



SEPTEMBER 7, 2025

READ

Read Psalm 23, specifically focusing on verse 4, and consider what lessons the Holy Spirit intends us to learn.

EXAMINE

- How do we reconcile the dual reality that David has all that he needs (v.1), and yet walks through “the valley of the shadow of death”?
- What is “the valley of the shadow of death”? Is David referring to a literal or metaphorical dark valley (or a blend of both)?
- David says his reason to not fear the dark valley is because of God’s presence. Why is this true?
- The shepherd’s rod was a weapon to defend the flock, and his staff was an instrument for correcting the sheep from wandering. Why is it significant for God to hold both the rod and staff in his hand?

APPLY

- What is a time that you have walked through a dark valley as a follower of Jesus? What happened to your relationship with God through that time?
- Would you say that you are in the valley of the shadow of death right now? Why or why not?
- How does the gospel relate to verse 4?
- How can we practically fight for a constant awareness of God’s unending presence with us? How should we follow Jesus in times when we struggle to sense his presence?
- David Gibson points out, “Some of us want Jesus to protect us from our enemies with his rod, but we don’t want Jesus to protect us from ourselves with his staff.” What are some ways we can submit to God’s correction and discipline?
- What role does community have when believers walk through the valley of the shadow of death? What are the responsibilities/expectations of the church? What are the responsibilities/expectations of the individual?

PRAY

- Make time and space for anyone willing to share if they are in the valley right now. Don’t try to fix the situation; listen well and then pray for each other.

NOTES

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