

Week One: The Language of Trust

Trust / [truhst] *noun*: reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of a person or thing; confidence.

Discussion Starter: What first comes to mind when you think of the word “trust”? What are some antonyms for “trust”?

Context: This psalm is perhaps the most well-known of all the psalms. Written by King David – “a man after God’s own heart” –Psalm 23 depicts our relationship to God as that of sheep to their shepherd. There is no such thing as a flock of wild sheep; sheep are incredibly vulnerable and cannot survive on their own. They will die without the care of a shepherd. In order to live and thrive, they must follow and trust their shepherd as he leads them through all circumstances.

Scripture and Discussion: Read through the psalm silently for a couple of minutes, then have someone from the group read it aloud.

Psalm 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

³ he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name’s sake.

⁴ Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

1. Is there an image or idea in this psalm that you find particularly comforting or encouraging? Why do you think it speaks to you?
2. What are some of the ways the sheep must trust the shepherd in this psalm? What does the shepherd do or provide for them?
3. What can this psalm teach us about human nature? What do we learn about God and what He is like?

Group Prayer

Share your concerns and thanksgivings with one another and pray together. You could close your prayer time by reading Psalm 23 aloud together.

Throughout the week, practice turning Psalm 23 into a personal prayer:

“Praying the Psalms” is not difficult, but it does take practice. One way to do this is to start by reading the psalm through once, then reread one verse at a time. For each verse, practice putting your own words, experience, and desires alongside the words of the psalm.

For example: In verse one, “The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing”, you could start by saying something like, “Lord, I am always worried about what I lack – time, energy, money – but I can trust you to care for me and provide for me. When I worry about lack, remind me that in you I really do lack nothing. You have given me all in Jesus. You hold nothing back in Him. Help me to grow in trust.”

Make your way through each verse, using it as a mirror for your own heart, and letting the language of the psalm help you connect to God.