

Joyce Meyer: Why Many Christians Miss the Significance of Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is a popular passage of Scripture, and many people read it when they are hurting or going through a difficult time. Because it's so familiar, we can miss the significance of what God is saying to us.

So, I want to take a close look at verse 1 to share some insights that will encourage you today.

Psalm 23:1 (AMP) says, "The Lord is my Shepherd [to feed, to guide and to shield me], I shall not want." The New International Version reads, "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing." This is a powerful analogy for us to gain a deeper understanding of who God is and how He loves us.

Jesus is the Shepherd, and we are His sheep.

The Role of the Shepherd

Everyone wants to feel safe, secure and that they are cared for. If Jesus is your Shepherd, then you can rest assured that you are loved and that He watches over you.

In a book I read about shepherds and sheep, I discovered that a shepherd is a manager, a caretaker and an owner of his sheep. The sheep are important to him and he buys them—he pays a price for them.

In the same way, God wants to be our caretaker and the manager of our lives. He literally wants to be involved in everything that concerns you—big or small.

In this book I also learned some things about sheep. It says that sheep do not instinctively take care of themselves; they

need endless attention and a great deal of special care. They are prone to disease and parasites, which represent sin, failure, weakness, flaws and all of the messes in our lives.

Sheep are timid, fearful, stupid and stubborn. It's no wonder He calls us sheep! The truth is, on our own, we aren't smart enough to know the best way to manage our lives. Whether we realize it or not, we are desperate for Jesus every minute of every day to have a good life filled with real love, peace and joy!

The Shepherd Gives His All for His Sheep

Now, a shepherd loves his sheep and he never leaves them. In Hebrews 13:5 (NIV), God says, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

God wants you to know He's not far off somewhere, out of your reach. He gave His only Son—Jesus Christ—to purchase your life. John 10:11 says Jesus is "the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." And in verses 17-18, Jesus says, "I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord."

Everything Jesus did for you, He did it willingly. He suffered willingly. He died willingly. It's so hard for us to grasp this truth with our minds. We simply have to believe it in our hearts—to come to Him like a little child and just believe.

The Shepherd Loves His Sheep

As your Good Shepherd, God loves you unconditionally, endlessly and perfectly! He cares for you and has a good plan for your life. He's not mad at you, and He knew everything you were ever going to do wrong before you came into relationship with Him.

Psalms 139 says He knows every single thing about us, and He

loves us anyway! He knows our thoughts before we think them and all of the words we will ever say before we say them. I will say it again: God loves you unconditionally, endlessly and perfectly!

It's so amazing when we realize that Christianity is not about doing religious works or fulfilling certain obligations. It's about having a personal relationship with God by accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, believing He is the Son of God and took our sin upon Himself. He willingly shed His blood on the cross for us and died in our place. Jesus rose again and through faith in Him, His Holy Spirit comes to live inside us—in our spirit.

With Christ in our hearts, we have everything we will ever need to experience the life He has for us. And when we go through the hardships and hurts of this life, we can be comforted knowing we are in His loving care.

As you celebrate Christmas, think about Jesus, the Lamb of God, who came to take away the sin of the world, and what it means for Him to be your Shepherd. You are so precious to Him that He willingly came to this world to live, suffer and die so you could be purchased with His blood and become God's child. You are a priceless sheep! {eoa}

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-teaching CD series Psalm 23: The Lord Is My Shepherd. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting .

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times' bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. She has authored more than 100 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and *Your Battles Belong to the Lord (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .

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