



THE GOOD SHEPHERD



Connect Groups

STUDY GUIDE

PARK CHAPEL | WINTER 2024

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Name: _____

(in case you misplace this study guide and want it returned to you)



How to get the most out of this study

There is no doubt: **Psalm 23** is one of the most widely recognized scriptures in our culture. It seems every major Christian musician has recorded a version of it, and it's even featured in the bell tower scene of *Saving Private Ryan*. Its message of tranquility, green pastures, and the gentle pursuit of goodness and mercy have resonated with Christians and unbelievers alike for thousands of years. But while such familiarity is good, it can lead to loss of meaning through repetition. Over the course of this 8-week study, we will follow the sermon series exploring each verse in depth and augmenting it with a passage of scripture that speaks to the same theme.

As with any tool that you may encounter, some familiarity with the intended use is warranted. You will find this packet separated into 8 sections, each corresponding to a week's sermon. Within each section you will find 4 sub-sections titled **Knowledge**, **Understanding**, **Wisdom**, and **Maturity**. The idea is that as the discussion follows the flow of the curriculum, the conversation will progress from the words of Scripture itself and the basic facts of its context, to establishing a correct understanding of the scripture. Those basics having been laid as a foundation, the Wisdom section begins to probe questions to compare ourselves and the world around us to the scripture and its correct

understanding. And, finally, the Maturity section prompts you to look for ways to translate wisdom into actions and habits. Our hope is that you will come out of each session with a broader understanding of who God is and some concrete opportunities to focus on growing.

But take note! This guide is not intended to be comprehensive. There are thousands of years of study into Psalm 23 and a good discussion requires some homework. We encourage you to prepare ahead for your group discussion. Read the following content. Even a simple Google search of commentary on Psalm 23 yields many places to start. **And pray!** Like we often say at Park Chapel, "Prayer is the plan!" Calling on God for understanding as you go is a core aspect of study. To sum up, the key to robust Bible study is that you get from it what you put into it. Our prayer for this Connect Group study on the Good Shepherd is that you will be drawn to make the Word of God your own, hide it in your heart, meditate on it day and night, bind it to your doorposts and teach it to your children, and that the God of Truth will open your eyes to know Him more clearly.

We'll see you in small group!

—**The Content Creation Team**

NOTE: All scripture references, unless otherwise noted, are the ESV translation.



Week 1:

Context – Survey of verses describing David's sojourn before ascending the throne

KNOWLEDGE

“The Lord has sought out a man after His own heart.” (1 Samuel 13:14) This phrase is used to describe only one individual throughout the Bible: David. At the time this was first used to describe him, he was still young, shepherding his father's sheep, and the most insignificant amongst his brothers. But God went to great lengths to redirect his life. He reminds us along the way that He cares first about the quality of our character, that He is mighty to save, that nothing is too great for Him, that He is magnificently holy and will not be mocked, and that He is constantly looking forward to the ultimate goal of His plan for the restoration of creation.

What is this idea of being after God's heart? We get an intimate peak at David's thoughts throughout his life: in anticipation of victory, in the throes of defeat, in righteous joy, and under the crushing guilt of sin. Let's examine these a bit closer.

Read 1 Samuel 17:45-47. The exclamation point at the end of David's battle cry is, “all the earth will know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly will know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's.” The story of David and Goliath is so deeply entrenched into western culture that it has become a trite thing, but remember, these were real people, and this was a real battle. At this point, David was nearly unknown on the national scene in Israel and came, seemingly from nowhere, with this tremendous faith and confidence in his God. To David, there was no question about it: his strength came from God.

David also suffered great loss and defeat. As he fled from his home, his throne seized by a usurper, he reminds himself and his entourage of God's control and his acceptance of God's plan. “Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me back and let me see both it and His dwelling place. But if He says, ‘I have no pleasure in you,’ behold, here I am, let Him do to me what seems good to Him.” (2 Samuel 15:25-26). And in this time of defeat, he writes in Psalm 3: “Many are saying of me, ‘God will not deliver him.’ But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the Lord, and He answers me from His holy mountain.” (Psalm 3:2-4). In retreat, in danger of his life, David leaned on God for his sustenance, comfort, and deliverance.

Another psalm David wrote reminds us to “delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4). This razor cuts two ways though. God promises us the desires of our heart, but the desires of our heart must be right. As a man after the heart of God, we get a glimpse of the desire of David's heart when, at last, after years of waiting and after enduring tragedy in a previous attempt, David brings the ark of the covenant (the physical representation of the presence of God) into Jerusalem. Take a moment to read 2 Samuel 6:1-19. While there is a lot going on here, consider David's joy at the presence of God arriving in his city. This occasion was one, to him, worthy of literally making a fool of himself.

David wasn't perfect, though. Temptation followed him and he sometimes fell to it like all humans do. One case in particular, he cheated with another man's wife

and had him murdered to cover up the pregnancy. The story takes place in **2 Samuel 11:1-27**. But instead of trying to justify himself, of making excuses, or ignoring the guilt, he repented. Read **Psalms 51**. David wrote this after he was confronted for his sin. His heart is marked with contrition, and he humbles himself. To seek after the heart of God requires that sin be confronted with repentance.

David's story is one of the longest in the Bible, stretching from **1 Samuel 16** to **1 Kings 2**. The moments described above are short snapshots into his life and the mind of a man who was after God's own heart. In the next weeks we'll look at his most famous psalm, **Psalms 23**, and see these ideas come up again. You can almost see the battle-hardened, adversity-honed king, remembering the days of his youth, watching his father's sheep, humming to himself,

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. 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. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

UNDERSTANDING

God can use ordinary flawed people in extraordinary ways to accomplish His purpose when we respond to Him in faith. Abraham, Noah, and Moses are others who fit this pattern. For example:

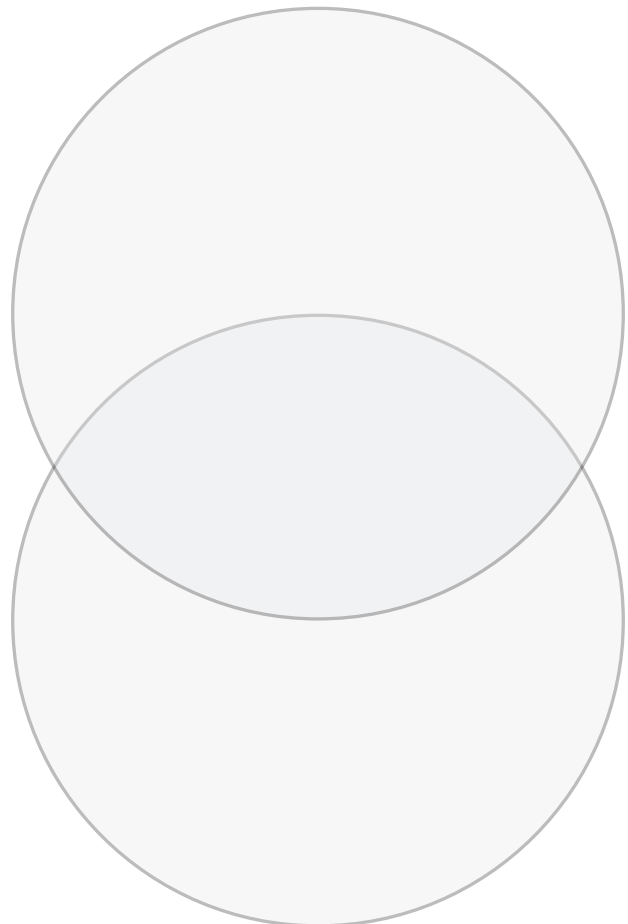
"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and the one who had received the promises was offering up His only son; it was he to whom it was said, 'Through Isaac your descendants shall be named.'"

—**Hebrews 11:17-18** NASB2020

Is there a particular story that stands out to you from David's life? What is it about this that grabs your attention? What does it tell you about God?

Does focusing on different aspects of David's life change how you read **Psalms 23**? If so, explain.

David foreshadowed the coming Messiah in many ways. What are some of the ways that Jesus and David are similar? How are they different? Make a Venn Diagram (overlapping circle comparison chart) showing what they had in common and what their differences are.



What does it mean to be a person “after God’s own heart?”

WISDOM

What aspects of life are easy to be after God’s heart?
What areas are harder?

How does the knowledge of God’s perfect plan affect your plan?

“The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and just is He.”

—Deuteronomy 32:4 NASB2020

What does it mean to respond to God in faith?

“Now faith is the certainty of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen. For by it the people of old gained approval.”

—Hebrews 11:1-2 NASB2020

MATURITY

We respond to God in faith because God is perfect. His ways are right, good, and perfect.

“As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the Lord is refined; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.”

—Psalms 18:30 NASB2020

How might God use your ordinary imperfect life for something extraordinary if you respond to Him in faith?

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully, just as I also have been fully known.”

—1 Corinthians 13:12 NASB2020

What is the next step to following God’s perfect plan?

“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

—Philippians 4:19 NASB2020

NOTES & PRAYERS

THE GOOD SHEPHERD



Week 2:

Godly perspective leads to right behavior – Sermon on the Mount

KNOWLEDGE

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

“Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

“And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

“Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

—**Matthew 6:19-34**

Treasure — The word treasure is used frequently throughout the Bible to describe something of great worth. While this includes material riches (like the Magi brought in **Matthew 2:11**), it encompasses broader ideas like the treasure of God’s power being shown through us (**2 Corinthians 4:7**) and the value that God placed on His chosen nation of Israel (**Exodus 19:5-6**).

Do not be anxious — Anxiety described here refers to a mind preoccupied with worry about things outside of our control. While God is able to bring quiet and peace to our souls during the rising pressure of panic, this is not a command to never experience an anxiety attack. Jesus is referring to the human tendency to focus on our own material situation and to fret when it doesn’t look the way we wish.

Added to you — God’s promise is to meet our needs. At first blush this may sound like a promise to reward us with wealth and riches if we seek His kingdom first. We need to remember that Jesus just taught us to lay up our treasures in heaven. God’s approach to meeting our physical needs is grounded in the building of His kingdom, as Paul elucidates in **Philippians 4:17-19**.

The Sermon on the Mount, represented in **Matthew 5-7** and **Luke 6**, gives us one of earliest impressions of the God-Man, Jesus himself, in His ministry on earth. Throughout this sermon, He deepens the Law's understanding of sin, taking it from an outward action to the thoughts and desires of mind and heart. Hatred is akin to murder. Lust to adultery. Worry to doubt. Here, in **Matthew 6:19-34**, we find Jesus' missives to consider what is truly valuable and to not be anxious about our material needs. We are reminded that there is a treasure greater than what we can find here on earth and that God's desire for us is to lay up more and more of that treasure. We are promised that, as we seek first after the kingdom of God, God Himself will see to our needs.

In the light of this promise, it's hard to not think of the millions of global Christians suffering through poverty, homelessness, hunger, and danger. What about them? Is God going to meet their needs? Are they less Christian because they are not experiencing the same comfort as others? We need to start answering these questions from the perspective that humans are not merely physical, material beings. We were created as spiritual creatures who spend eternity in heaven or hell. This is God's view of us and the framework from which He evaluates our needs. The apostle Paul addresses this idea in **Philippians 1:18-23**: "For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." To Christians, this is a great comfort in a world marred by the curse of sin. Jesus himself later shares that, "To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on His throne." (**Revelation 3:21**).

UNDERSTANDING

What are these verses saying about anxiety? What are they not saying about anxiety?

What are some examples of worldly wants?

What other Bible verses do you know about anxiety? What do they say about it?

Why does Jesus ask us to look at nature (the birds and the flowers) when we are anxious?

How does Jesus' view about anxiety and treatment differ from our society's views of anxiety and its treatment?

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."
(**Psalms 23:1**) What is the meaning of the word want in this verse? What doesn't it mean?

Anxiety about not having what we need can be a form of unbelief: a distrust that God will provide.

"Based on the teachings of the Bible, we can only conclude that David was not referring to material or physical poverty when he made the statement, 'I shall not be in want.' For this very reason the Christian has to take a long, hard look at life. He has to recognize that as with many of God's

choice people before him, he may be called on to experience lack of wealth or material benefits. He has to see his sojourn upon the planet as a brief interlude during which there may be some privation in a physical sense. Yet amid such hardship he can still boast, 'I shall not want... I shall not lack the expert care and management of my Master.'"

—W Phillip Keller,
A Shepherd looks at Psalm 23

WISDOM

What connotations or gut-reactions do you experience at the phrase: "The Lord is my shepherd?"

What are some of the divine attributes of God? How do these fit into His role as our shepherd?

"I will not be in need" can be both a statement and a command. God tells us that He will provide in His perfect way for those things that we need and we are not to lust for the things of the world.

"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

—**Philippians 4:19** NASB2020

Do you lean towards materialism or stoicism? What should our attitude be towards the luxuries that we want but don't need?

How does love of the world draw us away from God?

MATURITY

As we pray, study, and meditate on Scripture each day, the Holy Spirit reveals the divine nature and attributes of "The Great I AM," strengthening our faith in Him rather than ourselves or the world. What lessons from your own study have drawn you to lean on God first?

How can we orientate our hearts toward the peace of God when we are tempted to be anxious?

"Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful."

—**John 14:27** NASB2020

When you pray, do you ask God for wants or needs? Are all wants necessarily bad or selfish? How do you respond when you "think" God has not heard your prayer?

"The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and just is He."

—**Deuteronomy 32:4** NASB2020

How can you encourage those around you to leave their anxieties at the cross?



Week 3:

Rest – Elijah’s Desert Repose

KNOWLEDGE

The reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel was a dark time for Israel. At the behest of the king, nearly the whole nation had abandoned the worship of God to follow after false idols and devolved into moral waste. And in this time of darkness, the prophet Elijah appears to call the people back to the Lord. God, speaking through Elijah, brought about a severe drought upon the errant nation, intending that His punishment would urge them to repent. The image from King David’s **Psalm 23**, “He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters,” is lost as the land of Israel wastes away into dryness. In **1 Kings 17** we see hints of the poverty and desperation as a widow waits for herself and her son to starve to death. Still the people refuse. And so God brings Elijah to a spectacular showdown with Ahab during which the prophets of Israel’s false Gods are put to shame and destroyed and Yahweh is proven the one true God and we get a side glimpse of the burden that Elijah carried. Let’s pick the story up here:

“Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, ‘So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.’ Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, ‘It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.’ And he lay down and slept under a broom

tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, ‘Arise and eat.’ And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, ‘Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.’ And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.”

—**1 Kings 19:1-8**

It’s no doubt that life is full of hectic chaos, work, suffering, and labor. In the midst of a day, there is much to occupy our minds such that the truth can be hard to remember. Note that Elijah, who had just called fire down from heaven, now runs for his life, fearing the revenge of Jezebel. It’s in this low moment that God urges Elijah to stop, renew his strength and rest. Only then is he able to move on to his next destination: the mountain top of Horeb, where God appears again to correct Elijah’s perspective and give him guidance. We, too, can become disconnected with God’s vision when we are exhausted. But God sees the condition we are in and sustains us to accomplish His will, in His name, and in His strength.

The Angel of the Lord — This is a mysterious phrase used throughout the Old Testament. Often it used to refer to the Pre-Incarnate Christ, stepping into our world to direct events. This occurs at the flaming bush in **Exodus 3:4** and when Abraham is stopped from killing his son. It is likely here, too, that God the Son has reached out himself to sustain Elijah.

Strength — Strength speaks to our ability to overcome obstacles. While our human strength may fail, God’s will not. The manner in which God sustains Elijah echoes the words of **Isaiah 40:25-31**. While this passage is written as an indictment against a once again rebellious Israel, to the Christian leaning on God it is a promise of sustenance to weary.

UNDERSTANDING

How does God take care of Elijah in these verses?

What does “He makes me lie down in green pastures” (**Psalms 23:2b**) mean? What doesn’t it mean?

What do these verses about Elijah and lying down in green pastures teach us about God?

Why did the Israelites struggle to rest when commanded? (**Exodus 16:26-27**)

It’s clear that we need rest, but what need does spiritual rest meet?

God demonstrated rest on the 7th day of creation (**Genesis 2:2-3**). Why do you think He rested?

Rest is necessary and is a gift from God but can also be a form of sacrifice. We don’t always want to stop and be still, but we were created to need rest, and it gives us space to obey our Shepherd.

WISDOM

God leads us to a safe place of comfort, care and rest; offering His peace and contentment for those who seek it.

“I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing place will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down in a good grazing place and feed in rich pastures on the mountains of Israel.”

—**Ezekiel 34:14** NASB2020

“In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, Lord, have me dwell in safety.”

—**Psalms 4:8** NASB2020

In what ways does God lead us? Where do we find these places of comfort, care and rest?

How have you experienced blessing for trusting and obeying God?

“One who pays attention to the word will find good, And blessed is one who trusts in the Lord.”

—**Proverbs 16:20** NASB2020

Are there any ways that you are resisting being led?
Into rest or into action?

What growth have you experienced during rest in the past?

MATURITY

Our Creator has provided detailed instructions on where and how we find comfort, care and rest, both physical rest and spiritual rest.

What habits support your discipline of spiritual rest?
What habits impede it?

How can you set an example to other believers in balancing rest and action?

NOTES & PRAYERS



Week 4:

He renews my life – The casting out of Legion

KNOWLEDGE

The Old Testament books of the Law (especially Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) spend a lot of time discussing uncleanness: what causes it, what are its consequences, how is it rectified. In just these three books, the word is used 107 times! It's easy to blur past the significance of these parts of the Bible. God is revealing the extent of His perfection and holiness, and the requirements that sinful humans must meet to be close to Him. Of course, as sinful humans, we were never going to be able to attain that. Our lives may appear put together and proper, but our hearts are unclean, laden with sin, and in need of renewal. As if the burden of law weren't already unattainable, Jesus clarifies the origin of sin in **Matthew 5-7** when He puts the focus on our thoughts and desires. But while sin and the unclean separate us from God and lead to death, God can lead us into restoration and sanctify our hearts. Here's an example of Jesus interacting with the paragon of the unclean:

“They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit. He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

“And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell

down before Him. And crying out with a loud voice, he said, ‘What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.’ For He was saying to him, ‘Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!’

“And Jesus asked him, ‘What is your name?’ He replied, ‘My name is Legion, for we are many.’ And he begged Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

“Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged Him, saying, ‘Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.’ So He gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

“The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.

“As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged Him that he might be with Him. And He did not permit him but said to him, ‘Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you.’ And he went away and

began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.”

—Mark 5:1-20

When it came to the unclean, this man had it all. He lived in the tombs (**Numbers 19:16**), he ran amongst the pigs (**Leviticus 11:7**), Luke’s account (Chapter 8) tells us he was naked (a show of shame) and filled with demons. It begs the question of what Jesus was even doing there to begin with. The country of the Gerasenes is on the far side of the sea of Galilee in a culture where pork was an acceptable food, landing on a remote shore covered in tombs. In fact, after this encounter with Legion, Jesus turned right back around and returned to Galilee, apparently having completed His goal, and the results couldn’t have been more dramatic. The man he found naked, demonically crazed, and unclean was freed from oppression, in his right mind, and wanting to follow Jesus. He was renewed. God’s power is complete today over the mess and uncleanliness in our lives, and He offers us renewal, too, if we will follow where He leads.

UNDERSTANDING

Where else in the Bible do we see God taking something messy and making it good?

What is meant by “renew my life” or “restores my soul”? (**Psalm 23:3a**)

Put **Psalm 23:3a** into your own words (paraphrase).

Jesus was Jewish, and Jewish people had many rules about interacting with those who were unclean, and there would have been a whole process for Jesus to return to “cleanness” per the Torah. Yet He still interacted with those who were unclean. What was the impact of His choice to meet people whose lives were messy and to come into the mess to help them? What does this tell us about God?

What does Jesus’ actions teach us about the freedoms we have as Christians? (**Acts 10: 9-23**)

What situations did Jesus break the rules or conventions of the religious leaders of His time? Was it for His own benefit or others?

God makes beauty from ashes, coming after sinners in our messy lives and making what was messy good.

WISDOM

How have you experienced God’s renewal, either at your point of conversion or later in your walk?

Why do you think some Christians prefer to leave the mess in their lives?

“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet

without sin. Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need."

—Hebrews 4:15-16 NASB2020

What is God's opinion of sin, guilty pleasure, and other uncleanness in our hearts?

Explain why those who have been redeemed through faith in Christ still need God's provision of "He restores my soul."

MATURITY

David's prayer for restoration:

"Create in me a clean heart, God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And sustain me with a willing spirit."

—Psalms 51:10-12 NASB2020

We live in a fallen world. We are exposed to the consequences of sin, both the sins of the world and the temptations and the sins within our own flesh.

However, God is good and faithful.

NOTES & PRAYERS

"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work among you will complete it by the day of Christ Jesus."

—Philippians 1:6 NASB2020

What steps can a Christian take to loosen the hold of uncleanness in their hearts?

The noetic effect describes the idea that the further from sin someone is, the easier God's truth is to understand. Have you experienced this in Christian life?

How does God keep us on the right path?

What assurance do you have that God is working in your heart and you are being conformed to His image?



Week 5:

God leads me for His glory – Moses argues that Israel be spared

KNOWLEDGE

“... He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”

—Psalm 23:3b

“Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did He bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your burning anger and relent from this disaster against Your people.” (**Exodus 32:12**). Thus did Moses plead with God to spare the Israelites. Although God had been leading the Israelites on a literal path to the Promised Land and was in the process of giving them the Law to guide them in the figurative paths of righteousness, they, in a few short days, turned to other gods in the form of a golden calf. God’s name held no reverence nor fear for them.

In response, God was understandably angry – very angry. Like a loving husband who just learned of his wife’s adulterous affair, God’s righteous indignation welled up in Him in intense jealousy, and He thought to “consume them from the face of the earth” and make Moses “a great nation.” What a deal for Moses! However, Moses pleaded with God, not based on the Israelites’ righteousness, which was sorely lacking, but for the sake of God’s reputation among the nations – this is, for His name’s sake. With this reasoning, that is, “Why should the Egyptians say” evil things of God profaning His name, “... the LORD relented from the disaster that He had spoken of bringing on His people.” (**Exodus 32:14**)

Let us not be like the Israelites but let us remember we carry God’s name to the world because “... we are

ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” (**2 Corinthians 5:20**).

Here’s the fuller story:

“When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, ‘Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’

“So Aaron said to them, ‘Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.’ So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’

“When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, ‘Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD.’ And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said,

“These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.’

“But Moses implored the LORD His God and said, ‘O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, “With evil intent did He bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth?” Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, “I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.”’ And the LORD relented from the disaster that He had spoken of bringing on His people.”

—Exodus 32:1-14

UNDERSTANDING

God led the Israelites out of Egypt because He greatly loved them and they were His people.

Leading also assumes someone will be following, obeying the leader.

Were the Israelites following and obeying God’s leading of righteousness? Or were they the counter-example to following in God’s paths for His name’s sake? Were the Israelites wandering off the path God had for them; trying to do it their own way?

Explain and give examples.

How often do we try to “follow” God by making our own path instead of obeying Him?

He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. (**Psalm 23:3b**) This is a very comforting statement the Psalmist, David, makes. Saying God will personally guide him in the paths of righteousness. What reason does he give for this?

Give some examples as to how God is personally guiding you.

Moses hits at a point about God’s honor, His reputation, His glory. Or as the Psalmist would say, for His name’s sake.

Moses was concerned about how wiping out the Israelites and starting over with his lineage would look to the people living in Egypt, Canaan, and the surrounding nations. Thus, ruining God’s name, tarnishing His character in their eyes.

In the Bible, people’s names held meaning and was descriptive of their character. David’s name in Hebrew means “beloved or favorite.”

List some of God's names and how they represent His very character.

If God's name was not synonymous with Him, what would that mean for us as believers?

In what ways can we be ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20) to bring glory for His name?

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

—Ephesians 2:8-9 NASB2020

God seeks what is good for us not because of our goodness or performance but rather because of His divine nature and character.

WISDOM

In what things does the world place their hope?

Where are you tempted to place your hope?

What are some of the consequences of failing to follow God in paths of righteousness?

"I am the good shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me,"

—John 10:14 NASB2020

Which areas of your life would be characterized as an obstinate straying sheep?

MATURITY

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied."

—Matthew 5:6 NASB2020

What are some ways that God leads us in paths of righteousness?

Is being led an active or passive process?

How can we build ourselves up to trust where God is leading us when it doesn't make sense in the moment?

How can we leverage our journey as a medium to share the gospel?



Week 6:

God's promises provide power over fear – Gideon

KNOWLEDGE

“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 23:4**

Death, destruction, darkness, terror, pain — throughout history people have feared death and associated it with bad things. The Canaanite myths picture death as a god who greedily and continually demands human flesh (*Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, page 198). Neither did the Israelites know the mysteries about death that the New Testament has revealed to us. For the Israelites, death was not a god but thought of it as “Sheol, the barren womb, the land never satisfied with water, and the fire that never says, ‘Enough.’” (**Proverbs 30:16**) and “The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me.” (**Psalm 18:4-5**).

The nearness of death surely made David quickly leap to the side as Saul hurled a spear at David at close range — twice! (**1 Samuel 18:11**). Gideon, roughly 200 years before David, feared death, if not by the sword of the Midianites, then by starvation because the Midianites were plundering all of the Israelites food. How much did Gideon fear death? Enough to bring him to an act of sheer hubris — Gideon tested God, multiple times!

“And he [Gideon] said to him [angel of the Lord], ‘Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.’ And the LORD said to him, ‘But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one

man.’ And he said to Him, ‘If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me.’” (**Judges 6:15-17**). Some 1200 years later, Jesus would condemn such requests: “But He answered them [scribes and Pharisees], ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.’” (**Matthew 12:39**).

Even after seeing the sign that the angel of the Lord graciously did, Gideon still feared when doing God’s command to tear down Gideon’s father’s idol of Baal and Asherah: “So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.” (**Judges 6:27**). Even with God’s protection after tearing down these idols, Gideon’s fear drove him to test God twice with the dampness and lack of dampness of a fleece (**Judges 6:36-40**). Even then Gideon still feared as Israel’s attack on the Midianites was at hand, but God was gracious: “That same night the LORD said to him [Gideon], ‘Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand. But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant. And you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.’ Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outposts of the armed men who were in the camp.” (**Judges 7:9-11**). Only after learning that the Midianites were very afraid of Gideon and the Israelites, did Gideon obey God.

Gideon was a man of faith (**Hebrews 11:32**), but he let fear of death creep in unnecessarily. Non-Christians should rightfully fear “walk[ing] through the valley of

the shadow of death.” However, for us as Christians, death is not so much an end but a wonderful beginning: “So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:6-8).

For the fuller story, read **Judges 6-8** and **Hebrews 11:32**.

UNDERSTANDING

Even though Gideon thought God had abandoned the Israelites (**Judges 6:13**). God had not.

He actually told Gideon to “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian” (**Judges 6:14**). And tells him in verse 16 He will be with him. Gideon didn’t quite realize at this time that “this might” meant God’s power.

As the account of Gideon progresses, God is gently prodding Gideon’s faith to grow and mature. His fear gave way to faith in God by the time he needed to go into battle.

God was walking him through his fear of death to be faithful and victorious.

List three other people in the Bible that God told not to fear.

Describe how they grew to trust God to walk them through their situation?

Why are we so prone to fear?

God doesn’t tell us that life will be easy and without hardships, pain, or suffering. To the contrary:

“These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

—**John 16:33** NASB2020

WISDOM

Share a time in your life when you were walking through a valley (past or present).

How did you overcome the urge to fear?

How did God grow you during that time?

Looking back on that time, what advice would you give your younger self?

God does tell us that He is with us in both the best times and the darkest valleys:

“Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will also help you, I will also uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

—Isaiah 41:10 NASB2020

What are some common fears that Christians have?

MATURITY

“Fear Not!” is the most repeated command in the Bible. It is repeated 365 times. When we choose to fear, we choose not to respond to God in faith.

What strategies can you use to equip yourself to resist fear?

How can you translate the victories of our faith into times when you are tempted to doubt?

Romans 8:31 says “...if God is for us, then who can be against us?” We all know the “correct” answer to this rhetorical question. But life sometimes presents us adversaries, circumstantial or relational, that seem like they are pretty successful against us. What are some of these adversaries and how can you begin to claim victory away from them?

How can we boldly encourage others around us in the faith without coming across as brash, patronizing, or dismissive?

NOTES & PRAYERS



Week 7:

Seeing blessing in hardship – Joseph’s reconciliation to his brothers

KNOWLEDGE

“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 I was young, my family would visit my grandparents about once a week. Often, the comedy show *Hee Haw* was on the TV. One skit had two fellows in dialog. Fellow 1 would say such-and-such good happened, and Fellow 2 would say, “That’s good.” Then Fellow 1 would say, “No, that’s bad, because then it resulted in such-and-such bad happened.” Next, Fellow 2 would say, “That’s bad.” Followed by Fellow 1 saying, “No, that’s good, because then it resulted in such-and-such good happened.” And back and forth from good to bad and bad to good they’d go.

Joseph, Jacob’s son, must have often felt like he was in the presence of his enemies, and no doubt sometimes said to himself, “This is bad.” However, just like Fellow 2 in the comedy skit learned over-and-over again that he was wrong, Joseph later learned that actually, “No, that was good” about all his hard times.

In his early years, Joseph must have enjoyed being favored by his father Jacob above his 10 and eventually 11 brothers (**Genesis 37:3**). After all Joseph was the first-born of Rachel, the wife that Jacob most loved (**Genesis 29:30**). As if to wear a billboard of this favored position, Joseph wore the coat-of-many colors that Jacob gave him. For Joseph life was good – except for the bitter resentment of his brothers (**Genesis 37:4**). Oh, and Joseph’s dreams of exalting himself above

his brothers (and mother and father too!) did not help (**Genesis 37:1-11**).

In these good times, 17-year-old Joseph could not have foreseen that betrayal, slavery, false accusations, imprisonment, and broken trust would cascade over the next 13 years of his life. Like sin crouching at the door, the brothers, far from home at Dothan, forcibly stripped him of his robe and sold him to some traveling Ishmaelites (**Genesis 37:12-38**). Being sold to Potiphar, Joseph was now a slave (**Genesis 37:6**). Since God was with Joseph, he rose to be over all Potiphar’s household. “And after a time his [Joseph’s] master’s wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, “Lie with me.” (**Genesis 39:7**). Of course, when Joseph rebuffed her by fleeing, she took revenge by making accusations against Joseph landing him in prison (**Genesis 38:20**). At this low point, those glory-filled dreams of Joseph’s youth must have seemed far-fetched if not ridiculous. But in fulfilling God’s purposes, “No, that (imprisonment) was good.”

Joseph, through God’s blessing, rises once again, but this time he had charge over all the prison (**Genesis 39:22**). Things got even better when Joseph, by God’s provision, correctly interpreted the bakers’ and, most importantly, the cupbearer’s dreams. Given the cupbearer’s honored position close to Pharaoh, Joseph had good reason to hope to get out of prison (**Genesis 40:14**). It would be another “two whole years” Joseph waited in prison, not knowing when nor if he would ever get out.

By interpreting Pharaoh’s dream, God catapults Joseph to be second only to Pharaoh. “Then Pharaoh said to

Joseph, 'Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.' And Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.'" (**Genesis 41:39-41**) Now, Joseph's childhood dreams seemed to be coming together.

After the seven years of plenty and starting into the seven years of famine, Joseph's brothers went to Egypt for grain. After testing his brothers and seeing how they had changed since they jealously had sold him into slavery, Joseph revealed his identity to them. Later, with Jacob's death, the brothers once again feared Joseph's possible revenge on them, but "...Joseph said to them, 'Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.'" (**Genesis 50:19-20**).

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ... For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

—1 Corinthians 13:9-10, 12

UNDERSTANDING

Not only was Joseph reconciled to his brothers (that was good) through them selling him into slavery, but the Israelite lineage was saved from possible starvation (that was very good). You see, Jesus would come through the line of Judah, one of Joseph's brothers.

Many times, our daily schedules do not go as we had planned them. Something happens that delays us or totally "rewrites" our day. Sometimes, looking back on those events, we can actually see God's hand protecting us from something worse or helping a friend or neighbor out in need. Our schedule was put on hold for the good for us or others. In the few events we can see God's hand, how many more do we not recognize His hand. I would suggest immensely more. Analogous to ... most of the iceberg is unseen below the water.

As **Romans 8:28** states, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."

We may not see the current circumstance we are going through as "good" or how it could ever turn out for "good." It's at these times we need to do the very hard work of trusting God and putting our faith in Him. He knows the past, the present, and the future; we don't.

Share a time when you had something unexpected happen and it turned out to be a better outcome than you could have ever imagined.... your cup overflowed.

This week, take note (write it down) each time God displayed an "overflowing" in your heart, home, You will probably be amazed at how often this happens.

Consider the phrase, "You anoint my head with oil." When was it done? Who did it? What was it's purpose?

Is God anointing you for a task ahead?

WISDOM

In the midst of our difficulties and hardships, God offers us His intimate fellowship and care. He sustains us; He strengthens us; and He renews us in our times of need.

"Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken."

—Psalms 55:22 NASB2020

What are the hardships you are experiencing now?

Is there any blessing apparent in it yet?

The idea of anointing carries a theme of healing and invoking the spirit of the Lord:

“So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.”

—1 Samuel 16:13 NASB2020

How has the presence of the Spirit sustained you in past hardships?

When we pursue God's purpose in our life, we receive an abundance of joy and fulfillment.

“These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

—John 15:11 NASB2020

What are the ways that God feeds us and sustains us?

MATURITY

How can you equip yourself in advance to resist the temptation to despair during hardships?

How does God's definition of joy differ from the world's definition of joy? Which are you pursuing?

How can you leverage your outlook of faith in suffering as a tool to witness or encourage others?

NOTES & PRAYERS



Week 8:

God is good and faithful – Trust in the Lord with all your heart

KNOWLEDGE

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

It's a pleasant and reassuring thought that "goodness" and "mercy" (sometimes translated "love" or "loving kindness" in other Bible versions) will follow me all the days of my life. Even though there's some disagreement among Bible translators about how to translate "mercy" (Hebrew: *hesed*), "goodness" may be the more mysterious word. After all, what is good? What is David saying will follow him? Is it wealth, fame, ease, fulfilled desires, comfort, tolerance, acceptance, being liked, leisure, etc.? The current cultural debate, which at its core is over what is "good," has and is dividing communities, friends, churches, even families. So, it's a difficult question, and not a new one.

About 236 years ago, in the Federalist Papers # 10, James Madison wrote, "As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed.... So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts." However, Jesus had a short answer for what is good. Jesus declared in **Luke 18:19** "... No one is good except God alone." God in His very nature is good. So, to fully understand what is "good" is to attempt to fully understand who God is. God is good, God does good, God made His good creation, albeit now a fallen one.

Like "mercy," the word "follow" is rendered differently in some translations. Sometimes it is rendered "pursue," which is a slightly more aggressive term. So, to be followed or pursued by goodness and to have it, in fact, surround you, is to conform more to be the image of God (that is, become more Christ-like). David's second statement, "and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever," flows nicely from this in that it expresses the worshipers continual communion with God.

Contrast this — drawing near our good God and God drawing near to His people, to how the Canaanites related to their gods. Where we are made in God's image, pagan gods were made in man's image. Pagan gods were thought to be capricious and whimsical able to do evil or good, and they were thought to have the same type problems as humans had. Pagan gods were also thought to be distant; **Daniel 2:11** says, "The thing that the king [Nebuchadnezzar] asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." Additionally, with their supposed special powers, pagan worshipers did not want to get on the gods' bad side. To prevent that, the gods had to be appeased, pagans even offered their own children to Molech. As horrific as the thought of child-sacrifice is, maybe pagan worshipers had a sense of their own sin and knew that justice demanded some sort of payment.

As Christians we can praise God because even though God is transcendent (existing and operating beyond our universe and experience), He is also immanent (existing and operating in our universe and our experience) by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," (**John 1:14a** KJV) So the

ultimate pursuit of goodness and mercy (love/loving kindness) for us is Christ's saturating us with goodness through His finished work on the cross. "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him," (**Colossians 1:21-22**) Standing before the Heavenly throne "holy and blameless," now that will be "good."

UNDERSTANDING

Where will this continual dwelling (fully present) with God be? If in Heaven, how do you get there? Can it be experienced in this life?

Paraphrase **Psalm 23:6** in a manner that emphasizes our closeness to God and His pursuit of us.

How does this verse complete the other 5 verses in the Psalm?

Consider **Romans 8:38-39**, "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And **Proverbs 3:5-6**, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths."

How do these verses set your mind to rest with God's pursuit of you?

WISDOM

In which areas of your life is the closeness of God most easily felt?

"Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in faithfulness and truth;'"

—**Exodus 34:6** NASB2020

What aspects of the world at large make it difficult to remember that God is good?

"And my dwelling will be in the house of the Lord forever."

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

—**Romans 8:38-39** NASB2020

Describe a role model in your faith (historical or contemporary) that demonstrated this kind of faith and confidence in God's nearness.

The world celebrates independence and self-reliance, seeking security in the world rather than in God. People strive to be in control of their own destiny. Take a moment to consider and discuss the implications of **Psalm 23** if you were your own shepherd, placing your hope, faith and trust in the world or your own abilities:

- Would the psalm bring confidence and hope? Or fear and uncertainty?
- Would it provide strength to persevere during times of hardship and suffering?
- Would you be able to pursue the path of righteousness on your own?
- Would you have the hope and assurance of an eternal relationship with God?

How can a person increase their trust in God?

What are some impediments to trust that would be relatively easy to remove?

Who is a mentor or friend that you can call on to encourage you in trusting God more?

What are some strategies to keep the nearness and goodness of God at the forefront of your mind, especially outside of church or your private devotions?

MATURITY

What areas of your life do you need to trust in the Lord rather than your own abilities?

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose trust is the Lord."

—**Jeremiah 17:7** NASB2020

NOTES & PRAYERS

Evangelism | Sharing your testimony

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

– Acts 1:8

Fill in the following blanks, then practice sharing your testimony in 2-3 minutes.

My name is _____

Before following Christ _____

I realized I needed _____

How I became a Christian (or when I became intentional about following Jesus) _____

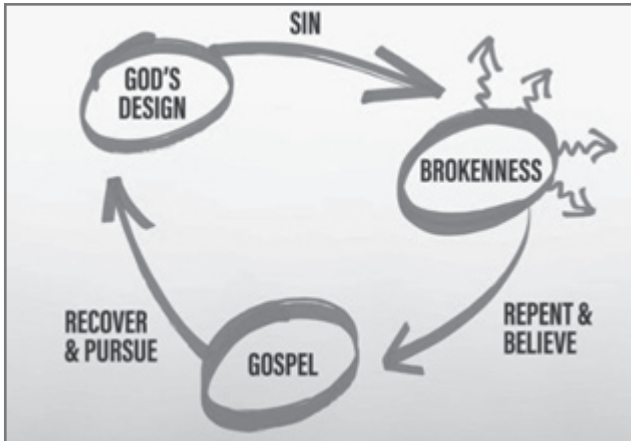
Today my life is _____

Evangelism | Sharing the Gospel

Resources to equip to you to share God's story

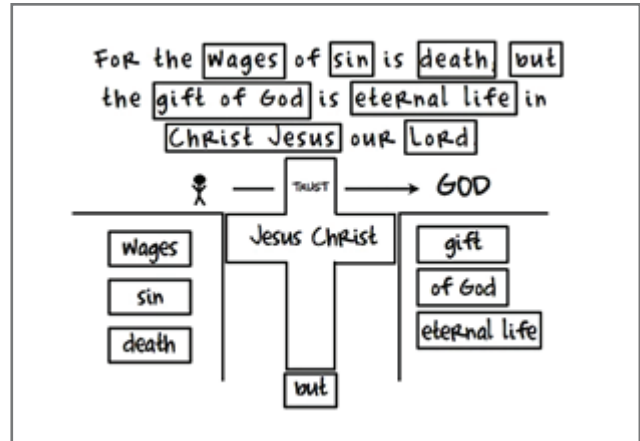
THREE CIRCLES

Life on Mission (download the app)



THE BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION

Romans 6:23



PRAY FOR YOUR NEIGHBORS | BLESS EVERY HOME

Blesseveryhome.com gives you the tools to become a Light for Christ in your neighborhood.

Go to blesseveryhome.com to begin praying for your neighbors by name.

Community Impact

Serve the community together with your Connect Group. Here are some local outreach ministries your group can contact to find a way to serve together. Also, consider meeting the need of a neighbor, widow, or elderly couple.

GOD'S OPEN ARMS MINISTRY

Passionate individuals on a mission to be the hands and feet of Jesus, serving the needs of the communities around them
godsopenarms.org

HANCOCK FOOD PANTRY

Secure and distribute food to the needy in an effort to alleviate hunger in our community
hancockcountyfoodpantry.com

JOURNEY BAGS

Providing clothing to children in foster care
jbagsofhc@gmail.com



<https://parkchapel.org/localoutreach>

KENNETH BUTLER MEMORIAL SOUP KITCHEN

Serving all people without bias by providing their immediate need for nutritious meals
kbmsk.org

LIFE CHOICES CARE CENTER

Providing assistance, education and counseling for pregnant women and young mothers
lifechoicescarecenter.org

LOVE INC (LOVE IN THE NAME OF CHRIST)

Helping churches help people in the hope of transforming lives and communities
loveinc-ghc.org

Pray for Missionaries

There is no greater way to stand with and encourage our missionaries and ministries, than by bringing them before God in prayer. With our prayers we say, "We are with you!"

STRATEGIC GLOBAL PARTNERS

- Elam** | Iran Region
- Empart** | South Asia
- Dr. Felix & Nema Kohol** | Burkina Faso
- Brian & Tabitha Hauser** | West Africa
- The Hope Foundation** | Kenya

US CHURCH PLANTING

US-BASED PARTNERS

- Crescent Project** | US & International
- John Blatzheim** | Wheeler Mission & MissionToConnect
- Campus Ministries** | Ball State, Purdue, IU, IUPUI

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- Jared & Liz Crabtree** | Germany
- Jonathan & Amanda Moore** | SE Asia
- Rana Samuel** | South Asia
- Rick & Kathy Walden** | SE Asia
- Taylor Zimmerman** | Latvia
- Kevin & Emily Ennis** | Eurasia
- Kaitlin Smith** | Uganda
- Ashley Malloy** | Malawi

<https://parkchapel.org/globaloutreach>



Connect Group Progress Chart

FIVE EXPECTATIONS FOR CONNECT GROUPS

1. **Bible Study** – Our Connect Group will study the scriptures together for at least 30 minutes each week.
2. **Evangelism** – Our Connect Group will practice knowing other members' stories, sharing our story and sharing God's story once a month.
3. **Fellowship** – Our Connect Group will gather outside of regular scheduled group meetings at least once during each group season (fall, winter, spring) for the purpose of encouraging one another and building one another up.
4. **Benevolence** – Our Connect Group will meet the tangible needs (meals, childcare, financial) of group members during times of need (hospitalization, funeral, sickness, job loss).
5. **Community Impact** – Our Connect Group will serve together as a group at a local ministry or a neighbor in need at least once during each group season (fall, winter, spring).

EVANGELISM

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice sharing your testimony | <input type="checkbox"/> Practice sharing the gospel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Praying for your neighbors | <input type="checkbox"/> Inviting someone to church |

FELLOWSHIP

- Plan a time to gather/fellowship as a group outside of regular meeting

Location, Date & Time: _____

COMMUNITY IMPACT

- Plan a time to serve together as a group

Service, Date & Time: _____

BENEVOLENCE

- Group members meet the needs of other group members (show kindness as needs arise)

Kindness shown to: _____

BIBLE STUDY

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Wk 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Wk 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Wk 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Wk 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Wk 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Wk 8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Wk 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> Determine Next Study |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Wk 5 | |

**Park Chapel
Christian Church**

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THE GOOD SHEPHERD

