



OVERVIEW: The Bible often depicts us as sheep. Left to ourselves, we wander off and place ourselves in harm's way. We can't find our way back. The Bible also depicts God as the Shepherd over us. He is the One who gently guides us, protects us, and comforts us. Psalm 23 is one of the most beloved psalms in Scripture, and it succinctly captures this picture of God as our loving Shepherd.

Directions: As you begin your event, consider using the following engage options before starting the message.

ATMOSPHERE

Place pictures around the room of famous celebrities and personalities the students may follow. Say, **"It's often tempting to follow after 'successful' people, but Jesus calls us to forsake the world to follow Him."**

MEDIA

Search the Internet for "Do sheep only obey their Master's voice?" Play the video as you begin the session. Say, **"Jesus is our shepherd, and we are a part of His flock. We will know His voice and follow Him."**

TEACH (MAKE YOUR NOTES BELOW)

The Point: God guides us as He walks with us.

PREPARE

Whereas in the past, we've walked wrong paths and brought pain to ourselves and others, our Great Shepherd leads us on right paths so that we would experience His goodness.

1. GOD PROVIDES FOR US

Psalm 23:1-2

- A.** Because God is our shepherd, He is committed to providing all we need.
- B.** Green pastures are a picture of the rest He provides. Because of Jesus, we can cease striving to fulfill the law.
- C.** Quiet waters are a picture of the nourishment Jesus provides for our souls.

2. GOD PROTECTS US

Psalm 23:3-4

- A.** We've taken wrong paths of sin, which have brought pain and damage to our lives.
- B.** God restores our brokenness, then leads us along right and safe paths.
- C.** Though we will still experience tough times, we need not fear because God provides protection for His children.

3. GOD HONORS US

Psalm 23:5-6

- A.** The image shifts from sheep (whom the Shepherd loves) to family—God has made us sons and daughters.
- B.** God invites us to a feast where He honors us by anointing. Those who were against us have been captured and are forced to look on.
- C.** Because God is faithful, we know we will experience His goodness and mercy for eternity.



Directions: Use the following outline as a guide for a message based on the passages from this session of Bible Studies for Life: Students. Additionally, use the suggested illustrations and activities to customize your midweek event.

OVERVIEW: The Bible often depicts us as sheep. Left to ourselves, we wander off and place ourselves in harm's way. We can't find our way back. The Bible also depicts God as the Shepherd over us. He is the One who gently guides us, protects us, and comforts us. Psalm 23 is one of the most beloved psalms in Scripture, and it succinctly captures this picture of God as our loving Shepherd.

INTRO

- ▶ **What comes to mind when you think of a shepherd?**
- ▶ **What is the relationship between sheep and a shepherd?**
- ▶ **What would the world say about relying on a shepherd?**

PSALM 23:1-2

- ▶ **How can you trust God to provide for our needs?**
- ▶ **What are some examples of what God provides to His sheep?**
- ▶ **What does it mean to find our rest in Jesus?**

PSALM 23:3-4

- ▶ **What do we need protection from?**
- ▶ **How does God protect His sheep?**
- ▶ **What are some examples of God's providing protection?**

PSALM 23:5-6

- ▶ **What does it mean to be a part of God's family?**
- ▶ **How does God honor us?**
- ▶ **What good things does God have in store for His family?**

LIVE IT OUT

Discuss: Ask students to briefly discuss ideas that may have challenged them during the session.

Ask: How can you better follow God as a sheep follows a shepherd?

Pray: Ask God to lead students on the right paths and to help them follow Him in everyday life.