



# DIGGING DEEPER

THE PRAYER FOR LIVING NOT DYING

JANUARY 21

Prayer is understanding God cares deeply about you and your needs.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Review with your group how you experienced prayer over this past week. What went well? What was challenging?
2. Describe contentment. What does it mean to be content? When have you experienced the most contentment in your life?

3. Read **Psalm 23**.

Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say?):

- What do you notice and what are you curious about?

Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean?)

- What do you learn about humanity?
- What do you learn about God?

Now make some applications (what's my response?)

- How are you encouraged, challenged, or convicted by this passage?
- What should be our response to this passage?

4. What image from this Psalm of the Shepherd and sheep resonates with you the most and why?
5. Is it easier for you to depend on God and follow Him in times that are good or hard? Why?
6. How would you describe your level of trust and dependence in the Lord currently? In what ways are you lacking in trust? In what ways are you growing in trust?
7. In order to discern how God is calling you into a deeper place of contentment, trust and dependence upon Him, use the prayer prompt below. What clear next step is the Spirit giving you?

# KEY SCRIPTURE

**Psalm 23** The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

## PRAYER

Lectio Divina Prayer Guide through Psalm 23:

- Description: Lectio Divina means "Divine Reading" in Latin and it's an ancient practice of slowing down and not just reading scripture, but engaging it, listening to it and responding to it. It involves reading not just for information, but transformation.
  - There are four movements: 1) Read (Lectio) 2) Reflect (Meditatio) 3) Respond (Oratio) 4) Rest (Contemplatio). One person will guide the group through these four movements.
  - After each reading there will be a time of guided silence to reflect.
- Lectio: First reading
  - Direction: *Hearing the word. Let it fall on your hearts as I read. What word or phrase stands out to you? What is God drawing your attention to?*
  - Read Psalm 23, slowly.
  - Silence (about 1 min)
  - Direction: *Take a moment to sit with your word or phrase, then share it with the group. Just the word or phrase. Don't try to understand it just yet.*
- Meditatio: Second reading
  - Direction: *Ponder the scripture. Engage your imagination. Imagine yourself in the passage. What emotions or memories are stirring up? Where does it touch your life today?*
  - Read Psalm 23 again, slowly.
  - Silence (about 1 min)
  - Direction: *Share the connections between the words and your life right now. I hear...I see... I feel... What is going on in my life that I need to hear this today?*
- Oratio: Third Reading
  - Direction: *Respond in prayer. This is when you talk to God about what He's revealing to you.*
  - Read Psalm 23 again, slowly.
  - Silence (about 1 min)
  - Direction: *Take thoughts, feelings, fears, convictions, thanksgivings, and questions and offer them before the Lord. Simply tell God what you're feeling like you would a good friend sitting next to you.*
- Contemplatio: Fourth Reading.
  - Direction: *Silence. This is your time to sit with God and everything He has shown you. In this next reading, imagine yourself living out what God has shown you. Incarnating this word today.*
  - Read Psalm 23 again, slowly
  - Direction: *Be silent in the presence of God. Let His word settle down in your heart. Just BE with Him now. Commit to living out this Word today.*
- Next Steps: What clear next step did God show you through this practice? Share it with the group and follow up on how it's going next week!

## TAKE A NEXT STEP

1. Join us in Pray First by participating in 21 days of prayer (1/8-1/28). Go to the Gateway app for a daily prayer guide and videos from our staff. Commit to intentionally praying for and with others through these 21 days and let's see what God does!
2. Use the above guide to help you pray when there are no words or consider using a Psalm.

## FOR THE PARENTS

Hey, families! Here's a look at what we're covering with your kids so you can help them continue to grow at home during the week.

### THIS WEEK

All month long we will be talking about how God comes to our rescue by studying the story of Moses!

**THE BIBLE:** "Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,,and he saved them from their distress."  
(Psalm 103:7)

**THE MESSAGE:** It's so important to obey fully. We saw what happened when Pharaoh tried to half-obey God by only releasing the Israelites and then turning around and going after them again. Was there a time when you did not obey fully? Remember, God's wants us to obey Him, no matter how difficult it might be.

**THE BIG IDEA:** When I am in trouble, God comes to my rescue!

### ASK THIS

*Because sometimes you and your kid need a conversation-starter that isn't,  
"So . . . how was church?"*

- **What would have happened if Pharaoh just cried out to the Lord for forgiveness?**
- **How do you know that God cares for His people in this story?**

### REMEMBER THIS

We say no to God all the time, and the sky doesn't fall in on us. So are we getting away with saying no to God? The fact that God is patient isn't the same as his giving us permission to be disobedient—to say no. Realize that when we say no to God, we're the ones who suffer. We miss the chance to honor God, to find purpose in the amazing adventure of serving God. God wants His best for us. Pharaoh's big mistake was saying no to God—lots of times. That got Pharaoh in big trouble. The good news is that God loves us! Let's not make the mistake Pharaoh made. Let's say yes to God!

### NEXT WEEK

Next week we will see how God did something miraculous to save his people from Pharaoh!