

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study of Psalm 23 – Part 2

I. Verse 3 – “He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.”

A. “He restores my soul...” – The word “**restore**” means; “**to restore, bring back; to be recovered**”¹

God is a God of restoration. He wants to restore, to recover the soul that is downtrodden, depressed and discouraged. Philip Keller writes:

“Even David, the author of the Psalm, who was much loved of God, knew what it was to be cast down and dejected. He had tasted defeat in his life and felt the frustration of having fallen under temptation. David was acquainted with the bitterness of feeling hopeless and without strength in himself. In Psalm 42:11 he cries out, ‘Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God. . . .’”²

1. What Are Some Reasons For Depression and Discouragement?

- a. Tired in Body and Soul. **Hebrews 12:3 (Galatians 6:9)**
- b. Pressures of Responsibilities.
- c. Disappointments – “**The sadness experienced when people or circumstances do not fulfil expectations.**”³
- d. Comparing Ourselves To Others. **II Corinthians 10:12.**
- e. Meditating (dwelling) on the Wrong Things.
- f. Severe Loss through death, divorce, bankruptcy, etc..
- g. Fear.

2. How do we Overcome Depression and Discouragement?

- a. If it's due to sin, repent and confess - **Numbers 21:7; I John 1:9. (It could be the sin of unbelief! – Romans 14:23.)**
- b. Remind yourself of the blessings and promises of God. **Psalm 103:1-5.**
- c. Pray. **I Samuel 30:6-8.**
- d. Don't try to go it alone. “**...that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.**” - **I Corinthians 12:25-26.**
- e. Decide you're going to give Praise to the Lord no matter what - **Psalm 3:1-4; Psalm 9:1-10; Isaiah 61:3.**

B. “...He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.”

1. The word “**leads**” means; “**lead, guide, i.e., direct the movements of others implying leadership and rulership**”⁴ There should be no doubt that God wants to lead us in life. This is what a “**Shepherd**” does – He leads and feeds. Of course, the primary way God leads us is through His written Word – The Bible. There is, however, individual guidance, given by the Holy Spirit, to assist the believer in knowing what he ought to do specifically in his life. Any kind of subjective guidance, however, must never run contradictory to the Scriptures. If the Holy Spirit is guiding us and He inspired the Scriptures, He will never contradict Himself!

¹ William D. Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1052.

² W. Philip Keller, *A Shepherd looks at Psalm 23* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2007), 53.

³ Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

⁴ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

2. How Do We Receive the Holy Spirit's Guidance?

a. Believe that God wants to Guide you in life. There are some theologians and Christians in general, who do not believe in personal, individual guidance. Others believe that it can happen but it's very rare. What's the Bible say? **Proverbs 3:5-6; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:16; John 14:26; John 16:13; Acts 16:6-7; Acts 18:4-5; Acts 19:21; Acts 20:22-23; I John 2:20-27; I Corinthians 2:6-16; II Corinthians 13:14; James 1:5-6.**

personal b. Have a Strong Spiritual Life. Daily time of Fellowship with the Lord. This means worship, prayer and the Word of God. **John 15:1-14. The more you're in the Word, and the Word is in you, the more you will be able to recognize the leading of the Lord.**

c. Along with this time of fellowship is a time of waiting upon the Lord. **Psalm 37:1-11.**

- 1) The word “**wait**” literally means; “**to bind together by twisting**”.
- 2) Waiting does not mean doing nothing!
- 3) Waiting on the Lord involves listening.
- 4) Waiting on the Lord involves getting alone with God. **Matthew 14:23; Luke 9:18. Avoid distractions.** The devil's strategy is to bombard our minds with noise!!
- 5) Waiting on the Lord involves lingering in His Presence.

3. After the Written Word of God, the Primary way God guides us is through the inner witness. **Romans 8:14-16; 9:1.**

“Have you ever felt something alerting you to pay attention or pulling you in a particular direction? Perhaps you were listening to a sermon and you sensed God telling you to follow Him in obedience. Or maybe you walked into a restaurant and were filled with dread, as if you should leave quickly. If you are a believer, then most likely these feelings were the prompting of the Holy Spirit, who always guides you to understand and accept the Father's will. He is the One speaking to your heart, warning you about danger and encouraging you to submit to God's purposes.” - Dr. Charles Stanley, *Charisma Magazine – July 20, 2012*

- a. This inner witness is an inner sense of peace and affirmation. It is a “knowing” on the inside that something is the right thing to do.
- b. When the inner witness is present, there will be the “**gift of faith**” which gives assurance.
- c. Sometimes having No “Witness” is the Direction of God. It is common when seeking God's will in a decision to NOT receive any witness at all. In such instances, we may actually be getting a very clear direction from God. No witness is often God telling us to continue doing what we're doing and don't make a change.

4. **“...in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.”** – The word “**righteousness**” is defined as: “**...justice, rightness, acting according to a proper (God's) standard, doing what is right, being in the right.”**⁵

“He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.” – Psalm 23:3 - NLT

⁵ William D. Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1025.