

A  
*Shepherd*  
LOOKS AT  
PSALM 23

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DEVOTIONAL STUDY GUIDE

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# CHAPTER ONE

## "THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD"

Verse 1 from missionary Bob Burgess; a personal translation:

*The One Who Is Eternal, who always does what He says, is like a shepherd to me, I will never be lacking in anything that is good for me.*

List the three reasons the author gives for the legitimacy of God's ownership of us:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Read John 10. List attributes of God/Jesus that are also characteristics of a good shepherd:

What characteristics of sheep do human beings also share? Read Isaiah 53:6, John 10:1-18, Psalm 49:13-15, Psalm 119:176, Jeremiah 50:6-7, Ezekiel 34:5-6, Zechariah 10:2, Matthew 9:36

## CHAPTER TWO

# "I SHALL NOT WANT"

From Elizabeth George, "Powerful Promises for Every Woman:

"More is implied than is expressed, not only, I shall not want, but, "I shall be supplied with whatever I need; and, if I have not everything I desire, I may conclude it is either not fit for me or not good for me or I shall have it in due time."

Define the phrase "shall not want" in verse one.

What is the condition of those who are under the management of Sin and Satan?

How does the "boss" of your life change your destiny?

What characteristic do those who are surrendered to the Shepherd display?

Define a "carnal Christian" and list similarities with the sheep "Mrs. Gad-about."

Are you discontent in any area of your life? If so, write how you can surrender that to God:

## CHAPTER THREE

# "HE MAKETH ME TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES"

Verse 2 from missionary Bob Burgess; a personal translation:

*In the middle of the day He causes me to rest in lush meadows, and in the cool of the evening He leads me to still, pure waters. I am well cared for.*

What fears must sheep be free of in order to lie down?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Describe a fear that has, or is, affecting your life. What is your usual response to this fear? What advice does the author give on this subject, and how can you apply it to your circumstance?

**Read Ezekiel 34.** Make note of the particular verses that relate to Psalm 23:2. What warning does God give?

What does the author state as the remedy for jealousy and rivalry in our own human interactions?



What is the antidote available to us when we are “bugged” by something or someone?

The Old Testament account of Israel moving from Egypt to the Promised Land is a picture of us \_\_\_\_\_

From page 55, list the work Jesus does on our behalf:

Have you ever fed on the “barren ground of the world” and chosen “inferior” food? What was the result?

**From “Powerful Promises for Every Woman” by Elizabeth George**

It’s been said that there are three primary positions for handling life’s difficulties--- struggling, clinging, and resting. The classic illustration for these three positions is that of a shipwreck when people are thrown into the sea and fighting for their lives.

In the struggling position they are in the water, fighting with the waves, and are in need of help themselves. In the clinging position they are holding on to the lifeboat; they are quite safe themselves, but cannot help anyone else, because both their hands are holding on for dear life! In the resting position they are sitting in the lifeboat with both hands free to help others.

God promises to give you rest, not only for the nourishment and strength that comes to yourself, but also for what your invigorated life can do for others. The goal for every woman should be to grow beyond struggling and clinging to the position of resting in the Lord so that she is able to help others.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# "HE LEADETH ME BESIDES THE STILL WATER"

**Isaiah 49:10** *"They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat down on them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water."*

"To drink" in spiritual terminology simply means to \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_. That is to  
say it implies that a person \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the very life of  
\_\_\_\_\_ to the point where it \_\_\_\_\_.

**Three sources of water for sheep are: dew on the grass, deep wells, and springs or streams.**

What is the parallel in our Christian life to dew on the grass? What are the parallels to "deep wells" in our lives? What are the benefits to us?

Describe a time you felt you were in a deep well and the result of that experience on your walk of faith.

Why do people, like sheep, sometimes "drink from small, dirty, muddy pools" along the trail?

List some “hidden dangers” that might be present in these alternative sources we humans use to quench our thirst.

What are the consequences of our misjudgment? How do we guard against the dangers of making bad decisions?

**John 14:16-17** “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you.”

**John 15:26** “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father—He will testify about Me.”

**John 16:13-14** “But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify Me because it is from Me that He will receive what He will make known to you.”

List some of the benefits of a “Life in Christ.”



## CHAPTER FIVE

# “HE RESTORETH MY SOUL”

Verse 3 from missionary Bob Burgess; a personal translation:

*At night, when my emotions are frazzled, His presence restores strength and stability to my soul. And in the morning when He leads me out to pasture, He leads me along paths of tranquility into ways that God has ordered. And He does that not just for my sake, He does it so that people will respect who He is. It is His name and character that are at stake.*

1. Describe a “cast” or “cast down” sheep. Why is this such a serious concern for a shepherd?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What must the shepherd do to rescue a “cast” sheep? How does this parallel how Jesus treated “cast” people during His ministry on Earth?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Describe each of the three ways Christians can become cast:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_



4. **Read 1 Kings 19:4-9.** In what practical ways was Elijah restored to physical well-being? How is this account of Elijah a lesson for you?
  
5. Read Psalm 19:7, Psalm 51:12, Psalm 147:3, Isaiah 61:1, Jeremiah 3:22 & 30:17, Galatians 6:1, and I Peter 5:10. How do these verses speak to you personally regarding the aspects of physical and spiritual restoration?

**To ensure spiritual health and healing, we need to feed on the Word of God and commune with Him in prayer!**

CHAPTER SIX

# “HE LEADETH ME IN THE PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE”

1. The greatest single safeguard which a shepherd has in handling his flock is to keep \_\_\_\_\_ . Why is moving the sheep so important?
2. List the seven “fresh attitudes” we need to acquire in order to “discover: fresh pasturage; new, abundant life; and increased health, wholesomeness, and holiness” in our walk with God.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Read Proverbs 4.** List some of the specific instructions God gives us for staying on His righteous path:



4. As Christians, we know that we can count on God's help to walk in His paths of righteousness. Read John 16:13, Galatians 6:1, James 1:5, and Hebrews 13:17. What specific kinds of help are described in these verses?

5. Read Psalm 139:23-24. As the sheep of His pasture (Psalm 100:3), what can we do to guard our Shepherd's name and reputation?

From Elizabeth George, "Powerful Promises for Every Woman," quoting Barbara G. Ryberg

He does not lead me year by year  
Nor even day by day,  
But step by step my path unfolds;  
My Lord directs the way.

Tomorrow's plans I do not know,  
I only know this minute;  
But He will say, "This is the way,  
By faith now walk ye in it."

And I am glad that it is so,  
Today's enough to bear;  
And when tomorrow comes,  
His grace Shall far exceed its care.

What need to worry then or fret?  
The God who gave His Son  
Holds all my moments in His hand  
And gives them, one by one.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# "YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY..."

Verse 4 from missionary Bob Burgess; a personal translation:

*Even when I walk in places of spiritual darkness and physical violence, I have no reason to fear evil, because You are by my side.*

1. The Psalm changes at verse four. Note how and why:
  2. List the three reasons for using valleys to move the sheep to higher ground for the summer:
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_
  3. The "valley of the shadow of death" is a place of danger, but not necessarily an actual death experience. When sheep enter a dangerous area, what is the reason for their confidence?



4. Describe a time that you walked in a deep valley and how that experience changed or impacted your faith in God. What lessons did you learn during that time? Have you allowed God to use that experience to minister to others?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Read Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 1:9, Psalm 46, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 28:20, Acts 18:9, Hebrews 13:5-6. Make note of how these verses personally relate to you in your present circumstances:

From Wordwise Bible Studies:  
**Many of us would like to move on to more satisfying and fulfilling experiences with God, but we have failed to realize that the path to richer pasture/ands my lie through dark and dangerous valleys.**

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# "THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME"

Verse 4 from missionary Bob Burgess; a personal translation:

*I see the weapons you carry and I gain confidence and courage.*

1. List the four purposes of the shepherd's rod:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is God's "rod" in our lives? \_\_\_\_\_

What a comfort to have this \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
instrument under which to conduct ourselves. By it we are kept from  
\_\_\_\_\_ amid \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Read Psalm 139:23-24. What represents "wool" in Scripture? Which of these applies to you personally, and what is the remedy?

- Self - \_\_\_\_\_
- Self - \_\_\_\_\_
- Self - \_\_\_\_\_
- Self - \_\_\_\_\_



4. What is the shepherd's staff a symbol of? What single word describes its function on behalf of the flock?

5. The staff of God is symbolic of what?

6. What are the three areas of sheep management where the staff plays a significant role? Describe the parallel in the Christian life:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

From Wordwise Bible Studies:

**The shepherd's "rod" is a club, used to ward off predators. It is also used to discipline the sheep. African herders can hurl their rods with great accuracy to drive a sheep away from a poisonous plant, or rocky cliff. The shepherd's "staff" is the familiar crook, used to lift and manage the sheep. The first instrument seems to speak of God's authority, His "thus saith the Lord." The second tool perhaps speaks of God's loving care.**

From "Powerful Promises for Every Woman" by Elizabeth George,  
poem by J.C. Whitelaw:

Fear thou not for I am with thee,  
I thy God---be not dismayed:  
Face the days that lie before thee,  
Trust Me and be unafraid.

When the nights are darkest trust Me;  
Trust Me when the days are bright.  
'Tis My mighty hand upholds thee,  
Though 'tis hidden from thy sight.

All the journey I am with thee,  
All thy weakness I'll sustain;  
Never shall My presence leave thee:  
Trust Me still in joy and pain.

Trust Me when the shadows lengthen,  
And the shades of night draw near;  
I am with thee still to strengthen.  
Trust in Me and have no fear.

When for thee life's journey's ended  
And thy days of service o'er---  
With Me Who for thee has tended  
Thou shalt be for evermore.



## CHAPTER NINE

# "THOU PREPAREST A TABLE BEFORE ME..."

Verse 5 from missionary Bob Burgess; a personal translation:

*And even when my enemies surround me and are watching every move I make<sup>1</sup> You set up a table and receive me as an honored guest<sup>1</sup> at a banquet of exotic foods. My cup of joy is full and overflowing.*

1. What three preparations does a shepherd make for the arrival of the sheep in the high summer ranges?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. What are the parallels in the Christian life to the above three points?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. Choose one of the above parallels that speaks most strongly to you. Describe how Christ's preparations on your behalf might change your perspective as you walk through life.

4. The author states that God "longs to see me living above the mundane level of common humanity." That He is "pleased when I..."
- "... walk in the ways of holiness,"
  - "... of selflessness,"
  - "... of serene contentment in His care,"
  - "... aware of His presence"
  - "... and enjoying the intimacy of His companionship."

Describe how you can improve your walk of faith in each of these areas:



## CHAPTER TEN

# "THOU ANOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL..."

1. Fly time refers to the summer months when hordes of insects emerge that torture the sheep. List some things that "bug" you.
2. Summer is also scab time for sheep. Scab is a contagious disease that is common to sheep. How is this represented in the Christian's life?
3. What is the shepherd's antidote for both insects and scab? What is our antidote as Christians? How often do we need the application of this antidote?

4. Underline the key points about the Holy Spirit in each of these verses:

**Matthew 12:31-32** <sup>31</sup> And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. <sup>32</sup> Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

**Luke 11:13** <sup>13</sup> If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

**Luke 12:11-12** <sup>11</sup> "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, <sup>12</sup> for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

**John 14:16-17** And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever- <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you.

**John 14:26** But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

**John 15:26** "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father-the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father-He will testify about Me.

**John 16:13** <sup>13</sup> But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come.

**Acts 5:32** <sup>32</sup> We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."



**Romans 5:5** And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

**Romans 8:26-27** In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

**1 Corinthians 6:19** <sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?

**Ephesians 1:13-14** <sup>13</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-to the praise of His glory.

**Ephesians 4:30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

**1 Thessalonians 1:4-6** For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that He has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

**2 Timothy 1:13-14** What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup> Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you-guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

**Titus 3:4-6** <sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,

**2 Peter 1:20-21** <sup>20</sup> Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

5. Describe "the overcoming Christian life" as it relates to both the "cup of contentment" and the "cup of suffering."

From All the Promises of the Bible:

**The Shepherd Psalm as a whole reveals the Shepherd's ability to care for us in every way. If we are His sheep and His private mark is upon us, then we know that because of His kind, tender, and generous heart all our fears are follies, our forebodings are sinful, and our anxieties groundless, for He is able to "supply all our needs, according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus."**



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# "SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME..."

Verse 6 from missionary Bob Burgess; a personal translation:

*How can I expect anything but the goodness of God and God's covenant of love to follow me, in fact pursue me, all the days of my life? And I will live in the presence of the Eternal God, the One who always does what He says, forever.*

1. Read Exodus 34:6, Psalm 31:19, Psalm 100:5, Psalm 103:2-18, Lamentations 3:22-23, Titus 3:5. What do these verses say about the goodness of God?
2. Think of a time when you felt that your life was falling apart and, in retrospect, you came to see God's goodness and mercy through that experience. Summarize what you learned about His management of your affairs:
3. How has that life lesson changed your attitude when you've experienced subsequent trials?

4. What does the author refer to as “the essence of all that has gone before in this Psalm?”

5. What is the meaning of “those of the golden hooves?” How does this term apply to Christians?

**“The only real, practical measure of my appreciation for the goodness and mercy of God to me is the extent to which I am, in turn, prepared to show goodness and mercy to others.”**

6. List ways you routinely leave a “blessing and a benediction” behind you?

7. Write one way that you benefit The Lord, a way that you pass back a measure of His goodness and mercy to Him.

From Elizabeth George, "Powerful Promises for Every Woman:"

**Dear one, for you and me as Christian women, "hope" is not to be seen as an uncertainty. We are not "hoping" that God's promises will come true. No, we rather have a "confident hope" in God's promises, for we have confidence in the character of God. A promise is only as good as the one who makes the promise. So, because of God's goodness and mercy, we have a confident hope for all the days of our lives---and beyond---"through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:6).**



## CHAPTER TWELVE

# "I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER"

1. The author describes the "sense" of the word house in three ways. Write a definition of each in your own words.
  - House of The Lord:
  - Household or family or flock of the Good Shepherd:
  - The presence of The Lord:
2. Summarize your thoughts about the sheep that snuck into the author's pasture which he returned to the neighbor in a wheelbarrow. Write out the parallel to the human condition.
3. What do you think your impact is on the non-believers you rub shoulders with?
4. What are the two ways we can "Live ever aware of God's presence?"

5. The following is a list of what the flock is guaranteed under the care of a good shepherd. To summarize our study, review your study guides and write out the correlation to your Christian walk under the care of your Good Shepherd.

- No lack of any sort:
- Abundant green pastures
- Still, clean waters:
- New paths into fresh fields:
- Safe summers on the high tablelands:
- Freedom from fear:
- Antidotes for flies, disease, and parasites:
- Quietness and contentment:

“A Shepherds Look at Psalm 23” by W. Phillip Keller (ISBN: 978-0-310-27441-4)

Study Guide adapted from Simple Truth Church  
<http://simpletruthlive.com/bible-study-psalm-23/>