

## **SOUNDTRACK:**

### **Encountering Jesus in the Songs of Scripture**

Study Guide, Dr. Jeremy K. Bratcher

#### **Week 1: The Church is Family**

**Introduction:** Few people fail to appreciate the simplistic beauty and comfort contained in the Twenty-third Psalm. Many of you know it by heart. I feel somewhat like a tourist guide standing before you in the shadow of a magnificent mountain peak, attempting to describe its beauty—or like a guide in an art museum telling you of the magnificence of a priceless painting which has been universally regarded as a classic work for decades. Perhaps Bernhard Anderson has best expressed the value of the Twenty-third Psalm when he wrote,

*“No single psalm has expressed more powerfully man’s prayer of confidence ‘out of the depths’ to the God whose purpose alone gives meaning to the span of life, from womb to tomb.”*

While few of us understand the life of the shepherd in the ancient Near East, most have been able to grasp the message of comfort and assurance conveyed in the psalm. Especially in times of distress, such as the death of a loved one, we instinctively turn to the assuring words, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

**The Big Picture:** Those who trust in God have all they really need!

#### **Discussion:**

##### **Share:**

- Have you ever been around farm animals? Which ones?
- Why do you think sheep need a shepherd?

##### **Discuss:**

##### **Sermon Review:**

- Write down any questions or thoughts that stand out to you as you review the sermon together. Discuss them as a group.  
Link: <https://www.cornerstonecrystal.org/messages/>
- What are the three essential elements of a psalm of trust?
- Respond to Pastor Jeremy’s statement: “Experience is the master teacher of trust.”
- How do you understand the following statement: “The Lord is my shepherd”?
- Respond to Pastor Jeremy’s statement: “Those who trust in God have all they need.”
- Do I believe that God is greater than my trouble?

- Respond to Pastor Jeremy’s statement: “We don’t run to God to escape trouble, but to experience life.”

### Unsettled or Uncertain:

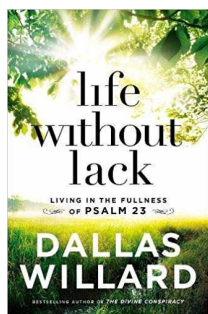
- What questions, concerns or doubts do you still have as this discussion wraps up?

### Now That You Know:

The Lord is my shepherd...is that true for you? Is God the one who guides you and provides for you? Are you experiencing His leading? If not, why not?

The Bible says that people lead life like sheep without a shepherd...scattered, lost and vulnerable. What would your life look like if you said with full trust and confidence, “The Lord is my shepherd!”?

### Further Exploration on this Topic:



*Life without Lack: Living in the Fullness of Psalm 23* by Dallas Willard

**From the Publisher:** Pause for a moment and ask yourself what your life would be like if it were completely without fear? If you did not fear death. If you did not fear life and what it might bring. If you did not fear any man, or woman, or any living creature. Would you live differently?

In this unique work of never-before-published teaching, Dallas Willard revolutionizes our understanding of Psalm 23 by taking this comfortably familiar passage and revealing its extraordinary promises: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.... I will fear no evil.” The psalmist claims to live without any need and without any fear. How is that possible?

Written with Willard’s characteristic gentle wisdom, Life Without Lack reveals the secret to enjoying God’s presence and becoming utterly caught up in his abundant generosity. The more we practice living in his presence, the more we experience the peace and freedom from worry that is promised in the psalm.

Link: <https://www.amazon.com/Life-Without-Lack-Living-Fullness/dp/0718091841>