

REST FOR THE STRESSED-1

God's Antidote For Worry

"Because the Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need." - Psalm 23:1

"Your heavenly Father already knows perfectly well what you need, and he will give it to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to."
- Matthew 6:32, 33 (Living)

The 23rd Psalm is the most well-known psalm in the Bible, but not necessarily known well. This psalm reveals the heart of God, and knowing God's heart makes it a lot easier to deal with the stresses of life.

Welcome/Worship

Introduce the focus of your worship time by reading Isaiah 40:11, explaining that God takes care of His people like a shepherd. Ask, *"How have you experienced God's care lately?"*

Spend time in praise and prayer thanking God for His blessings. Possible songs: "I Am A Sheep" (533), "He Is Able" (213), "He Leadeth Me" (410), "Give Thanks" (68).

Word

Read Psalm 23, noting the intensely personal nature of this psalm.

1. What comfort do you find in knowing that God's heart is the heart of a shepherd?
2. Do you share the same level of confidence in God's care as expressed in this psalm? If so, what has happened in your life to give you that kind of assurance?
3. At the moment, which are you depending upon more-- His provision, protection, guidance or correction?
4. **Read Matthew 6:32-33**. Do you believe that giving God first place in your life will assure you of having everything else you need? Explain.
5. **Read John 10:1-18, 27-28**. According to this passage, what does it mean to be shepherded? What does this passage tell you about what it means to give Jesus control of your life? (notice particularly vss 14, 27)

Works

Religion will not relieve your stress. You need a relationship--someone who provides, protects, guides and corrects. Is the Lord your shepherd? Is the Shepherd your lord? He won't be one without the other!

If you catch yourself worrying about something this week, make the conscious decision to pray about it. If it's big enough to worry about, it's big enough to pray about. And as you pray, keep the words of Philippians 4:6 in mind, *"And my God will meet all of your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."*