

PRAYER

- Thank God for being your Good Shepherd. Thank Him for the lessons that He teaches and for His great love in caring for His sheep.
- Ask God for His continued provision. Pray for the strength to be content even in lack.
- Pray for those around you to understand how you can be content and satisfied with God as your Shepherd. Pray for them to experience God as their Good Shepherd today.

NOTES

PERSPECTIVE

Provision

WEEK 1

WARM-UP

- What is your favorite restaurant or buffet experience? What would you eat there if you could have anything?
- Tell us about one time you had more than enough.
- Have you ever seen anything and been overwhelmed by the sheer amount of it?

WORD *¹The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.*

PSALM 23:1,2

David begins this well-known psalm by singing of God as his Shepherd. A shepherd is one who cares for, leads, and guides flocks of sheep. In the time of the Israelites, this imagery would have been far more relevant, as they had many shepherds among them and knew how they cared for sheep. With David focused on the Lord as his Shepherd, he would *not want*. This means he felt that he lacked nothing. He felt content and cared for knowing who his Shepherd was. This can be true for us, too, if we see our lives through God's perspective and focus on Him. Let us look at how we can be content with God as our Shepherd.



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1 | I can be content because I know who God is to me.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. **PSALM 23:1**

(Read also **JOHN 10:11,12.**)

David looked to God as his Shepherd, and he felt content because he understood how a shepherd took care of his sheep—often putting his own life on the line. Jesus spoke about how He is the *Good Shepherd* and how He was different from a *hired hand* (John 10:11,12). While the hired hand may abandon the sheep to danger, the Good Shepherd cares for them and even lays down His life to protect them. When we experience God as our Shepherd, we can live a life that lacks nothing. Even if we don't have everything that this world could offer, we can be satisfied. How can we focus on the one who cares for us rather than on what we lack?

2 | I can be content because I know what God does for me.

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. **PSALM 23:2**

Israel is a desert land. There weren't many green pastures or quiet waters in the country. When a shepherd led his sheep to a pasture, they would graze until there was no grass left. Lying down in the pasture meant that the sheep was fully satisfied and could eat no more. This is a picture of how we dwell when we are with Christ, our Good Shepherd: fully content (John 10:10,11). Even in lack, we lack nothing with Him. We can be content in lack or in plenty not because of the things we have, but because we can do all things through Christ, who ultimately satisfies us (Philippians 4:11-13). How has this been true in your life?

APPLICATION

- Read and meditate on Psalm 23 throughout the week. What truths can you glean from this text? How does God as our Shepherd change your perspective about your life and situation?
- We experience supernatural contentment when we are in God. How can the contentment we have in Christ show in your attitude toward lack? What attitudes or ideas in your life need to change?
- Do you have family members or friends who have not yet experienced the contentment you experience in Christ? Pray that your life will be a testimony of God's provision to them.