

**PSALM 23**  
***Be Refreshed***  
**WEEK ONE NOTES**

**SMALL GROUP COVENANT**

Be on time if at all possible.

Keep prayer requests and sharing confidential within your group

Condense your personal sharing so as to give time for everyone to participate. Extroverts manage yourselves. Introverts we want to hear from you.

Focus on your own individual thoughts and feelings as you share with the group. Respect spouses or other family members by not saying anything that will embarrass them.

Resist fixing and advising unless the other person requests input

Be as vulnerable as you are comfortable; no one is required to share. Vulnerability begets vulnerability.

Appreciate and respect each person's contribution. So be mindful of allowing others to finish their thought by not interrupting or hijacking their story

Respect each other's religious backgrounds, denominations, and political views (try to avoid), should they happen to come up

All you amazing entrepreneurs, I am so proud of you but ask that you not market your business at Women's Small Groups.

Pray for the group members as they come to mind during the week

Put your phone on silent and only reference it for emergencies

**WEEKLY FUN FACTS:**

One pound of sheep wool can make ten miles of yarn!

There are about 900 breeds of sheep out there - who knew?

Most of us have heard Psalm 23 read at funerals which is kind of ironic because it is actually, a Psalm of Life, not death

Context: The Jews were a nomadic people and sheep herding was one of the earliest human occupations. A family's wealth was measured by the count of his sheep, goats, cows, horses, donkeys, and camels.

Psalm 23 was written by David who was son of shepherd and was a shepherd himself. So he knew all about shepherding and about sheep.

And as we begin why don't we read it together.

### **PSALM 23 (NASB)**

- 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 The Lord is my shepherd  
I lack nothing

Context: Psalm 100:3 gives us a great introductory picture of who God is as our shepherd.

### **PSALM 100:3**

Know that the LORD (Jehovah - the self existent One) Himself is God (Elohim - the Creator God);  
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;  
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

David uses these specific names for God to say “The self-existent God who created every piece and part of you, and gets you more than anyone else, also serves as and desires to be the Shepherd of your life.

The promise in Psalm 23 is that when we allow Him to fulfill that role, we will lack for nothing.

In Bible times each individual flock had its own shepherd. And, each individual sheep’s ear was marked with a symbol of who they belonged to.

We are marked as *His* sheep belonging to *Him* as well. In other words the *Lord* is *My* Shepherd. Or, “The Lord, He’s my Shepherd.”

**Psalm 95:7**

For He is our God (Elohim/Creator)  
and we are the people of *His* pasture,  
the flock under *His* care.

Shepherding was a low level occupation and usually delegated to the youngest son.

David was the youngest son of a shepherd, a shepherd himself. I love how later he became known as the Shepherd King of Israel. Again, he knew all about shepherds and sheep.

What’s important beyond all that imagery is that David also knew the King who was *his* shepherd.

I don’t think any of this was a coincidence. This is God’s designed picture of our relationship with Him.

I love how David used this part of his early life story to paint this beautiful picture of his relationship with God later in his life, after *he* became king.

God made the decision to be identified, of all the descriptors He could have chosen, as our shepherd. And then Jesus chose to call Himself the Good Shepherd.

Right off the bat David says I am God’s sheep, in His pasture, and as a result, “I will not lack...anything He knows I need.”

There can often be a big difference between what I think I need and what He knows I need.

\*But the promise is that under the Shepherd’s care I will flourish. And I really like the sound and the promise of that word right now. FLOURISH.

What do you think of when someone says “Oh, she is really flourishing right now”? I think of someone who is *thriving*.

We are setting a context right now, but there is an implied prerequisite here. For David to boldly state that the Lord was his shepherd meant that he was at the same time acknowledging himself as a sheep.

Later we'll see that when the sheep follows the shepherd he fully meets the sheep's need for protection, its need to be known, its need for guidance and encouragement, and its need for rest and refreshment. So the sheep is free to *flourish* in His pasture.

These needs are universal, but I think #corona has both exposed and exacerbated some of them, and then added a few of its own.

For me it has thoroughly and completely upended my false belief that I am in control. But rather than be paralyzed by that, or bide my time until the pandemic is over, my heart's desire is to turn toward the Shepherd who knows me completely and what *I truly* lack - whether I am totally clear on what that is or not.

One thing I like about sheep is that they don't intuitively know how to *fake it til they make it*. When they are lost or afraid or hungry or thirsty they are totally dependent on the shepherd. They're like “Whoah - I really need my shepherd right now.”

Study after study of sheep tells us how they clearly know their shepherd's voice and how the shepherd clearly knows their unique bleat.

My hope this session is that as we learn how to trust and hear our Shepherd's voice and follow His loving and wise guidance we will both depend on Him like we've never done before and flourish like we've never flourished before - even in this crazy season we all find ourselves in.

And that a few years from now when someone asks us about our 2020 we will be able to say - It was so incredibly stinking hard, but I grew exponentially in my relationship with God and I experienced His presence like never before. I actually flourished during that season.

## DISCUSSION

1. Share something you have learned about yourself during this time.
2. 2020 has exposed my lack of \_\_\_\_\_ in general, and right now I specifically lack \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Read Psalm 27:4 and the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10. How do these verses address needs, wants, and lack?
4. How do we shift our thinking and perspective in this area? How does this perspective speak into what you lack right now?
5. What one thing could you do to embrace both your lack and how God would love to meet you there?
6. What is your definition of flourishing? What do you look like when you are flourishing? What would that look like now?
7. Make a text or email prayer group to use to communicate with each other. How can the group pray for you?