

**Come to Me:
The Good Shepherd**

Reflect

1. What comes to mind when you think about how a shepherd interacts with his flock?
2. How do you think stress is generally viewed in today's culture?
3. How are authority and boundaries generally viewed and approached in today's culture?

Read Your Bible

- Matthew 11:28-30
- Psalm 23

Apply God's Word to Your Life

1. Describe a time when you have felt stressed, weary, or overwhelmed from day to day living?
2. How do you generally manage those feelings?
3. Describe your interactions with others during times of overwhelm.
4. Describe your feelings and approach toward God in overwhelming moments.
5. Reflect on the "rod" and "staff" mentioned by the psalmist in Psalm 23. What do you think they represent and how do you think the Psalmist finds them "comforting"?
6. Describe a time you went somewhere and felt welcomed as an honored guest. Describe a time where you felt *unwelcomed*.
7. What is your current view and approach toward boundaries and authority?
8. How does Psalm 23 influence your view of God and your relationship with Him?

Conclusion

Psalm 23 is one of the most recognizable Psalms. Though it is recognizable, I wonder how many of us hear judgement and discipline in it and miss the many other characteristics of God illustrated in this Psalm. Many hear the "rod and staff" and think they are tools of punishment, but the psalmist uses the word "comfort" when talking of them. They are comforting because they symbolize God's protection, guidance, present help, and rest, even in the face of enemies. Psalm 23 is much more than just the "rod and staff". This Psalm also illustrates God's character as loving, good, gentle, compassionate, caring, protective, provisionary, and faithful. Just as a good shepherd watches over his flock, we can be confident and find rest knowing God is always with us, always protecting us, always guiding us, and always offering us a place of peace and rest.

Pray

Heavenly Father, we know You are our Good Shepherd. Thank you for the gifts of Your guidance, rest, and provision. Help us to see them as a comfort. We admit that we sometimes stray off the path You

have intended for us. We admit we can get weary from challenges we face. Help us to look to You and lean on You when we are feeling overwhelmed. When we are in need of rest, help us to find it in You. We pray in Jesus' Name. Amen