

Praying Psalm 23



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by [Dave Butts](#)

Growing up in church was a wonderful privilege for me. One of the benefits was the encouragement I received to memorize scripture. I'm pretty sure that the first full chapter I ever memorized was Psalm 23. The beautiful imagery and spiritual depth of the Good Shepherd's Psalm has been a blessing for me throughout my life.

Though I rarely use the King James Version anymore, I still revert to that when praying through Psalm 23:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of

righteousness for his name's sake.

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy
staff they comfort me.*

*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine
enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my
life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

There are many benefits to memorizing scripture, but one of the best is the ease of access to God's Word when praying. It is a simple matter for me to pray Psalm 23 because I have committed it to memory.

Sometimes Psalm 23 suffers from the old adage that familiarity breeds contempt. We view it as a nice, safe portion of scripture best used at funerals. May I suggest instead that this powerful Psalm prayed regularly with insight can bring transformation to your life at a deep level?

Consider what you are asking of Him. Psalm 23 from beginning to end is all about the Presence of God in a person's life. When prayed from that perspective, it changes all of life. David, the Shepherd King, understood from personal experience what a shepherd's presence means to sheep.

Whether it is protection, provision, rest, or direction, the sheep are dependent upon the leadership and presence of their shepherd. That is precisely what is needed in our lives today.

What has become a powerful spiritual experience for me involves personalizing Psalm 23 as I pray. It is astonishing to me how I sense the Lord's presence by simply changing a pronoun. "You are my shepherd, Lord." I am speaking to the One who is present with me now.

If you struggle with doing this, please note that David

himself, the author of this Psalm, personalizes His prayer: "Thou(You) are with me"... "thy (Your) rod and staff"... "thou (You) preparest a table"... "thou (You) anointest."

Psalm 23 is all about the Lord being present with us every day in every aspect of life. For me, it is the way I experience and live out the truth of Col.1:27, "Christ in us, the hope of glory." No longer just head knowledge or good theology, but a way of life.

Like Col.1:27 which speaks of the Lord's presence as the hope of glory, so Psalm 23 concludes in a similar way. As we walk with Jesus through all of life, we dwell in the midst of His glory in and as the house of the Lord forever.

My challenge to you today is to memorize Psalm 23 (if you haven't already) in whatever version you enjoy, and begin to pray these amazing words back to God. This will be a life-changing experience for you as you trust and look to the Father to answer.

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