

# **P.R.A.Y. – PSALM 23 – THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

Psalm 23 is a Psalm of Confidence in the Lord. It declares the Lord's goodness with two images... the Lord as Shepherd (1-4) and the Lord as Host (5-6).

The first image speaks of God's guidance and protection for His people. The second speaks of communion and fellowship with God.

God as Shepherd is a common theme in Scripture (Gen. 48:15; 49:24; Ps. 28:9; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; Rev. 7:17; cf. Ps. 49:14). We also recognize the title "Good Shepherd" as a title for Christ our Lord (John 10:1-18).

If you have a Bible Dictionary or other study resource check the meaning of "mercy" in v. 5 (or at least compare other translations. What do you find?

What other words and phrases are translated differently that catch your eye?

*Additional Resources: ESV Study Bible, NIV Study Bible, NET Bible*

**“HOW DO YOU READ THE BIBLE?  
OH, I PRAY (O.I.P.R.A.Y)!”**

**P.R.A.Y. THE BIBLE**

**PRAY** - for God's help in understanding His Word!

**O** - Observe what you read (what does it “say”?)

- What Stands Out to you?
- What Do You Learn About God?
- What do You Learn About People?
- What Do Different Translations Say?

**I** - Interpret what you find (what does it “mean”?)

- How Would You Explain Them To Someone Else?
- What DID These Words Mean To The First Audience?
- What DO They Mean Today?
- Write it in Your Own Words?

**P** – Praise and Thanksgiving in response to God’s Word

**R** – Reflect, Repent, Return to Jesus Christ the Lord who forgives and restores

**A** - Ask, Seek, and Knock in light of God’s kingdom purposes as well as for daily needs (Matt 6:11)

**Y** – Say YES! to God’s Will by creating a Plan of Action!

**PRAY** - Turn your answers into active prayer, praise, repentance, and seeking God’s strength to carry out your plans to follow His will!

Remember... Saying “YES!” to God’s Will revealed in Scripture ultimately leads us to **SHARE & BLESS.**

**SHARE** - What you've found with your household, friends, and/or small group this week!

Who do you know who needs to hear what you've discovered?

**BLESS** – How will you, your household, small group, etc. live out a lifestyle of mercy this week?

## **GROUP GUIDE – HOUSEHOLDS & SMALL GROUPS**

1. Check to see how folks are doing and ask about everyone's joys and concerns.
2. Check to see how their plans of action went and how their sharing went.
3. Pray for one another (James 5:16)
4. If people have not already made notes, the next part of your study time can be spent on this working through the scripture as a group after a few minutes of individual study.
5. Share how you would explain it to someone else and P.R.A.Y.
6. Share your "Plan of Action" to say YES! To God and who comes to mind to share Good News with.
7. God's Word or concerns in the group or community may guide you how to **BLESS** others in the coming week as individuals, households, or groups.
8. Pray for God's help to carry out your plans, return safely and study God's Word in the coming week!
9. Pray for people who are far from God to come to Christ.

# **OUR GOAL: BE WHOLE HEARTED FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST WHO...**

**SEEK** to know God's will regularly through scripture

**SPEAK** the Good News of Jesus Christ to others inside and outside the Body of Christ

**BLESS** others as Christ has blessed them with a lifestyle of mercy.

**PRAY** as participants in Christ's Kingdom, not merely as "consumers" of God's blessings.

**OBEY** God's Word and look for ways to practically implement it in their lives.

