



# Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

Psalm 23 – August 16, 2020

## I. Starter Thoughts:

Has it ever been difficult for you to submit to and follow someone else's leadership? What about having trouble trusting in someone else? Has that ever spilled over into affecting the Lord's leadership in your life? Think back on those situations where your trust and submission was proved as the right thing to do? Or possibly times where you decided to go on your own?

## II. Discussion of Scripture:

Throughout Psalms, we discover mountain after mountain of praise for the Lord. In fact, the title of this book in Hebrew, "Tehillim", translates to "Praises", and this is appropriate! Ephesians 1:6 illuminates God's ultimate purpose in rescuing us—"to the praise of His glorious grace".

The Psalms, however, spill over with much more than just thanksgiving and adoration, our usual categories of praise. As we study, we see not just thanksgiving and adoration, but the full range of every emotion. John Calvin said that the Psalms contain "an anatomy of all the parts of the soul," continuing to say that, "there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror." As John Piper says, "You can always find yourself in the Psalms."

This is probably why many people call the Psalms their favorite book—you can find yourself in there. God speaks to you in His word, whatever your situation may be. But, more importantly, you find God in the Psalms, in a picture more complete, than any other book of the Bible. No other book details as many attributes and acts of God than the Psalms.

Psalm 23 deepens our understanding of God further still. Here we have the opportunity to see first and foremost the intimate relationship David has with the Lord. It is because he is close to the Lord that he is *confident* in His guidance and care. This display of confidence is why Psalm 23 is known as a psalm of confidence. Praise God for the way he cares for us, guides us, and shows his grace on us. May we have this same confidence in Him, too!

### **Psalm 23 - The Lord Is My Shepherd**

**The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.** <sup>2</sup> **He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.** <sup>3</sup> **He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.** <sup>4</sup> **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.** <sup>5</sup> **You prepare a table before me**

*in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. <sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

### **III. Group Discussion:**

1. One of the ways David portrays God is as a Shepherd who cares for His Sheep. Using verses 1-4, List out 10 specific protections or benefits God provides as our shepherd? For each of these 10 benefits, discuss what each means for the Christian and our life?
2. What are the reasons for the Lord leading us in paths of righteousness (v. 3)?
3. The Lord brings us to “green pastures” and “still waters” (v. 2), what does each term mean to you and possibly what is this contrasted too? What do terms “makes me lie down”, “restore” and “walk through the valley of the shadow of death” suggest about our Christian lives? Does this bring you comfort or concern?
4. How does verse 6 (“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”) and Psalm 84:11 (“No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly”) shape your understanding of these valleys, pastures, and waters?
5. David writes that his “cup overflows” (v. 5). How does this term mean to you? How are we to use this as assurance and guidance every day?
6. David changes how he speaks of God during the course of this psalm. He refers to Him as “The LORD” in verse 1, then “He” in verse 2, then “you” starting in verse 4. Why do you think this progression from talking *of* God to talking *to* God happens? What can we learn from this?

### **IV. Responding in Prayer:**

1. Pray for our elders, pastors, staff, and leaders, as they continue to seek the Lord’s guidance and protection as we joyfully gather more fully. Praise God for the green pastures and still waters He’s shown us in this time, even now!
2. Pray for the families in our body who are beginning to re-enter all kinds of schooling situations. Pray for our kids and for our teachers. Pray for those home schooling, those going virtual, and those going back into buildings. Pray for our seniors, and for those heading to college. Pray for unity among all, and for each path to magnify His name (Ps. 23 :3). Pray for the peace of God to guard all our hearts and minds! “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7).