

# “On the Way” 365 Bible Reading Plan

# PSALM 23

## Psalm 23

Psalm twenty-three is the most familiar passage in the Old Testament and is quoted more than other many times over. The psalm is a poetic masterpiece, but more than that it is the inspired words of God, and these words are instructive for every life, especially those who are followers of the Great Shepherd, Jesus.

Psalm twenty-three is often associated with funerals in the Christian world and that is understandable. The verse appears on the front or back of many funeral home and mortuary programs or orders of service. It has been read beside of caskets and gravesides since time immemorial. However, this is not a song of death! This is a song of life, real life. A life that is centered, balanced, and filled with perspective. This is by construct a song of provision and protection. It is a song of confidence, hope and assurance about living, not dying...living. The psalm opens portraying God as a caring shepherd leading to feeding grounds of green grass for nourishment and provision. Leading to “still waters” where the sheep in His loving care can drink. Sheep will not drink from a swift stream as it is frightening to them. If there is swiftness the shepherd will lead them to a slow circling or still eddy. The valley of the shadow of death is not an

imaginary place, but rather a real place with real dangers, but because of the Great Shepherd’s presence and protection, there is nothing or no one to fear (the preparation for you in the presence of your enemies, that everyone has, is for another commentary or podcast).

The last verse of the psalm is the most assuring and trust-building of this great song. **“Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”** Goodness is the Hebrew word “Tov” and speaks of more than just behavior, but essence of character and nature. All that is wholesome, summed up in the nature of God Himself. Mercy translates the unique Hebrew word, chesed. This word is translated twelve different ways in our English Bibles. The reason is, it is so rich in expressing the character of God that one word cannot express it. “Follow” is translated “chase after” or “hotly pursue” in other passages.

### **Prayer and Action Steps**

*Thank you, Lord, that you have and will hotly pursue me and chase after me all the days of my life and because of that, I will dwell with you forever. Amen*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Scripture \_\_\_\_\_

- *Read the chapter. If you have time, read it again.*
- *Highlight, underline or circle the Key Verse or Verses of the chapter.*
- *Ask yourself these questions as you read through the chapter.*

Is this historical narrative, analogy, metaphor, allegory, or some other element of speech or communicating truth?

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What is the Context? Old Testament? New Testament? What is the writer speaking or writing about? To whom is he writing?

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\_\_\_\_\_

Is this a clear passage of Scripture (can only be interpreted one way)? Or could the passage be interpreted legitimately, in two or more ways, according to grammar and context?

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Does the passage teach a Biblical Precept; that is, tells you something to be, do or act?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there principles in this chapter that if followed, would require me to change my attitudes or actions?

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Does the passage give a Biblical Pattern that is followed here and other places in the Bible?

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