

Growth Assignment

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Is God Good? The Shepherds' Care

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.***

Psalm 23: 1 – 4 (ESV)

Psalm 23 is probably the most compact portrait we have of God's goodness, motivating us to want to know him better. Because the rod and the staff are some of mankind's oldest tools, they are universal symbols of protection and guidance. These symbols are used frequently in the Bible to depict how God cares for his people, whom Jesus calls his "sheep" and his "flock." Actual sheep are defenseless, needing lots of protection and guidance from their shepherd.

Hebrews 13: 20 (NLT)

Now may the God of peace—who brought up from the dead **our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep**, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood—

1. Considering the meanings of the metaphors for the rod and staff, why do you think Jesus is the Great Shepherd for us?

Psalm 23: 3 (ESV)

... He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

2. After you decided to follow Jesus, how has the path of your life become different than it was before?

Psalm 26: 3 (NLT)

For I am always aware of your unfailing love, and I have lived according to your truth.

3. Children who feel deeply loved by their parents are guided on the right path; likewise, relying on God's steadfast love keeps us from going astray. How can we remind ourselves of God's constant love so we can always be on the right path?

Matthew 18: 12 (NLT)

If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost?

4. God values each of us as if we were his only sheep. Was there a time when you felt lost and God showed you he was with you?

Luke 19: 10 (NLT)

*For the Son of Man came to seek and save **those who are lost**.*

5. Give an example of how you helped someone who felt lost turn to Christ.

Psalm 119: 67 & 68 (NLT)

I used to wander off until you disciplined me; but now I closely follow your word.

⁶⁸ *You are good and do only good; teach me your decrees.*

6. Reflect on a time when you realized why God was disciplining you and then discovered that following his ways would improve your life.