

TEEN WITH A BULLET

Touching Lives

#### **SERIES OVERVIEW**

God knew about the benefits of music to help us deal with stress, to be healthier, happier and even holier, which may explain why the largest and longest book in the Bible is a book of songs. They are called psalms, and we are going to dive deep into these psalms as we are currently walking through some of the deepest, darkest, national stress of our lifetimes. Over the next several weeks, we are going to listen to a song that God gave to a shepherd named, David., which I believe could be called "God's greatest hit." It is the 23rd Psalm, and it is probably the best-known chapter in the entire Bible. Of the 150 psalms in this collection, the 23rd Psalm is the most popular and best known. It is only 118 words in English, but it is probably the most familiar 118 words in the hundreds of thousands of words that are found in the Bible. I can tell you as I've gone back and read this psalm over and over and over, it does make you feel good. It does lower your stress level. You realize there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and these important truths do bring the sunshine from out behind the clouds.

SERIES VERSES

Psalm 23:1-6

## **WEEK 1: Listen To The Music**

OVERVIEW	NOTES
As we begin this study, we're going to start witt the first verse. Anybody who has ever heard this psalm before knows that it is actually not just the first verse, but it is the foundational verse of this passage. Everything else David is going to say in this psalm is built upon the first line in the first stanza, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1). David gives us three reasons why, no matter what happens going forward, faith ought to be in, and fear ought to be out. Worship ought to be in, worrying ought to be out. Prayer to be in, and panic ought to be out. Let's take a look at those reasons together.	
KEY POINTS	
1. I Have A Shepherd Who Leads Me When you decide to give your life to Jesus Christ, the Jesus that becomes your savior is the Lord that becomes your shepherd. I am limited by time and by space, but my shepherd is not. I don't know what is going to happen tomorrow, but I have a shepherd who does, and he will lead me through it. I don't know what is over the hill beyond me, but the shepherd does. He will lead me over it. He who leads me will never leave me. Even if I tend to let go of him, he will never let go of me. He sees what I cannot see. He knows what I do not know. He hears what I do not hear. Wherever I am, I will get to where I need to be, because I have a shepherd who leads me.  2. I Have A Shepherd Who Looks After Me	
The Lord has given us over 7000 promises in his Word. Every one of them is a blank check promising that whenever we come up against a real need in our life, he will meet that need. We won't lack anything. I know some of you sitting there may be saying, "I had a need in my life and God didn't meet it." Well, that just is not true. If God didn't meet it, then it really wasn't a need. Remember this – If you have a real need, God will meet that need. If God doesn't meet it, then it wasn't a real need.	
In the midst of everything we are going through. and that we are going to continue to go through, and not knowing how long we will continue to go through it, at the end of the day if the Lord is your shepherd, you will not lack. You have a shepherd that looks after you.	
3. I Have A Shepherd Who Loves Me In preparation for this series, I was reading about how a good shepherd can locate one sheep out of a flock of twenty-five hundred in less than five minutes by the way he holds his head, by the way he bleats, and by the way he walks. A shepherd can look at the ground where a sheep has been laying down and tell by the condition of the grass or by the droppings they leave behind or even by one look in their eyes if they are sick. The shepherd has a personal relationship with every sheep.	

## **WEEK 1: Listen To The Music**

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Do you understand what David is saying by using this analogy of a shepherd? This shepherd knows his sheep better than the sheep know themselves. Therefore, Jesus knows you better than you know you. You think you know what you need, but Jesus knows what you need. Jesus knows how to forgive your past. He knows how to frame your present. He knows how to fulfill your future. This shepherd wants to have a personal relationship with you because He loves you. He wants what's best for you, so choose to accept His love and His better plan today.	
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	
1. When was a time in your life where Jesus led you through a situation turn	
2. Can you look back on your life and point to examples of how the	Lord looked after you?
3. How would the way you live your life change if you believed that than you knew yourself?	t Jesus knew you better
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## WEEK 2: Rest Easy

Psalm 23:2

OVERVIEW	NOTES
Stress is robbing us of our rest and the lack of rest is increasing our stress and we are caught in this vicious cycle of physical, emotional and spiritual fatigue that never seems to end. But the good news is, the Lord is your shepherd, and He promises to give you rest. Close your eyes and get that imagery in your mind. You are a sheep. You have been walking all day. You are tired, thirsty and hungry. All of a sudden, you are lying in thick green grass, under the shade of a tree, beside the still waters of a stream that is flowing right beside you, resting easy. No matter where you are, and no matter what you are going through, that green grass, those still waters are right in front of you. You can enjoy them every day and rest easy. In the beautiful stanza of this beautiful psalm, we are told that if we follow the shepherd, we will find the rest we are looking for in these green pastures and still waters.	
KEY POINTS	
1. My Shepherd Guides Me To Rest It is interesting that the first thing the shepherd leads the sheep to do is rest. In the morning, the first thing we do is get ready for work. Then, we work until we get tired, and only then do we rest. Did you know that the first thing the Lord wants you to do in the morning is rest before you go to work?	
You may think to yourself "Wait a minute. That is what I have been doing all night is resting." Actually, you have been sleeping and even that rest is physical. What I am talking about is not physical rest; it is spiritual rest. Spiritual rest is when you lie down in the presence of the shepherd, when you take time to be with the shepherd and enjoy fellowship with the shepherd.	
God is much more concerned about your spiritual health than he is about your physical health or your financial health. That old saying, "Take time to smell the roses" is not just an old saying. It really is biblical. Jesus calls himself the "Rose of Sharon," and we ought to begin our day by taking the time to just smell that rose. A shepherd knows that even sheep need to have that break and so should we.	
2. My Shepherd Grows Me Through Rest Think about this. If you are lying down on a bed of green grass, beside a stream of flowing water, there is one thing you know you are going to be surrounded by which is quietness. That is what we call spending time with God, reading God's word, spending time talking to God and listening to God as a "quiet time." I can tell you no matter what else is going on when I get into the green pastures of God's word and I listen to the still waters of his spirit I rest easy.	
Don't ever think that beginning your day with God is a waste of time. This is the time when you grow the most, when you get the strongest. You need this time of rest every day. The reason why the shepherd guides us to rest is because he grows us through rest in God's word where you see his power,	

you hear his promises, you experience his presence, and you rest in his peace.

# WEEK 2: Rest Easy

3. My Shepherd Gives Me His Rest When you have that quiet time every day in your life, when you take time to get into the green pastures of God's word and you let the quiet waters of his Holy Spirit flow over you, speak to you, comfort you, and encourage you, when everything else is falling apart around you, you can be at perfect peace resting easy.	NOTES
When sheep lie down in green grass and lie beside a still stream, they are in the height of their quiet time. It is when they are peaceful, are growing, and getting strength for the journey. That is why Jesus is called "The Good Shepherd," because he knows how to lead us to his green pastures and feed on his word. He knows how to get us to the quiet waters and drink from his spirit. He knows when we do that, we will be resting easy. We will experience this peace that passes all understanding.	
Life is like a symphony. In any symphony there are moments of music, but there are also moments of silence. A symphony is simply a series of sounds that is followed by pauses. God knows we need that quiet time every day in our lives, when we just get a Bible, and maybe a notepad, and we go to a quiet place and we feed on the green pasture of his word and drink from the still waters of his spirit, so we won't grind the starter until the battery is dead and we won't run the engine until the tank is dry.	
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	
1. Do you start your morning each day by resting with God and spe	nding time with Him?
2. Do you notice a difference in your spiritual growth when your quersus when it's more sporadic?	uiet time is consistent,
3. What's one way you can adjust your morning routine to prihealth and growth?	ioritize your spiritual
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# **WEEK 3: Restoration Project**

OVERVIEW	NOTES
In the third stanza of Psalm 23, David shares with us that this shepherd loves us so much he will correct us when we make the wrong decisions and he will lead us to make the right decisions. If you are on the wrong road because of a wrong decision you've made, there is hope for you. If you are at a crossroads and you don't know which way to go, there is help for you. In the third stanza, we find that there is healing for our past, help for our present, and hope for our future. David writes, "He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his namesake" (Psalm 23:3). We are all God's restoration projects at times in our lives. This beautiful sentence tells us how God carries out that project perfectly.	
KEY POINTS	
1. God Lifts Us From The Wrong Path As sheep are eating, they don't look up and watch where they are going; they just walk and eat. In their minds is that next blade of grass and before you know it, they just wander off and they are lost. A sheep can't find its way back. Dogs, pigeons, horses all have a homing instinct. They can find their way home. I hate to tell you this, but a sheep is not strong like a lion, swift like an antelope, or smart like a dog. The number one characteristic of a sheep is it is stupid. Once a sheep has gone astray it can't find its way back home. It is up to the shepherd to go and find that sheep, get him off the wrong path and put him back on the right path.  This is a beautiful picture of what our shepherd is willing to do for us. If you have ever been knocked flat on your back spiritually, mentally, emotionally and you can't get up, God will restore your soul. He will give you back your peace, your joy, your strength, your confidence.	
2. God Leads Us To The Right Path  One thing that is always true about a sheep is when that sheep stops following the shepherd they will always get off on the wrong path. A Palestinian shepherd was a master at reading tracks. In the desert there were many marks and paths that crisscrossed the land. Some were made by wide beasts and others by robbers lying in wait, but to a sheep every path looks the same. Sheep do not realize that this path could lead to a wild animal. This path could lead to a cliff. This path could lead to a place where there is no grass and no water.	
That is why the shepherd always takes the lead. He will always guide us to where the waters are still, where the grass is green, and the path is right. When the shepherd leads his sheep to the right path, he is at the same time leading them away from the wrong path. Do you know why God has given us specific commands in the Bible? There is a twofold purpose. When God says "you shalt not do this", he is trying to keep you from a path that leads	

## **WEEK 3: Restoration Project**

you to harm, to hurt, and heartache. When God says "you shall do this" he is trying to take you down a path that will lead you to health, holiness, and happiness.	NOTES
Here is the great thing about our shepherd. He never gets it wrong. He never misreads the instrumentation on the panel. He never has a faulty compass. He always bats a thousand. He never makes a mistake. He will always guide you to paths that are right for you and best for you.	
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	
1. When was a time God lifted you from the wrong path when yo making a big mistake?	ou were on the way to
2. Is there a path God is trying to lead you down right now, but you Him? What is making you hesitate?	ou're hesitant to follow
3. What is one verse in Scripture, along with Psalm 23:3, that you ca help you remember God will always lead you down the right path?	_
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### WEEK 4: The Last Walk

OVERVIEW	NOTES
I love what Jerry Seinfeld said, "According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking and number two is death. This means to the average person if you have to go to a funeral you are better off in the casket than doing the eulogy." Whether or not you fear death you do have to cope with it. Basically, you will cope with it in one of two ways: with hope or without hope. Two things have to be true, either this life is all there is or there is more to life than this life. This is one reason why I wish everyone would consider Christianity, because I don't know of any faith, or any religion, or any spiritual concept that gives more hope for death than Christianity. If just this one statement that David wrote is true, to rephrase Winston Churchill, "Death is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. It is just the end of the beginning." The last walk we will ever take is the walk with death. We don't know when, where or how we are going to take that walk, but we will. Let's do what David did and let's look ahead to what that walk could be like and where that walk you will ever take.	
KEY POINTS	
1. We Walk To The Prospect Of Death  If we want to fully grasp what David is saying in today's key verse, we must understand the importance and the context of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, which is an actual place in Israel. The shepherd would guide the sheep through the valley, up to the mountaintop where they could lie down beside green pastures and rest beside still waters. The reason why the shepherd always took the sheep through the valley was this. The valley was the only route to higher ground. Every mountain has its valleys and most of the time the best route and sometimes the only route to the top of the mountain is through the valley.	
He said, "I walk through the valley." He doesn't run through the valley and he doesn't run away from the valley. He can't go over it, around it, or under it and has to go through it, but he is in no hurry. A valley is not a dead-end street. It is not a cul-de-sac. Do you know what a valley is? It is a tunnel that is open at both ends. It has an entrance, and it has an exit. There is hope at the end of the tunnel because of Jesus, who said, "I am the light of the world" and once you enter into the tunnel of death, he is the light at the end of the tunnel.	
2. We Walk In The Presence Of The Lord Something we must all understand as the sheep in this analogy, is that it is always better that sheep are in the valley with the shepherd, for they would be much worse off on the mountaintop without the shepherd.	
When you leave this earth, you don't leave God's presence. You take God's presence with you wherever you go, because he is the good shepherd. There is one thing that is true about a shepherd. He will never lead the	

#### **WEEK 4: The Last Walk**

Psalm 23:4

sheep where he has not already been. As hard as it is to understand and believe, God himself went through the same valley of the shadow of death that one day we will go through. He went into that valley of darkness that we will go through, but darkness cannot hold light. Jesus is the light of the world who is staying in us, who is shining before us, and who is standing with us. No believer ever dies alone. God is always with you.	NOTES
3. We Walk With The Protection Of The Shepherd A shepherd always carried two things: a rod and a staff. The rod became an extension of the shepherd's right arm. It was a symbol of his strength and power. The purpose was to guard the sheep. That shepherd would take that rod and drive pieces of metal into that knob and with that rod he could kill bears, wolves, snakes and all kinds of wild animals. Whenever the sheep would see that rod in that shepherd's hand there would be this calmness, this peace, because they knew the shepherd would guard them.	
The shepherd also had a staff he carried with him. Where the rod was to guard the sheep, the staff was to guide the sheep. One was to protect the sheep and the other was to direct the sheep. The shepherd's staff was about four feet long and the shepherd was an expert at handling that staff. It was used to guide the sheep, because the sheep would walk along a dangerous or difficult path and he would take the tip of that staff, lay it gently against the side of that sheep and apply the pressure so the sheep would go where the shepherd wanted it to go. Sometimes the sheep would wander, and the shepherd would just reach out with the crook of that staff and grab that sheep by the neck and pull him back into the fold.	
Our shepherd does the same thing for us, even if he doesn't use a physical rod and staff. He protects us, and he guides us. He guards us and he directs	

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

us. Therefore, we can just him to lead us down the right path, even if that

means walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

- 1. Are you afraid of dying? Or do you have peace that death is only the end of the beginning in your life with Christ?
- 2. When was a time you had peace, even in the valley, because the Lord was with you? On the other hand, when was a time you were on the mountaintop, but you felt from far the Lord?
- 3. What is an example of a time in your life where the Lord clearly protected you from something and guided you toward something better?

## WEEK 5: Just What I Need

Psalm 23:5

OVERVIEW	NOTES
In studying through Psalm 23, it is amazing to see how this psalm addresses practically all of our greatest needs from the cradle to the grave. In today's key verse, David is describing how he realized that his greatest need and our greatest need is God. I believe that God is the only one that can address our greatest problems. Our greatest need will always be God, because only God can meet our greatest needs. The philosopher was right who said, "There is a god-shaped vacuum in every life that only God fill." Listen to what David writes, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows" (Psalm 23:5). When you understand this from a shepherd's perspective, you will understand that God will always be just what you need. God meets our needs, but it is how he meets our needs that make this such a beautiful verse.	
KEY POINTS	
1. God Actively Meets Our Needs For sheep to live, to grow and to make wool, they had to eat and then they had to be able to lie down and rest and digest their food. They would not do that if they sensed any danger. In other words, it was the shepherd's job to "prepare the table" for the sheep even in the presence of certain enemies.	
You know we are the same way. Have you ever noticed that when you have trouble in your life, you lose your appetite? When you are afraid, when you are worried, when you think you have cancer, or may lose your job, or your wife may walk out on you, or you aren't sure if your kids are safe, you can't even think about eating. The only way you will be able to eat and rest is if you know the shepherd is protecting you and watching over you and no matter what happens will take care of you.	
At the Lord's table there is only one item on the menu and that is his will for your life. One thing you can always know is if you are where God wants you to be, doing what God wants you to do, in the way that God wants you to do it, you don't have to worry about your enemies. He will take care of you and he will take care of them.	
2. God Affectionately Meets Our Needs When a sheep gets an open wound, dirt and debris will get into that wound. If it is not cleaned, it will fester and poison the bloodstream and the sheep can die. So the shepherd would use oil to clean the dirt from the wound so the wound can heal.	
You can imagine it was not exactly clean, pristine work to be putting oil up a sheep's nose and in a sheep's ear and on those poisonous, puss-filled sores. When sheep are bothered by flies or covered with sores, they don't need a flyswatter or a gun or even aspirin; they need oil applied with tenderness	

and love and care.

## WEEK 5: Just What I Need

That is exactly what God does with us, except his oil is the Holy Spirit. When we are wounded, the Holy Spirit heals us. When we are hurting, the Holy Spirit helps us. When we are in sorrow, the Holy Spirit holds us. If you will allow him, God will take the oil of his Holy Spirit and pour it over your head and into your heart so that you can meet whatever hurt, harm, or heartache will face you that day.	NOTES
3. God Abundantly Meets Our Needs In the Middle East hospitality is a big deal. If you came to somebody's house, even if you were a total stranger, the first thing the host would do is offer you a cup of water or a cup of wine. You would drink the cup and the host would refill it. You could drink and the host would refill it again. As long as the host kept refilling your cup you were welcome to stay. If there ever came a point where they left the cup empty, it meant it was time to go. But, if the host decided he really liked you, if he wanted you to stay the night or stay a long time or stay as long as you wanted, he would literally fill that cup to overflowing.	
When you come to God through Jesus Christ, God takes his picture of grace and pours it into the cup of your heart until it is overflowing. When a shepherd's flock needed watering and there were no streams or rivers, he would lead his flock to a well. That shepherd would let that bucket down into that well and he would bring that water back up and there would be large stone cups beside the well. The shepherd always made sure that the cups were filled to overflowing. It made it easy not only for the sheep to get to the water easily, but he also wanted them to know that there was plenty for them to drink. I believe what David is talking about here without any question is the blessings of God on us. Just as the shepherd blesses his sheep, God blesses his children.	
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	
1. What is an example of God actively meeting needs in your life ri	ight now?
2. When was a time the Lord cared for you when you were hurting	g? How did He do so?
3. Was there a time in your life where blessings from God seemed you take the time to thank Him for His provision and blessing?	to be overflowing? Did
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### WEEK 6: Now And Forever

OVERVIEW	NOTES
When David wrote Psalm 23, we don't know how many more days, weeks, or years he had left in his life. But he definitely closes on a high note of what his life will be like for however long it lasts and what his life will be like after his life ends. He is looking at both now and forever. In this last stanza of this beautiful song, David shares with us what is true of us or can be true of us if the Lord is our shepherd, "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). David basically says two things: one about life and one about death or life after death. These two things will be true of you if the Lord is your shepherd.	
KEY POINTS	
1. I Live In God's Hands On Earth Why does David talk about just these two things in today's key verse - goodness and love? Remember, this is a shepherd's song. Shepherds don't drive sheep; they lead sheep. They are led from the front so the shepherd would always be out front. Who would bring up the rear? Shepherds always have with them sheep dogs.  Their job was to follow behind the sheep, and if a sheep started wandering off or a sheep got hurt or started falling behind, they would bark and alert the shepherd to come and take care of that sheep. What David is saying is that God's goodness and God's love are like divine sheepdogs in our lives. They are always following behind us, keeping watch over us, and helping us when we have a need.	
I am so glad that we are told that this goodness and this love follows us not just some of the days of our lives, but all the days of our lives. Thank God he never turns his goodness and love off. He is not good one day and bad the next. He is not loving one day and unloving the next. All the days of my life until I draw my last breath, God's goodness and God's love will follow me. If the Lord is your shepherd you live in God's hands on earth.	
2. I Will Live In God's House For Eternity  You know what blesses me about this psalm is that God saved the best for the last. From the beginning, God says any real need that you have you will never lack anything. When you are hungry, he will lead you to green pastures. When you are thirsty, he will lead you to still waters. If you get off on the wrong path, he will lead you to the right path. When you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, he will protect you with his rod and his staff. When you are surrounded by enemies and tough times, you will be eating grace and peace and love and joy from his table.	

## WEEK 6: Now And Forever

Then he tells us our earthly life is going to be full of goodness and love and that no matter what happens to us God will work it out for our good and no matter what we do he will always love us. Then he tells us if the Lord is your shepherd the best is yet to be. You haven't seen anything yet.	NOTES
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	
1. What are some of examples of God's goodness and love following in line with the Lord's plan throughout your walk with Him?	g you and keeping you
2. Do you have peace about eternity, or does the thought of it make	you anxious?
3. Which verse in Psalm 23 stood out to you the most throughout verse somewhere you can see it every day and begin committing it	
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