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# STRESS BUSTERS

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40 DAYS WITH THE SHEPHERD

## Session 6

### *The Secret to Confidence*

*“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”*

Psalm 23:5-6

### **OPENING**

1. If you were to try to capture the mood of Psalm 23:5-6 in one word what would it be?

### **BIBLE STUDY**

Read Psalm 23

1. How would the meaning and message of Psalm 23 be different if it ended at verse four? What do verses five and six add to the meaning and message of this Psalm? If you were experiencing the valley of the shadow of death, what would these verses say to you?
2. Which phrase in Psalm 23:5-6 stands out or means the most to you? Explain.
3. In Psalm 23:5-6, David confidently expresses his experience of God’s presence in His life. Read the explanations on page three to learn more about what these statements mean.
4. Is there a phrase found in these verses that you wish described your life but it doesn’t yet?
5. Verses five and six describe what we will experience when we have built a strong and mature relationship with God. What has Psalm 23 taught you about the ways God uses to build a relationship with us so that we can experience life as described in verses five and six?
7. What has been the most valuable lesson you’ve learned from the Psalm 23 series? What lesson has been the most challenging for you?

### **APPLICATION**

1. Thinking of the steps of growth you have been learning from the sermons and these Bible studies, what new step of growth have you, or will you, commit to taking?

## **PRAYER**

In Psalm 23:5-6, David is proclaiming and celebrating what God has done in his life. Use this prayer time to do the same.

- Proclaim and thank God for what He has been doing in your life recently or as a result of this series.
- Tell God how you want to grow and experience Him.
- Express the commitment you're going to make to strengthen your relationship with Him.
- Pray for another person in our group. Pray that God will pour His life into theirs and empower them to keep their new commitment to growth.

### **“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”**

In Old Testament times, to be invited to the king's table was an honor that signified you had a special friendship with the king. It also meant that the king was committed to protecting and providing for you. (example is 2 Samuel 9:1-7) This seems to be the picture in Psalm 23. The Lord has invited us to His table. God's enemies and ours tried to keep us from coming to God but now they must watch us enjoy the blessings and benefits of the relationship God has built with us.

### **“You anoint my head with oil.”**

When people, or things, were designated for special service to God they would be anointed with oil. God instructed the prophet Samuel to anoint Saul and David as kings. Likewise, God instructed Moses to anoint the priests with oil as well as all the items to be used to worship God in the Tabernacle. (Exodus 40:9-15) So, in Psalm 23 David seems to be saying that the Lord has honored us by entrusting and setting us apart to serve Him and His mission. The New Testament goes on to teach that God anoints believers with the Holy Spirit. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22) This adds to our understanding of Psalm 23 by telling us that God sets us apart and empowers us for service by filling us with His presence through the Holy Spirit.

### **“My cup overflows.”**

The overflowing cup represents the unlimited nature of God's life. We do not need to hoard God's love, forgiveness, and blessings. We can freely pass these things on because, when we follow God's ways, God's life will not only fill our life but overflow onto others. (See Matthew 5:13-16, John 7:37-39, Galatians 5:22-23)

### **“Surely goodness and love will follow me.”**

This can have two meanings. The first is that God's goodness and love follows us and never abandons us. God will never give us up. Examples of this are David's description of not being able to escape God's presence in Psalm 139, Jesus' stories of the lost sheep, lost coin and lost son in Luke 15 or Paul's declaration that nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus in Romans 8:38-39.

The second meaning is that goodness and love follow us in the sense of our leaving a legacy of goodness and love as God's goodness and love overflows from our lives onto the lives of others. (examples are Psalm 37:25-26, Proverbs 20:7, Acts 2:42-47)

### **“I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”**

This is the confidence of eternal life, forever being in the presence of God who is our Lord, Creator and Source of Life. Jesus said, “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.” John 10:27-29