

PSALM 23:

The Lord is my shepherd

*A six-week family
devotional from*

CHM

Christian
Healthcare
Ministries



WHAT DOES

Psalm 23

MEAN FOR MY FAMILY?

WHAT DOES *Psalm 23* MEAN FOR MY FAMILY?

God's Word transcends time, space, culture, and place. When we choose to read and discuss Scripture, our family's focus shifts towards Christ. However, between soccer practice, ballet lessons, serving in church, and late-night frozen dinners, it's challenging to make time to sit and soak in God's perfect love.

In a world of worry and built-in busyness, Psalm 23 invites us to stop, slow down, and be still in the presence of the Lord. What's more, Psalm 23 directly applies to family life. Full of metaphors, poetry, and timeless truths, it speaks equally to both family trials and triumphs. Whether your family is walking through a valley of sorrow, or peering over a joyous mountaintop peak, God is faithful to meet us in every moment as we seek His beauty (Matthew 7:7).

Over the next six weeks, you'll dive into short devotions to uncover the heart of Christ. Intentionally created for busy days and long nights, you can use these bite-sized resources to guide your weekly conversations, or even quick chats in the car. Each week, you'll find a verse to meditate on and memorize, a read-aloud devotion, age-appropriate reflection questions, and activity ideas to jumpstart your journey with Jesus. As you use these resources, our prayer is that your family draws near to the Good Shepherd. He cares for you, and your family, as His beloved sheep.

¹The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

⁴Even 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.

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

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

— Psalm 23:1-6, ESV

WEEK 1

*The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.*

PSALM 23:1, ESV

Read-aloud devotional:

Sheep are some of God's most beautiful animals. However, sheep require protection—someone to take care of them in the darkness, show them where to walk, and make sure that they get food and water for the journey ahead. That's the job of the shepherd! Good shepherds take care of their sheep and make sure they have everything they need, not just to make it through the day, but to grow strong and successful.

Here's the thing, no matter how hard they try, sheep just can't do the same job as a shepherd. They can't see danger on the road ahead, they don't know where the best grass grows, or what water sources are safest. That's why a sheep knows the sound of the shepherd's voice.

The sheep don't rely on their own knowledge or wisdom but instead trust that the shepherd knows where to lead.

Just like sheep have shepherds, we also have a Good Shepherd—Jesus Christ (John 10:11). When we seek Him, learn about Him, and remember that He provides everything we need, we start to recognize His voice. We can rest today, knowing that we don't have to worry or want for more, because the Lord is our perfect shepherd.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

■ For little ones:

- How do shepherds help their sheep?
- How does God take care of you?
- What should we pray about today?

■ For older children/teens:

- Why do you think God calls us His sheep?
- Are there areas in your life where you try to take on the job of the shepherd? What does that look like?
- How can we seek to grow closer to Jesus in this area today?

■ For adults/spouses:

- Are there any areas where you're struggling to rely on God for His provision? How can we bring those areas to Him?
- What does it mean to hear God's voice, and how does that impact our family culture?
- What matters most to Jesus in this moment?

FAMILY ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- **Spend five minutes making a prayer list as a family:** Pray together and ask God to give your family a deeper understanding of how He is our Good Shepherd.
- **Create your own mini sheep picture:** Draw the outline of a sheep on a piece of paper. Use cotton balls and a bit of glue to stick the "wool" on your sheep.

WEEK 2

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

PSALM 23:2, ESV

Read-aloud devotional:

After wandering on a dusty path, sheep quickly get weary and need nourishment. That's when a good shepherd finds grassy banks for rest and food, and quiet streams where his thirsty sheep can find water. He doesn't just let them rest, he *makes* them rest, because the shepherd knows that even sheep need their sleep. They can't walk forever, and they need a safe place to restore their weary legs.

God is a shepherd who asks us—His sheep—to rest. When we're stressed, sick, or walking through moments of sadness, God is faithful to care for our souls.

He knows exactly what we need after a scary day at school, a fight with our friends, or worries at work. He wants us to be still and know that He is in control of our lives and hearts (Psalm 46:10).

God's stillness isn't like the rest we find in the world. He wants us to find our rest by sitting and soaking in His presence. God calls us to a life of rest no matter what road we're traveling. He doesn't just want us to sleep (although that's one of His gifts, too), but rather, He wants us to live our lives knowing that He will direct our spirits towards wholeness.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

■ For little ones:

- How do sheep get their sleep?
- How does God help you rest?
- What should we pray about today?

■ For older children/teens:

- Is resting hard for you? Why or why not?
- How does God show up in our moments of stillness?
- How can we seek to grow closer to Jesus in this area today?

■ For adults/spouses:

- What is stopping you from relying on Jesus for stillness?
- How can we cultivate rhythms of rest over the next few weeks?
- What matters most to Jesus in this moment?

FAMILY ACTIVITIES:

- **Plan a prayer walk in nature:** Take a trip to a nearby park or walk around the neighborhood and pray for peace, stillness, and rest. What examples of God's goodness can you identify in nature?
- **Start a family gratitude journal:** Have each family member note one thing they're thankful for each day. At the end of each week, find five minutes to sit together and read these gratitude notes out loud. How has God shown Himself faithful during your week?

WEEK 3

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

PSALM 23:3, ESV

Read-aloud devotional:

What is righteousness? According to the dictionary, righteousness means being just, following what's true, and making good decisions. However, it's hard to make good decisions when we're under pressure, tempted to do something wrong, or even just not sure what we're supposed to do at a specific moment. That's why we need God to lead us and restore our souls.

Just like a puzzle, God takes all our broken pieces and puts them together to create a beautiful picture of His grace. He's the one who turns bad things into good things and helps us when we're suffering through trials (Romans 8:28).

When we make a bad decision or take a wrong turn, God gives us grace—favor that we don't deserve. When we come to him and share our sins, shame, and sorrow, He gives us another chance and guides us to make better choices. He redirects our paths and heals our hearts, even when we make mistakes. He's a Good Shepherd who guides the steps of His sheep.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

■ For little ones:

- Have you ever made a mistake? What happened?
- How does God help us make good choices?
- What should we pray about today?

■ For older children/teens:

- What does righteousness mean to you?
- How does living righteously change the way you make decisions?
- How can we seek to grow closer to Jesus in this area today?

■ For adults/spouses:

- What decisions are we facing as a family this week?
- When do we bring God into our decision-making process? How do we need Him to restore our souls today?
- What matters most to Jesus in this moment?

FAMILY ACTIVITIES:

- **Put together a puzzle:** Grab your favorite puzzle, or pull out a different type of puzzle, like a word search or seek-and-find activity. Discuss how God restores our broken pieces to create a mosaic of His goodness.
- **Make a family mission statement:** Pray and ask God for His direction and restoration for your family. Next, use a piece of cardstock and write out a list of "righteousness commitments" as a family—what is God calling you to prioritize first?

WEEK 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.*

PSALM 23:4, ESV

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.

PSALM 23:4, ESV

Read-aloud devotional:

It's very easy to be afraid. It's much harder to be brave. Whether it's a scary shadow under the bed, a big furry spider, a tough test at school, or a difficult nighttime news report, our fears, trials, and darkness have a way of creeping into our homes and hearts. While we might see the darkness, we can rely on Jesus to guide us in the valleys of our lives.

As our Good Shepherd, Jesus protects us. Just like a shepherd uses tools to defend his sheep against wild

animals or danger, God protects us from anything that could hurt His children. While we might still walk through tricky moments, or long stretches of sadness or pain, we can take comfort knowing that we're never alone.

God doesn't want us to be fearful of the evil or darkness in this world. In fact, we can be courageous today because of Jesus' finished work on the cross. Today, we can know that no matter what comes our way, Jesus is walking with us in every moment.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

■ For little ones:

- What happens when you're afraid?
- How does God help us when we're scared?
- What should we pray about today?

■ For older children/teens:

- What are some of the ways fear shows up in your life?
- How does walking with Jesus change the way you see a difficult "valley?"
- How can we seek to grow closer to Jesus in this area today?

■ For adults/spouses:

- What's the most stressful thing weighing on your heart today?
- How can we support each other, and find refuge in Christ, during the valleys of life?
- What matters most to Jesus in this moment?

FAMILY ACTIVITIES:

- **Make a habit of memorizing God's Word:** Select one Scripture about God's protection, peace, or deliverance from fear. As a family, commit to memorizing that verse throughout the month.
- **Let the light in:** Gather your family and choose an activity that uses light. You could make family-safe paper lanterns, catch fireflies, or even decorate candle jars. No matter which activity you choose, pray as a family and ask God to show you His light in the darkness.

WEEK 5

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

PSALM 23:5, ESV

Read-aloud devotional:

When God asks us to do something, He's faithful to give us the courage to complete it. Even when it's hard, even if people tell us we won't make it, even when we can't possibly see a way forward, God is willing and able to help us through any challenge.

God has a calling, a plan, a divine anointing, on each of our lives. He's given each of us different skills. Some of us might be great at painting, piano, or picking out new recipes to try. Others might be a cheerful encourager, a helpful handyman, or a patient parent. You might be an amazing artist, while your friend, brother, or sister has stellar soccer skills. No matter what talents you do or don't have, God is able to use you for His good purpose.

God prepares the way before us, even when difficulty surrounds our plans. Oftentimes, when we're up against a challenge, we assume that must mean it isn't in God's will for our lives. However, this isn't always true. God works on our behalf, even when we can't see it just yet. He has good plans for our lives, and we have a bright future ahead (Jeremiah 29:11). God wants us to overflow with His love, peace, and hope, so we can share Him with our friends, family, and neighbors.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

■ For little ones:

- What are you good at?
- How can we show God's love?
- What should we pray about today?

■ For older children/teens:

- What does it mean to have an anointing?
- Who are the "enemies" that stand in the way of the good things God calls you to do?
- How can we seek to grow closer to Jesus in this area today?

■ For adults/spouses:

- What are some of the ways our family is called to serve?
- How can we prioritize God's presence in this calling?
- What matters most to Jesus in this moment?

FAMILY ACTIVITIES:

- **Create a curiosity container:** Gather strips of paper and a clear jar or container. As a family, brainstorm ways you can serve your church, community, family, and world. Write each idea on a strip of paper and store it in the jar. Each month, pull out a strip of paper and explore ways to act on that area of service as a family.
- **Seek trusted mentors:** "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22, NIV). Identify people in your biblical community who can surround you with prayer, advice, and encouragement as you seek to follow God's plan for your family. Ask them to join you for dinner, coffee, or a family activity.

WEEK 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.*

PSALM 23:6, ESV

Read-aloud devotional:

When we make a call on the phone, send a text, visit a neighbor, or say “hi” to a friend at school, we’re doing one thing: connecting. When we’re connecting with the people around us, we show them that they matter, but we also build relationships. We’re *dwelling* together, doing life together, and learning more about each other.

In the same way, when we stay connected to God, we’re able to dwell in His presence. We learn from Him, we grow in our character, and we worship and serve Him for who He is: Our good and merciful Father. By staying close to

Him, we’re able to hear His heart. By staying close to Him, we’re able to serve our friends. By staying close to Him, we have access to His grace, goodness, and mercy.

As our perfect Good Shepherd, Jesus wants us to be able to hear and recognize His voice. He wants to be near us so He can shape us into the people we’re meant to become. As we learn to stick close to Him, He will guide our steps this year, and in the years to come. He delights in us, and loves us with a perfect, holy love.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

■ For little ones:

- How do you talk to God?
- How does God help us talk to our friends and family?
- What should we pray about today?

■ For older children/teens:

- What makes it challenging to dwell in the presence of God?
- What would it look like to live in communion with God this week?
- How can we seek to grow closer to Jesus in this area today?

■ For adults/spouses:

- When have we felt close to the Lord as a family?
- How can we support each other as we seek the Lord’s presence?
- What matters most to Jesus in this moment?

FAMILY ACTIVITIES:

- **Pick a prayer time:** As a family, schedule a day to set aside five minutes to dedicate in prayer to God. Bring your praises, worries, cares, and requests into His presence.
- **Build a bridge together:** Have a heart-to-heart discussion as a family about conflict resolution and communication skills. How can you invite God to help you in these moments?