

**SO, WHAT'S GOOD?**  
**Home Group Series**  
September - November 2018



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FGA MELBOURNE  
MEMBERS NOTES

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SESSION 1: OUR WANTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SESSION 2: WE MUST LIE DOWN</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SESSION 3: GOD IS WITH US</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>SESSION 4: DISCIPLINE IS COMFORTING</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SESSION 5: CHOOSE GOD</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>APPENDIX I</b>	<b>24</b>

# OVERVIEW

## How do you choose what's good?

**Series passage:**

*<sup>1</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
forever. Psalm 23:6 (ESV)*

### A. INTRODUCTION TO "SO, WHAT'S GOOD?"

The question we ask in this series is how to make GOOD decisions in life? We have so many choices in life and sometimes the stakes are high. When the result of our decision impacts a long-term commitment or is not readily reversible it is hard to make the best choice.

To make good choices, we often put considerable effort into seeking other's opinions, consuming product reviews, consulting experts, recommendations and following what's popular. Whether that be complex decisions like buying a house, choosing a school for our children, or simpler ones as finding a great cafe, we often go to great lengths to get it right! We need to be aware that the lowest form of knowledge is an opinion, it doesn't need anything to ground it and anyone can have one. So, what's a good measuring stick? How do we do good comparisons?

Scripture is the ultimate source to draw from when making decisions of significance. It is constant and unchanging. It is objective and has deep insights into the heart and struggles of mankind. This series is to inspire us to be the people of God he created us to be. It all starts with making good choices.

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*For 2018, our theme is "BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING" and we will spend the year focused on the Pastoral and being "Intimate Relationally"*

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### Psalm 23

The scripture that will anchor this life-giving series is Psalm 23. The Psalms are a collection of poems written by people of God. Psalm 23 is one of the great treasures of the Bible. It is ingrained in our culture. It is probably the best-known psalm in the secular world often showing up in movies and books. This Psalm is one of the most loved and memorised portions of scripture, often the only scripture read at a funeral. However, it is not a psalm about death or for the dead, but it's a psalm for the living. It can teach us how to live well and make good choices.

It may seem like a surprise choice to some, but as you will discover it contains insights that lead to a quality of life that we all desire. It reveals God's goodness in unique ways as it unveils our utter dependence on our Good Shepherd. Once we receive these truths into our spirit it can bring healing to anxiety and fears that so often beset us, sometimes on a daily basis. Here are some of the gems of a life under Christ will have the opportunity to explore how we can receive...

- Satisfaction and contentment
- Peace in everyday living
- Paths of righteousness (i.e. make good choices)
- The house of the Lord (living in God's presence)

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*The series is not so much about what is good but about who is good.*

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## B. MAIN POINTS

Psalm 23 contains six verses. We will study the entire psalm over five sessions. In addition, we have mapped each of the verses to FGAM's core values as a Household of Faith, using the F.A.I.T.H acronym.

Here is how we will cover five points for how to So, What's Good? (Sessions 1-5):

SESSION	TITLE	FOCUS	SCRIPTURE	F.A.I.T.H. POINT
<b>Session 1</b>	Our wants	We don't know what's good for us	<sup>1</sup> "The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want."	F – Faithful to the mission
<b>Session 2</b>	We must lie down	God causes us to rest well	<sup>2</sup> "He makes me lie down in green pastures he leads me beside still waters."	A – Active & Personally involved
<b>Session 3</b>	God is with us	You are with me	<sup>3-4a</sup> "He restores my soul. He leads me in path of righteousness for his namesake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me."	I – Intimate relationally
<b>Session 4</b>	Discipline is comforting	Those that God loves he disciplines	<sup>4b-5a</sup> "Your rod and your staff shall comfort me. You will spread a table before me in the presence of my enemies."	T – Teachable in discipleship
<b>Session 5</b>	Choose God	Dwell with God	<sup>5b-6</sup> "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 on the house of the Lord forever."	H – Holy & set apart

*Keywords: Choices • Psalm 23 • Good • Shepherd • Comfort • FAITH*

# Session 1: Our Wants

## We don't know what's good for us

*Key passage: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" Psalm 23:1*

### A. INTRODUCTION

God knows what is good. Genesis says God is good. God made the world and it was good, then he made mankind and it was very good! Adam and Eve were surrounded by choices, but like ignorant sheep they saw what looked good and chose that way, despite God's word warning them beforehand. Their decision had eternal repercussions, for all humanity. This series is to inspire us to be the people of God he created us to be. It all starts with making good choices.

At its core, this series is about a good God. God's goodness runs so deep it cannot simply be observed or learnt by reading a good book, even the Bible. It can only be understood by experience. We experience God as we go through the ups and downs of life and find that he is really there for us, shepherding us and helping us to navigate the wilderness and the predators to find good pasture and still waters. It is only when we experience God first hand that we begin to comprehend the depths of his goodness. It's from these time, even difficult ones, that we get to know our Good Shepherd and our trust and faith naturally grows. This series is one where we see just how skillfully and lovingly God takes care of us, as the Good Shepherd, he cares tenderly for his sheep.

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*God is our Good Shepherd and He takes good care of us.*

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### B. SCRIPTURE READING (Psalm 23)

Have everyone read the psalm aloud. Next, all should close their eyes and try to read it from memory. The leader can follow the text and prompt when necessary.

*<sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

*<sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.<sup>[a]</sup>*

*<sup>3</sup>He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.*

*<sup>4</sup>Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.*

*<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.*

*<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
forever.*

## C. SESSION VIDEO - MAIN POINT

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*Trust grows when experience God with us.*

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Did you know that every adult makes around 35,000 decisions a day? We strive to make each one right. Often, we go to great lengths to make good choices, consulting reviews, asking our friends, doing lots of research, discovering what's popular. Scripture has much to say on how we make decisions. This series will take a close look at Psalm 23 as a guide for life, by asking the question how can we learn what's really good? It's only six verses but it's oh so powerful.

One of the key points from today's passage (Ps 23:1) is to understand our limitations and the extent of God's good care for us. God is fully trustworthy. As we study the verse we will discover the many truths contained in the metaphor of the sheep and the shepherd. David, who wrote this Psalm, was able to speak from first-hand experience, both as a shepherd tending flocks and as a sheep cared for by a good shepherd.

While it is reassuring likening God to a shepherd, comparing ourselves to sheep is not a particularly flattering. It can make us uncomfortable as we prefer to think more highly of ourselves. We may prefer to view God as a co-pilot assisting us to achieve our goals rather than a Shepherd guiding us daily. David, however, paints a picture of us being fully dependent and at God's abundant mercy. Like the mountainous terrain of Israel, life is often a wilderness and we need a shepherd to lead, provide, guide and protect us. When we truly trust and closely follow the Good Shepherd we find he has so much more than just provision, there is intimacy and overflow.

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*When we make choices that align us with the Good Shepard we discover his abundant provision*

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## D. KEY VERSE STUDY (Psalm 23:1)

For the "So, What's Good" series we will be discovering for ourselves the meaning of the scripture through study. We will do this through relating to the symbols in the parable, looking up related verses, discovering the meaning of key Hebrew words, reading concordances and gleaming from our own inspiration.

**Choose one or more of the following options to study the key scripture:**

### 1. Relating to the Parable

We suggest that you divide into two groups to study the two main aspects of the parable: Shepherd and the sheep.

**Group 1. Note down key characteristics and responsibilities of Shepherds (you can search online if you like).**

**Group 2. Note down the characteristics of sheep (you can search online if you like)**

## 2. Understanding the Parable

One of the keys to interpreting Scripture correctly is to look at other passages that use the same or similar metaphors.

**Group 1.** Read scriptures that relate to Shepherds and God as our shepherd (e.g. John 10:11, Genesis 48:15, Psalm 80:1, Isaiah 40:11, Ezekiel 34:11, John 21:16-17, Acts:20-28, 1 Peter 5:1-4). What did you discover?

**Group 2.** Write down key points that relate to the people of God as his sheep (e.g. Ps 100:3, Mark 6:34, John 10:14). What did you discover?

## 3. Understanding the Verse

Look up an inter-linear Bible online (e.g. <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/psalms/23-1.htm>).

**What is the meaning of the following Hebrew keywords in this verse?**

English	Hebrew	Strong's Hebrew word	Meanings
The Lord	<a href="#">Yah-weh</a>	<a href="#">3068</a>	
Shepherd	ra'ah	<a href="#">7462</a>	
Not be in want	<a href="#">'eh-sār</a>	<a href="#">2637</a>	

## 4. Research using commentaries/blogs

Read key commentaries on this key verse (see also Appendix I)

[https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon\\_charles/tod/ps023.cfm?a=501001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/tod/ps023.cfm?a=501001)

Note any personal insights

## E. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does God give us?

2. How do we decide what is good?

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**FAITH Emphasis - Faithful to the Mission**

*The ultimate response to the gospel is trust. Psalm 23 verse 1 is a declaration of implicit trust in the Saviour as a good shepherd.*

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## F. APPLICATION

Say a prayer of thanks for the things that God has given you. If you feel that you are worrying about certain things in life, make a commitment to trust God again in each of those areas.

If you do not know the Saviour, Jesus Christ, or have wandered away from him, consider dedicating your life to him. It is simple just say a prayer of faith from your heart. You are trusting in a Good shepherd. The following prayer of repentance and turning to God is based on Psalm 51.

Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to Your unfailing love;  
according to Your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.  
Against You, You only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in Your sight,  
so that You are proved right when You speak  
and justified when You judge.

Surely I have been a sinner from birth,  
sinful from the time my mother conceived me...  
Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me and I will be whiter than snow...  
Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from Your presence  
or take Your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.  
Then will I teach transgressors Your ways,  
and sinners will turn back to You.

In Jesus name, Amen

## G. LOOKING FORWARD

In the next session, we will look at activity in our lives and how that can rob us of God's goodness.

# Session 2: We Must Lie Down God causes us to rest well

**Key passage:** "He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters." Psalm 23:2 (ESV)

## A. INTRODUCTION

We experience God as we go through the ups and downs of life and find that he is truly there for us, shepherding us and leading us to find good pasture and still waters. To lie down and rest we need to be secure in our trust of the shepherd. While we are overly active and roaming from one place to another we will not find the rest that God intends for us to have. We enter that rest by faith as we trust God to lead us. As we continue to trust, God's faithfulness is revealed. We are then able to share our experiences with others so they too can experience the rest and shelter our Good Shepherd provides.

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*To lie down and rest we need to be secure in our trust of the shepherd.*

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## B. SCRIPTURE READING (Psalm 23)

Have everyone read the psalm aloud. Now try to recite it from memory with one person following the text and prompting when necessary.

<sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>3</sup>He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
forever.

## C. MAIN POINT - SESSION VIDEO

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*God knows rest is good for us*

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If you have ever organised an event, you will know just how hard it is to get everyone together. People are so very busy, we seem to be constantly active and busyness is a way of life. Have you ever stopped to think why we push ourselves so hard, even to the point of exhaustion? What are we doing to our kids?

Hyperactivity isn't new to our generation, it is a trait of humanity. We know because God instituted the Sabbath rest day when he first brought Israel out of Egypt's slavery (where they had no rest). God also rested on the seventh day of creation. Rest is important to God, and he knows it's necessary for us. If God is truly your shepherd and leading you every day, even in the most challenging seasons of life, you will find still waters and green pastures. That is his promise.

Sheep are surprisingly similar to us. They are constantly looking for food, wandering around, are unable to see well and are easily startled. Unlike other domesticated animals, they have trouble sleeping. Conditions need to be just right. They need to be free from the threat of predators, pests and diseases. They need to have their hunger and thirst satisfied. Only then will they lie down. Also, sheep tend to bite and bully each other when they are agitated. Sound familiar?

So how do we rest with so many demands? How can we tell if we are doing things with the right motives? How do we know what are wise choices? With God as our shepherd we are given the grace and strength when it is him calling us to do it. As we spend time in his word, and yield to the still small voice directing our choices and our paths daily, we also find he leads us to rest. Rest without guilt, restoration without penalty.

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*We often have so many good options to choose from, but when we don't follow the shepherd often we are left feeling dry.*

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## D. KEY VERSE STUDY (Psalm 23:2)

For the "So, What's Good" series we will be discovering for ourselves the meaning of the scripture through study. We will do this through relating to the symbols in the parable, looking up related verses, discovering the meaning of key Hebrew words, reading concordances and gleaning from our own inspiration.

**Choose one or more of the following options to study the key scripture:**

### 1. Relating to the Parable

We suggest that you divide into two groups to answer this section.

#### **Group 1. Consider this about Shepherds**

What is the job of a shepherd?

How do Shepherds help sheep to drink?

How do Shepherds help sheep to rest?

*SO, WHAT'S GOOD [MEMBERS NOTES]*

**Group 2. Consider this about Sheep:**

How do they drink?

When do they rest/ Lie down?

## 2. Understanding the Parable

One of the keys to interpreting Scripture correctly is to look at other passages that use the same or similar metaphors.

**What are the key points that relate to Rest and still water in these verses: Proverbs 3:24; Job 34:29; Isaiah 8:6; Isaiah 40:31; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.**

## 3. Understanding the Verse

Look up an interlinear Bible online (e.g. <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/psalms/23-2.htm>).

**What is the meaning of the following Hebrew keywords in this verse?**

English	Hebrew	Strong's Hebrew word	Meanings
He makes me lie down	hirbits	<a href="#">7257</a>	
Still	menuchah	<a href="#">4496</a>	

## 4. Research using commentaries/blogs

Read key commentaries on this key verse (see also Appendix I)

[https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon\\_charles/tod/ps023.cfm?a=501001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/tod/ps023.cfm?a=501001)

Notes on your personal insights

## E. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do green pastures and still waters look like for you?

2. How does God make you lie down?

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***FAITH Emphasis - Active & personally involved***

*Faith without works is dead (James 2:14), but works done in fear or for approval is also wrong. The things we do and the choices we make should reflect the life of Faith we live.*

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## **F. APPLICATION**

Read Matthew 11:28. If you are not experiencing peace on a daily basis, think about the activities you do. Choose one thing you can change in order to give more time to God or finding your still waters.

Make a list of things that God uses to revitalise you. Ask God which green pasture he is leading you to at the moment. Surrender each day to him and let the great Shepherd faithfully lead you.

## **G. LOOKING FORWARD**

In the next session, we will look at the way God leads us to make good choices.

# Session 3: God is with us

## “You are with me”

*Key passage: “He restores my soul. He leads me in path of righteousness for his namesake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me.” Psalms 23:3-4a (ESV)*

### A. INTRODUCTION

This series is about a good God who helps us to make good decision. The focal passage for this session is about understanding how God pastors us skilfully. This is especially evident in times of trial and difficulty. Often in the darkness is when we feel he is the closest.

On the other hand, we can be tempted to become stuck in our circumstances. They can be so challenging that we stop trusting or believing God is good and he provides a way out. When that happens, we need to make the choice to trust again.

Following his lead means that he promises to find paths of righteousness. There is a way forward. His righteousness means demonstrating his good character to a watching world.

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*Paths of righteousness represent good choices that give us meaning and purpose, a future and a hope.*

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### B. READING PSALM 23

Try to read the psalm from memory. The leader should prompt where necessary.

<sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.<sup>1a</sup>

<sup>3</sup>He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
forever.

## C. MAIN POINT/ SESSION VIDEO

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*Paths of righteousness represent good choices that give God glory.*

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As we progress through Psalm 23, the Shepherd and sheep analogy becomes more intimate and personal. In verse 3 psalmist talks about the Lord restoring his soul. The Hebrew word used refers to awakening life as if bringing back from the dead. His life in us is what leads us in paths of righteousness. Paths of righteousness in the Hebrew comes from the root word meaning "return". There is a sense that in our life experience we wander off, but we return to God's path for us. This is the path that represents good choices that give us meaning and purpose. They reflect God's good character.

As sheep have limited vision of between 10-15 meters, it makes them vulnerable to straying away and to predators. It's imperative they be led by a shepherd with good vision or they simply won't survive. Similarly, we are often short sighted and are unable to see ahead. But our Shepherd, who has unlimited vision, guides us skilfully, even along the narrowest of paths. We only need to keep our shepherd within our close-range vision to be safely led.

As we look at the pastoral focus this session we see the exact midpoint of the Psalm are the words "you are with me". The language changes from being about God, to directly talking to him. This is the greatest reassurance of all. It is only because God is with us that we do not need to fear, even in our darkest times. We just need to keep choosing God and not remaining in our bitterness and anger because of our circumstances. As we follow him God will lead us to higher ground, green pastures and beside still waters. It is the Lord's presence that keeps us at all time.

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*It is only because God is with us that we do not need to fear, even in our darkest times.*

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## D. KEY VERSE STUDY (Psalm 23:4b-5a)

For the "So, What's Good" series we will be discovering for ourselves the meaning of the scripture through study. We will do this through relating to the symbols in the parable, looking up related verses, discovering the meaning of key Hebrew words, reading concordances and gleaning from our own inspiration.

**Choose one or more of the following options to study the key scripture:**

### 1. Relating to the Parable

In the interests of time, divide into two groups. Each group can share with the whole group.

**Group 1. Describe in your own words what are paths of righteousness.**

**Group 2. What is the valley of the shadow of death represent to you?**

## 2. Understanding the Parable

One of the keys to interpreting Scripture correctly is to look at other passages that use the same or similar metaphors.

**Look at the texts that relate to Paths of Righteousness and note down the Lord's promises or intentions for us:**

Psalms 20:1, 25:10, 40:11; Proverbs 2:9, 4:11, 4:26-27; Isaiah 26:7; Jeremiah 50:6.

## 3. Understanding the Verse

Look up the interlinear Bible online at <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/psalms/23-3.htm>

**What is the meaning of the following Hebrew keywords in this verse?**

English	Hebrew	Strong's Hebrew word	Meanings
Restore	shub	<a href="#">7725</a>	
Soul	nephesh	<a href="#">5315</a>	
Righteousness	še-deq	<a href="#">6664</a>	

## 4. Research using commentaries/blogs

Read key commentaries on this key verse (see also Appendix I)

[https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon\\_charles/tod/ps023.cfm?a=501001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/tod/ps023.cfm?a=501001)

Notes on your personal insights

## E. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do we think of God when bad things happen to good people?

2. What does "Fear no evil" look like?

## F. APPLICATION

Meditate on the words "you are with me". Allow time for people to reflect and wait on the Lord for their current circumstances.

Pray especially for those going through dark valleys at this time. Maybe ask them to declare to God themselves as David did, by reading Psalm 23:3 "you are with me".

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***FAITH Emphasis: Intimate relationally***

*"When you are walking with the Shepherd, the dark valleys always lead to higher ground" Steve May*

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## G. LOOKING FORWARD

In the next session, we will look at how skilfully God leads and disciplines us.

# Session 4: Discipline is comforting

## Those that God loves he disciplines

*Key passage: "Your rod and your staff shall comfort me. You will spread a table before me in the presence of my enemies." Psalm 23:4b-5a (ESV)*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Discipline is necessary if we want to grow up. In the natural, as children we expected to be disciplined by our parents when we did wrong. They showed us the way they thought was best, for the most part our parents had good intentions. We need to recognise the discipline of the heavenly Father, allowing it to shape and course correct us. He does not intend shame or harm for us, but he skilfully uses our enemies to bring good to us.

Consider this from Hebrews 12:7-11

*"Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."*

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*God always disciplines us for our good, that we can share in his holiness.*

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### B. SCRIPTURE READING (Psalm 23)

See if someone in your group can memorise the psalm. Try reciting it from memory together.

<sup>1</sup>*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

<sup>2</sup>*He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.<sup>14</sup>*

<sup>3</sup>*He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.*

<sup>4</sup>*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.*

<sup>5</sup>*You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.*

<sup>6</sup>*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
forever.*

## C. MAIN POINT - SESSION VIDEO

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*The shepherds two tools are a rod and a staff. They both provide comfort, but in different ways.*

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In David's time, shepherds carried two pieces of equipment, a rod and a staff. The shepherd's presence makes itself felt by rod or staff. The rod was made of solid wood and had three main uses. Firstly, it fended off predators or animals that threatened the sheep. It was also used to check the health condition of the sheep as it could get under the wool. Thirdly, when necessary, the rod was used to discipline sheep if they went out of line and did not respond to the master's voice.

The staff was leaner and longer than the rod. As well as guiding the sheep (they could feel it, even in the dark) it brought sheep back into line when they wandered off course or rescued them when they fell down a gully or caught somewhere.

At the very core of our walk with God is our need to respond to guidance and even correction when necessary. When left to themselves sheep naturally wander off and it's necessary for the shepherd to bring them back. We are pretty similar. So, let's bear in mind, that correction doesn't mean punishment. It does however mean changing direction to be following the shepherd once again. If we refused to respond to the correction we can cause ourselves even more pain. Remember, God only corrects us for our good.

As we receive correction we grow, it is like having a constant source of food. Plentiful nourishment even as we face our enemies. We grow a new strength of character and build much needed resilience. Let us not be discouraged by our enemies but focus on the feast that God has for us to enjoy.

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*Sometimes we travel long narrow paths where we can slip and fall, or predators lie in wait. But do not fear, our Shepherd is courageous and tough.*

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## C. KEY VERSE STUDY (Psalm 23:4b-5a)

For the "So, What's Good" series we will be discovering for ourselves the meaning of the scripture through study. We will do this through relating to the symbols in the parable, looking up related verses, discovering the meaning of key Hebrew words, reading concordances and gleaning from our own inspiration.

**Choose one or more of the following options to study the key scripture.**

### 1. Relating to the Parable

**What risks do shepherds take in defending and course correcting the sheep?**

### 2. Understanding the Parable

One of the keys to interpreting Scripture correctly is to look at other passages that use the same or similar metaphors.

**Read other texts that relate to correction or trials**

Revelation 3:19; Hebrews 12:5-6; Proverbs 3:11-12; Psalm 43:3 (also written in the context of the enemy perusing the worshiper), Matthew 6:13; 2 Timothy 4:18, 2 Thessalonians 3:3.

### 3. Understanding the Verse

Look up the following keywords <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/psalms/23-4.htm>

**What is the meaning of the following Hebrew keywords in this verse?**

English	Hebrew	Strong's Hebrew word	Meanings
Shadow of death	tsalmaveth	<a href="#">6757</a>	
Evil	ra'	<a href="#">7451</a>	
Anoint	diš-šan-tā	<a href="#">1978</a>	

### 4. Research using commentaries/blogs

Read key commentaries on this key verse (see also Appendix I)

[https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon\\_charles/tod/ps023.cfm?a=501001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/tod/ps023.cfm?a=501001)

Notes on your personal insights

## E. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you been corrected by God?
2. Correction in the body of Christ. What's a good way?

## F. APPLICATION

How has your decision making been lately? Have you recently made choices you regret or are unsure about? If you are concerned about a decision you are currently making or have recently made, surrender it to God now. Even if you have made a mistake, God is able to turn it around for Good. We just need to trust him to solve the problem and to give advice and wisdom to us when we turn to him (James 1:2-3).

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***FAITH Emphasis: Teachable in discipleship***

*When we drill down, we see a lot of our need for correction stems from pursuing our own wants and desires in an unhealthy way. It is times like these we need to review our motives to be able to make good choices.*

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## **G. LOOKING FORWARD**

In the next session, we will look at dwelling in the presence of God.

# Session 5: Choose God

## Dwell with God

**Key passage:** " 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 on the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23:5b-6 (ESV)

### A. INTRODUCTION

As we have been studying what is good, we find that it is not so much what is Good, but WHO is good. It is God who is good and the life he offers us reflects his generous and merciful character. Psalm 23 gives us a glimpse of what a life with God is like – one of peace, contentment, purpose, confidence, abundance and finally expectation. This final verse is one where we can expect God to dwell with God. As sheep we are prone to wander but a loving shepherd is tending us, and his goodness and mercy will bring us back to the fold. We can expect a life of a good future and blessed eternity only because God is our shepherd.

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*It is now we see that life is not so much about what is good but who is good.*

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### B. SCRIPTURE READING (Psalm 23)

Have everyone try to recite the psalm from memory as a group. Some in the group should know it off by heart and will be able to prompt others

<sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.<sup>(a)</sup>

<sup>3</sup>He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
forever.

## C. MAIN POINT - SESSION VIDEO

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*The final verse of Psalm 23 shows that we can live our lives with certainty.*

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Psalm 23 is a declaration of the character and promises of a good God. When taken to heart, this promise enables us to live with a true sense of certainty. We have every reason view life with an optimistic lens.

Reviewing the flow of the psalm, we saw how we started with the promise that we will not be in want because the Lord is our Shepherd. As we progress and follow him, we see how he provides and skilfully leads us to rest, guarding us from our enemies and disciplining us so we can make good choices. By journeying close to the Shepherd, we discover it's not just a life without lack, but where we can experience a life of abundance. Jesus reminded us of this promise in John 10:10 when he said *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

It is the goodness and mercy of the Good Shepherd, Christ, that follows us. Even when we wander away, his goodness pursues us to draw us back to him and back into the fold. Whether we stay in God's house or we wander off, we know that God's intention is to ultimately draw us back to dwell where God's presence is. This is not just a promise of eternity, but one that we can experience during our lifetime.

## D. KEY VERSE STUDY (Psalm 23:5b-6)

For the "So, What's Good" series we will be discovering for ourselves the meaning of the scripture through study. We will do this through relating to the symbols in the parable, looking up related verses, discovering the meaning of key Hebrew words, reading concordances and gleaning from our own inspiration.

**Choose one or more of the following options to study the key scripture:**

### 1. Relating to the Parable

**What makes a generous host?**

### 2. Understanding the Parable

One of the keys to interpreting Scripture correctly is to look at other passages that use the same or similar metaphors. If you are short on time, divide up the scripture references between two groups.

**Group 1: Texts that relate to being a host**

Deut 2:7; Psalm 30:11-12, 27:4, 61:4, 2, 73:24; Peter 1:11

**Group 2: Texts that relate to goodness and mercy**

Ps 16:11, 17:15, 103:17; Luke 12:32; Heb 4:16, 11:16.

### 3. Understanding the Verse

Look up the following keywords <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/psalms/23-6.htm>

**Look up the meaning of the following Hebrew keywords**

English	Hebrew	Strong's Hebrew word	Meanings
Goodness	hesed	<a href="#">2617</a>	
Follow	Radaph	<a href="#">7291</a>	

### 4. Research using commentaries/blogs

Read key commentaries on this key verse (see also Appendix I)

[https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon\\_charles/tod/ps023.cfm?a=501001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/tod/ps023.cfm?a=501001)

Notes on your personal insights

## E. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is your life an overflowing cup? What spills out?

2. Review the whole passage of Psalms 23, in your life, how does God guide you as a Shepherd as you determine What's Good?

## F. APPLICATION

It's a mistake to measure life's abundance by simply things we own or possess. Write down areas of abundance in your life. Take time to thank God for them.

If you struggle to be content with what you have, perhaps in the coming week reflect on what the scripture means when it says "Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honoured them. And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field" (James 1:9-11). Think about how that relates to the promises of Psalm 23.

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***FAITH Emphasis: Holy & Set apart***

*Dwelling in the house of the Lord means we are holy and set apart. We enjoy him but even more we are set apart so others can see God's goodness.*

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# APPENDIX I

## Charles Inglis: Psalm 23

### PSALM 23

POSSESSION ..... My Shepherd  
PROVISION ..... Not want  
POSITION ..... Lie down  
PASTURES ..... Green grass  
PROGRESS ..... Walk  
PLACE ..... Valley  
PRESENCE ..... With Me  
PROTECTION ..... Rod and Staff  
PREPARATION ..... Preparest, etc.  
PLENTY ..... Running over  
PURSUING (Heb.) ..... Shall Pursue  
PROSPECT ..... House of the Lord for ever

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WITH me ..... The Lord  
BENEATH me ..... Green pastures  
BESIDE me ..... Still waters  
BEFORE me ..... A table  
AROUND me ..... Mine enemies  
AFTER me ..... Goodness and Mercy  
BEYOND me ..... House of the Lord

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Perfect SATISFACTION ..... "Shall not want."  
Perfect REST ..... "Lying down."  
Perfect PEACE ..... "Waters of quietness." (mar).  
Perfect WALK ..... "Paths of righteousness."  
Perfect CONFIDENCE ..... "Will fear no evil."  
Perfect POWER ..... "Anointest my head."  
Perfect JOY ..... "My cup runneth over."

Reference:

[https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/inglis\\_charles/pegs-for-preachers/psalm\\_23.cfm?a=501001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/inglis_charles/pegs-for-preachers/psalm_23.cfm?a=501001)

*SO, WHAT'S GOOD [MEMBERS NOTES]*

NOTES: