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# STRESS BUSTERS

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40 DAYS WITH THE SHEPHERD

## **Session 1** *The Secret to Fulfillment*

### **OPENING**

In Psalm 23, David used shepherding as an analogy to describe his relationship and experience with God. What kind of analogy would you use to describe your experience with God? For example: "God is like the ocean because..." or "My relationship with God is like parenting because..."

### **BIBLE STUDY**

Read Psalm 23

1. Identify all the things David said he gained (or that he would not be in want of) because he chose to follow the Lord as his Shepherd.
2. Which one of these things would help the most in reducing your stress?
3. In Psalm 23, David also teaches us how he built his relationship with God. Read Psalm 23 again but this time read it as a description of a spiritual journey. What steps on the journey can you identify from Psalm 23?
4. The first step of a spiritual journey is to make the Shepherd your Lord.

Read Job 38:1-21 and Psalm 95:1-7.

What does it mean to call God "Lord?" What do we gain when we know that our Shepherd is Lord?

5. Read John 10:1-5. What is the relationship between sheep and their shepherd? What does this teach us about what it means to call Jesus "my Shepherd?"

## Thought to Ponder:

What you follow is what is lord of your life. If you don't follow Jesus as your Shepherd, who or what are you following in order to find fulfillment?

## APPLICATION

1. What practical things can you do to make the Shepherd your Lord?
2. Are there any areas in your life where you struggle to follow Jesus as your Shepherd? It could be integrity issues, relationship issues, finances, addictions, a lack of compassion, difficulty serving Christ and others, sexual purity, or many others. Identify where you struggle. In a moment you will have the opportunity to surrender yourself to Jesus in these areas through silent prayer.

3. Have you ever committed yourself to following Jesus as your Lord and Savior? If not, you can do so right now by praying this prayer:

*"Jesus Christ, I don't understand it all and I don't know what's in store for me, but I'm tired of trying to control everything. I want you to be in control of my life. I want You to be my Shepherd. I want You to be my Lord. I want to know You in a personal way. I want to listen to You. I want You to lead me in the life plan that You made me for. I confess my sin (be as specific as you can) and renounce it as wrong. I believe that you died to forgive my sin and rose again to offer me new life. I now invite you into my life and commit myself to following you. Thank you for your forgiveness and new life. Amen"*

If you have just prayed this prayer of salvation, welcome to the flock! Please contact us and let us know about the decision you have made. We want to help you grow in this new, life-giving relationship with Jesus.

## PRAYER

**Use the practices of praise and thankfulness to reinforce that, "The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not be in want."**

**Praise** focuses on who God is. Praise is saying, "God I am excited that you are (pick a characteristic of God you are excited about). Praise is a simple but powerful way to remember that the Lord is great and mighty.

**Thankfulness** focuses on what God has done by thanking Him for specific things He has done. Thankfulness reminds you that with God you will never be in want of the things that truly fill your life.

When praise becomes a normal part of your prayers, your trust in God will grow to the point that you willingly make Him your Shepherd. When thankfulness is a regular part of prayer, you will find yourself being filled with God's life and, like David, never be in want.

As you pray, practice praise and thankfulness. Take a moment to identify:

- a characteristic of God that is most meaningful to you at this moment.
- something God has done for you in the last few days that you can give thanks for.
- an area of your life that you need to surrender to Jesus as your Lord and then commit yourself to following Jesus as your Shepherd.

**As you pray, commit yourself to Jesus as your Lord and Shepherd.**

If there is an area of life where you are not following God, confess it by praying, *“Lord I have been doing \_\_\_\_\_ . It is wrong and I renounce it and ask your forgiveness. I want you to be in control of my life. I want you to be my Shepherd.”* Then, ask God for help and strength to follow Him.

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