

# REST FOR THE STRESSED-5

God's Antidote For Dark Valleys

"Even though I walk  
through the valley of the  
shadow of death, I will fear  
no evil, for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me."  
- Psalm 23:4

"The good man does not  
escape all troubles--he has  
them too. But the Lord  
helps him in each and every  
one." - Psalm 34:19

"By embracing death,  
taking it into himself, he  
destroyed the Devil's hold  
on death and freed all who  
cower through life, scared to  
death of death."  
- Hebrews 2:15, *Message*

An old Arab proverb says, "All sunshine and no rain makes a desert." Faith is built in the valleys of life. Regardless the nature of your dark valley--relational, financial, physical, emotional--God desires to use it in a way that will bring growth and maturity in your life.

## Welcome

*What was the toughest hike or climb you ever made? Share the details!*

## Worship

**Read Psalm 23**--noticing the change of personal pronouns in verse 4. It's the valleys of life that bring us face to face with God. *What is your favorite "funeral song" or song that has provided comfort as you've faced tough times?* Begin with yourself, and have someone lead the songs as they are shared.

## Word

1. *Are you afraid of dying? What is it about death that makes it so terrifying? As a group, come up with as many reasons as you can for why people fear death.*
2. *How does knowing Jesus' power over death address each one of those fears (Hebrews 2:15)?*
3. *Have you ever had a near-death experience, or gone through a dark valley that seemed almost as traumatic? What impact--negatively or positively--did that experience have on your spiritual walk with the Lord?*
4. *According to this passage, how can you keep from being afraid-- even in the midst of the deepest darkness? When you are in a tough situation, what helps you keep your eyes on God's presence (His protection and provision) and not on your problem?*
5. **Read John 10:27-29.** *What do you find most reassuring about this passage? What assumption is made in this passage about your response to the Great Shepherd?*

## Works

Spend some time prayerfully considering the needs of your group at the moment. *What is one way that the Lord could work through you this week to meet just one of those needs?* Keep in mind that some of the best things about your group happen between meetings!