

What Psalm 23 Reveals About God's Character

When I think of someone in the Bible who truly understood the goodness of God, one person that always comes to mind is David. God calls him a man after His own heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22).

As a young shepherd tending his flock on the hills of Israel, David fellowshiped with God and came to know His nature. He knew He was a loving God. He knew that He was good, kind and patient. David knew that God would take care of him, provide for him and deliver him from danger.

From that revelation, David wrote Psalm 23. My, what insight it gives us into **God's goodness**! You may have quoted it religiously for years. You may have even thought it referred to the care God gives us in heaven.

But this psalm reveals what God wants to do for us here on earth—in the “valley of the shadow of death.” It tells us what God wants to do for us while we are here in this present life, where we must deal with our enemy, the devil. Praise the Lord, the devil will not be able to follow us to heaven. When God sets a table before us in that wonderful place, the devil will not be there!

With those things in mind, read **Psalm 23** right now and let it speak to your heart in a fresh way about the kindness and loving care God wants to give you:

“The Lord is my Shepherd [to feed, guide, and shield me], I shall not lack.

“He makes me lie down in [fresh, tender] green pastures; He leads me beside the still and restful waters.

“He refreshes and restores my life (my self); He leads me in the paths of righteousness [uprightness and right standing with Him—not for my earning it, but] for His name’s sake.

“Yes, though I walk through the [deep, sunless] valley of the shadow of death, I will fear or dread no evil, for You are with me; Your rod [to protect] and Your staff [to guide], they comfort me.

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my [brimming] cup runs over.

“Surely or only goodness, mercy, and unfailing love shall follow me all the days of my life, and through the length of my days the house of the Lord [and His presence] shall be my dwelling place” (AMP).

The more deeply you understand the truth of those words, the more you will be able to **trust** God in every circumstance of life. Your confidence in Him will make you bold when others are timid.

That is what happened to David. The revelation of Psalm 23 filled him with confidence in God. It made him bold and daring in dangerous situations. When a lion came after the sheep of his flock, David didn’t run away. He single-handedly caught that lion by the mane and killed it. When the bear came, David killed it too.

Later in his life, when everybody in Israel was afraid of the giant Goliath, David was the only one courageous enough to fight him. He said, “Hey, I killed the lion and the bear, and when I finish with this giant, he’ll be dead too!”

What was behind this great courage? David revealed the answer in 1 Samuel 17:37 when he said, “‘The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine’” (NKJV).

David knew about the **goodness** of God and had seen it work in his life. He had also seen the victories God's goodness had gained for him, and just thinking of them made him bold.

You and I will be the same way. The more we understand the goodness of God and the more we see that goodness operating in our lives, the more victories we will have to remember. The more victories we remember, the harder it is for the devil to talk us into letting him run over us.

When the devil tries to convince us he's going to defeat us this time, he won't be able to do it. We'll remember **victory** over the lion and the bear in our own lives and think, *You know, God got me this far. He will not let me down now!*

I have had that thought more times than I can remember in the last 35-plus years. My life was such a mess when I first learned about God's goodness. I have often wondered, *What would have become of me if I had not believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living?*

I might not even be alive right now. I certainly would not be enjoying the blessings I am enjoying today. Through the years, as Ken and I have continued to trust God, we have seen the evidence of His goodness continue to increase until it has totally overwhelmed us.

God's Blessings Are for You

The more I have come to know the goodness of the Lord, the more I have come to believe that God wants all of us to give our lives to Him so He can lavishly, without reserve, pour His **blessings** on us. He wants all of us to be so blessed that everywhere we look, we see the goodness of God. Every time we drive up to our homes we say, "Look what the Lord has done!" Every time we get in our car and turn the key we say, "Thank You, Lord, for this good car!"

God's desire is for us to feel so good when we get up in the

morning that we cannot help but be grateful for a well body that functions faithfully and feels so good.

Every time we look at our children and see the peace they enjoy, we praise the Lord. God's desire is that every direction we turn, we experience His goodness.

Notice I said "we." Not just me. Not just my husband, Kenneth. God wants to bless you too—in every area of your life. He wants to bless you spiritually. He wants to bless you physically. He wants to bless you in your finances, in your relationships and in your career. He wants to give you the desires of your heart.

I know it sounds too good to be true, but if you think about it, Jesus Himself—the fact that God sent Him to pay the price for our sins, that He died so we could live by simple faith in Him—sounds too good to be true. But it's true nonetheless. And Romans 8:32 says, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

If you're still somewhat skeptical, let me ask you a question. Where will you be this time next year if you don't start believing to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living?

You'll be right where you are now. Things will be no better in your life. In fact, they'll probably be worse because the devil will still be unhindered in his work to steal, kill and destroy.

But if you'll find out what the Bible says about God's goodness and dare to believe it, things will begin to change in a wonderful way. Your life will immediately begin to improve. A year from now, you'll not only see that **goodness** on the pages of your Bible, but you'll also see it around you every day of your life.

That's what I call living!

Read a companion devotional.

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