast at His table in the midst of fleeing for his life from his enemies. He allowed his mind to rest on eternity rather than on his present circumstances. And as a result, David was able to be at peace even though externally, it appeared as though all hope was lost.

We, too, have the opportunity to regularly experience God’s everlasting peace. This comes through allowing God to lead us in His ways rather than seeking out the ways we would perceive as best. This week, I want you to select a few verses from Psalm 1 as well as from Psalm 23 to review for your PERCH study. We have come full circle from the beginning of the study, and I want you to think about how the way of the righteous in Psalm 1 connects with the green pastures and still waters mentioned here in Psalm 23.

Debrief Week Ten Using PERCH

Choose a passage from Psalm 1 and from Psalm 23. It can be each entire psalm, or it can be a small portion of each one. If you chose a shorter passage, write out the passage below. If you choose a longer passage, choose key verses and keywords to write below.

Change: Prayerfully ask God how you can apply this passage to your life. Prayerfully consider what changes you need to make in your actions or beliefs in order to make the application of this passage to your life. Write these below.

Help: Prayerfully consider how you can help others using this passage. How can you share it with them? How can you spread the Truth of this passage to both believers and non-believers?

