

Joyce Meyer: What Many Believers Don't Understand About Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is a familiar passage of Scripture for many people that brings comfort in times of loss or hardship. But there's so much more that God has for us in this Psalm than we will understand simply by reading it when we're struggling with fear or grief.

In the Amplified Bible, Classic Edition, Psalm 23:3 says, "...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." This promise from God is a key to living with real peace and joy and becoming everything you were created to be.

Getting Free of Guilt and Shame

The devil wants us to feel that something is wrong with us, everything we do is wrong and we're not what we should be. And so many people spend their life feeling bad about themselves, guilty or ashamed as though something is wrong with them.

I know what this is like. Because of the abuse I went through during my childhood, I spent many years with this message playing over and over in my head, "What's wrong with me?" I know many people have had similar experiences and can relate to what I'm talking about.

But the truth can set us free! And the truth comes through a personal relationship with Jesus, believing He is the Son of God and accepting Him as Lord and Savior of your life. You can be free of guilt, shame and condemnation, and have confidence that you are right with Him. (See Rom. 8:1.)

God's View of You in Christ

As born-again Christians, 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV) says we “become the righteousness of God.” This means that, *in Christ*, we have the righteousness of God in our spirit, and we have right standing with God.

It’s easy to wonder, “How can I be the righteousness of God if I’m not doing everything right? I still make mistakes and don’t feel like I’m right in His eyes.” The answer to this question is the difference between religion and having a relationship with God.

When I talk about religion, I’m talking about just following rules and regulations that have no life or power of God in them. Practicing a religion often means keeping laws or rules that you think will please God. But we see in Psalm 23:3 that God leads us in paths of righteousness not because we earn it based on what we do, but “for His name’s sake.”

Jesus gave His life for us so we could have an intimate, personal relationship with God through Him. When we put our faith in Christ, believing that His sacrifice on the cross—the shedding of His blood—provides total forgiveness of our sin, we come into relationship with God because of what *He* has done for us. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ, not by any works we do (Eph. 2:8-9).

As we get a revelation of what it really means to “become the righteousness of God,” we discover who we are in Christ and we can live the life God created us to live through faith in Him. What we believe about ourselves determines whether or not we will live by faith in God, trusting His love for us and His faithfulness to us.

Walking Out God’s Righteousness in You

I’ve heard people say, “If you believe you are right with God regardless of what you do, won’t that just give you license to sin?” My response to that is once you know who you are in Christ and the beauty of what He’s done for you, the last

thing you want to do is sin. Instead, you want to do what's right because of what He's done for you, not to try to earn His love or favor.

Being a believer in Christ is a progressive, continual journey of changing to become more and more like Him in our hearts, minds and behavior. Walking in His paths of righteousness happens as we get closer to God and grow in our love for Him and our trust in Him. It's a lifelong process, and a good attitude to have is: I'm not where I need to be, but thank God I'm not where I used to be. I'm OK and I'm on my way!

I want to encourage you to enjoy your daily walk with God. He is your Good Shepherd who is always with you, and He will faithfully lead you down paths of righteousness for your life.
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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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