

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- **Kindness/Goodness**

"I choose to do the right things in my relationship with others."

- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

Psalm 23 is certainly the best known Psalm of them all—perhaps even the best known passage of Scripture in the Bible. It evokes images and word pictures that have provided peace, comfort and hope to so many people for many thousands of years. But this week, I would invite you to not simply read these words and allow them to wash over you—though certainly you should do that. I'd invite you to inhabit these words—live in them—dig inside, poke around, try them on as you would a well-fitting piece of clothing. As you live into this Scripture, let God be your Shepherd. Allow Him to give you rest for your soul and the still waters and green pastures your heart has been longing for.

Led by Him,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

Psalm 23 (NIV)

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd,
I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,
- 3 He restores my soul.
He guides 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 love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house
of the LORD forever.

Psalm 23 (NLT)

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd;
I have everything I need.
- 2 He lets me rest in green meadows;
He leads me beside peaceful streams.
- 3 He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths,
bringing honor to His name.
- 4 Even when I walk
through the dark valley of death,
I will not be afraid,
for You are close beside me.
Your rod and Your staff
protect and comfort me.
- 5 You prepare a feast for me
in the presence of my enemies.
You welcome me as a guest,
anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.
- 6 Surely Your goodness and
unfailing love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house
of the LORD forever.

Monday

Begin your time today, asking God to enlighten your heart and mind to the truth in this passage.

Slowly read Psalm 23 several times in both the NIV (New International Version) and NLT (New Living Translation) above.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. (vs. 1)

Spend a few moments meditating on this verse.

**Read it slowly several times and ponder what each word means.

What role does a shepherd play in the life of its sheep?

How have you seen God act as a shepherd in your life recently? (Be specific.)

How have you seen God provide for your most basic needs?

Close your time today by memorizing Psalm 23:1.

Tuesday

Begin your time by thanking God for being your shepherd who provides for every need.

Read Psalm 23 slowly. Reread verses 2-3 again.

Verse 2 focuses on the analogy of a shepherd to his sheep. What does this show us about God's care for us?

A shepherd leads or guides his sheep to places of rest and quietness. Think back over the last week; how have you followed God's leading to places of rest or how have you resisted His leading?

Spend several moments sitting in quietness allowing God to *renew your strength (vs.3)*.

Memorize verses 2-3.

Close your time today by praying the end of verse 3 to God. (Ex. "Father, show me the path you have for me today, a path that is good and pure and honors your name.")

Wednesday

Think back on yesterday; how did you see God leading you in *paths of righteousness*?

Thank Him for guiding you.

Read all of Psalm 23 and then reread verse 4.

Note that David does not say, *if* I walk through the darkest valley, he says **when** I walk. Difficult times, dark valleys, are part of our spiritual journey. Think of a time when you have experienced a dark valley. What made this time difficult?

What does this Psalm promise us about God when we face difficult times?

Rewrite these verses in your own words, inserting your dark valley into the verse.

(Ex. *When I faced the painful death of my mom, I did not need to fear the evil one because God never left me. He was always with me comforting me and protecting me in my vulnerability and weakness.*)

Spend a few moments praying this verse back to God. Thank Him for not abandoning you, but for being an ever present source of help.

End your time by spending a few moments memorizing verse 4.

Thursday

Begin your time today, by reviewing the verses you have memorized so far in Psalm 23.

Read Psalm 23 through again and then reread verse 5.

What does this verse show us about how God relates to His children?

David demonstrates God's unconditional love and favor for His children through the word picture he paints in this verse – one of Him being given a feast in the presence of his enemies. This emphasizes God's acceptance of us in spite of rejection we may receive from the world.

Spend a few moments to think about the physical or material blessings that God has caused to overflow in your life. List some of these in the space below:

Spend a few moments in prayer thanking Him for His provision.

Close your time by memorizing verse 5.

Friday

Begin your time by praying Psalm 23.

Read through the whole Psalm once and then reread verse 6.

God does not just provide physical blessings, but He also provides abundant spiritual blessings.

What spiritual blessings has God given you? (Ex. *forgiveness for my failures to be obedient; salvation from the penalty of death for my sin; Holy Spirit's abiding presence.*)

What is the last promise we are given in this Psalm?

Thank God for this promise that we will dwell with Him for eternity.

End your time by memorizing verse 6 and reviewing the verses you have memorized this week.