

Questions for Your Journal

Use these following questions to evaluate what you learned from Sunday's sermon.

Summary:

- The main thing the speaker wants me to do, be, and/or feel as a result of this message.

Application to My Life:

- What did God say to me through this message?
 - How does my life measure up to this word?
 - What action(s) will I take to bring my life in line with this word?
 - What truth do I need to study further?
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The Good Shepherd

Many of our most popular cultural images of shepherds and sheep lead us astray in understanding God as our shepherd. Whether it's Little Bo Peep, Mary's Little Lamb, or even the classic painting of Jesus holding a wounded sheep, our mental images glaze over the hard realities of the ancient shepherds. Shepherding in the ancient world was difficult and dangerous work as shepherds spent the day—and sometimes the night—leading their sheep to water in a desert and protecting them from predators (1 Sam 17:34–36). All this time spent looking after the sheep meant that many shepherds cared so much for their flocks that they treated them as members of their family (see 2 Sam 12:1–4 for a moving illustration of this attitude). For all their trouble, shepherds were thought of as uncouth and regarded as some of the lowest members of society. Yet despite these realities Scripture tells us that God cares for His people as a Shepherd and leads us to regard Jesus as our “Good Shepherd” (John 10:11).

“The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. . . I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep,” (John 10:2–3, 11).

The metaphor of God as our Shepherd really says more about us than Him. After all, while it is true that God should be our leader and guide, we so often “like sheep” choose to go our “own way” (Isa 53:6). To put it another way, God must be a shepherd because the aimless wandering of His people most closely approximates the grazing of sheep, and our hurried pursuit of self-determined paths toward “safety” looks a lot like a flock of sheep scattering as they are pursued by a wolf or bear. So God is a Shepherd who promises to “rescue” His wayward flock and give them a Shepherd who will feed and protect them (Ezek 34:22–24).

It is also true that God looks toward His flock with the same kind of fatherly affection that a shepherd had for his sheep. In John 10, Jesus even claims that, as the “Good Shepherd,” He knows His sheep “by name” (John 10:3). According to some ancient sources, shepherds were known to affectionately nickname their sheep.¹ Taking into consideration the birthmarks or facial features,

ancient shepherds would give their sheep “pet names,” Jesus claims to have an intimate knowledge of His sheep that looks like this. He knows you like this. Because of that, He knows exactly what you need, when you need it.

One of the challenges of the Christian life is learning to believe that God really cares for us like this. Since we’re so used to going our own way (Isa 53:6 again!), we must learn to relinquish our control and live under his leadership. But if our God cares for us with tender affection according to his intimate knowledge of us, His leadership will always be for our good and will take us right where we both need and want to be.

Encounter

Take a few minutes to read Psalm 23 in a couple of Bible translations. Make a note of any differences between the translations and anything that especially jumps out at you.

Reflect

Many of the Psalms are personal prayers of David and his experience of God’s care is reflected in the metaphors he used to describe Him. **For example, Yahweh is described by David as a “rock” and a “shield,” and in Psalm 23, as David’s “Shepherd.” What does the description of God as “shepherd” teach us about His character? How does the Psalm explain His care for David?**

In Psalm 23:3, David describes God’s care in restoring and guiding His sheep. **Read Psalm 19:7. Taken together, what do these verses tell us about the purpose of the restoration God gives? How does restoration lead to righteousness?**

Despite constant antagonism from his enemies, David never doubted God. In fact, the “table” the Lord prepares for him (Ps 23:5) “anticipates a victory celebration, where the enemies are present as captives; or an accession feast with defeated rivals as reluctant guests.”² **What pressures are you currently facing that are tempting you to doubt God’s care in your life? Consider following David’s lead and writing a prayer asking God to bring you through it in a way that’s beyond what you can “ask or think” (Eph 3:20).**

David reflects on God’s relentless pursuit of him with “goodness and lovingkindness” (Ps 23:6) and demonstrates how believers should think of God’s promise to always do good to them. **Read Romans 8:28, Isaiah 41:13, Proverbs 3:5–6. Why do these promises—and others!—give believers confidence to face even “the valley of the shadow of death” with confidence in God?**

Examine

Based on 2 Timothy 3:16 (“*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*”), this series of questions is intended to help you figure out what you should do or believe in response to this text. (*This passage may not have a clear answer for each question. Just use them to prompt your thinking.*)

1. What does this passage tell me to believe?

(How does it teach me?)

2. What does this passage tell me not to believe?

(How does it reprove me?)

3. How does this passage tell me not to live?

(How does it correct me?)

4. How does this passage tell me to live?

(How does it train me in righteousness?)

Embrace

After spending significant time with this passage, you've probably learned a lot and heard God speak to you through His Word. Look back at your responses to the previous questions and ask God to show you how you can respond to this text this week.

Write down some ideas for how you can respond to the truth of God's Word.

About The Map

The Map exists to help you consistently reflect on Scripture as you pursue maturity in Christ. When you devote yourself to reading God's Word, and meditate on what you read, you're allowing Him to shape your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

NOTES:

1. Andreas Köstenberger, *The Gospel According to John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker), 301.
2. Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 129.



Disciple-Making Guide

Kids Kindergarten through 6th grade receive Adventure Tokens for discipleship activities completed during the week. They can spend them at the Adventure Store on the last Sunday of the month.

Big Picture Questions for Unit 33: “The God Who Changes Us”

Preschool: Q: Who changes us?
A: *God changes us to be like Jesus.*

Kids (1-6): Q: Who changes us?
A: *The Holy Spirit changes us to be like Jesus for God’s glory.*

This Week’s Family Reading Plan

for Preschoolers: *Mary Visited Elizabeth**

Day 1: *Psalm 119:129-176; Ps 139*

Day 2: *Psalms 148-150*

Day 3: *1 Kings 2*

Day 4: *1 Kings 3, 6*

Day 5: *1 Kings 8; 1 Kgs 9:1-9*

**Preschool readings are taken from [The Big Picture Interactive Bible Stories for Toddlers, New Testament](#) (B&H Publishing Group), available at [Amazon.com](#) & [LifeWay Christian Store](#).*

Key Passage for Unit 33: “The God Who Changes Us”

Preschoolers: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17, CSB)

Kids (1-6 grade): “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17, CSB)

Northway’s Family Ministry uses *The Gospel Project* to help preschoolers, kids, and students grow in their knowledge of Scripture and of Jesus Christ, about whom it was all written (Luke 24:44-49).



Adventure Token Coupon

Fill this out and bring it to Bible Study for your tokens!

I worked on learning my big picture question and key passage _____.

I read my Bible at home _____.

Child’s Name _____.

Parent’s Signature _____.

30 BIBLICAL BASICS

CORE BELIEFS

God | 2 Corinthians 13:13

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Personal God | Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace | Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible | 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God that guides my belief and action.

Identity in Christ | John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church | Ephesians 4:15

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth.

Humanity | John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion | Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Stewardship | Psalm 24:1-2

I believe that everything I am and everything I own belong to God.

Eternity | John 14:1-2

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus will return to judge all people and to establish His eternal kingdom.

CORE PRACTICES

Worship | Psalm 95:1-2

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer | Psalm 66:18-20

I pray to God to know him, to find direction for my life, and to lay my requests before him.

Bible Study | Hebrews 4:12

I study the Bible to know God and his truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness | Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Total Surrender | Romans 12:1

I dedicate my life to God's purposes.

Biblical Community | Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, in the life of others, and in the world.

Spiritual Gifts | Romans 12:4-6

I know my spiritual gifts and use them to fulfill God's purposes.

Offering My Time | Colossians 3:17

I offer my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving My Resources | 2 Corinthians 8:7

I give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Sharing My Faith | Ephesians 6:19-20

I share my faith with others to fulfill God's purposes.

CORE VIRTUES

Love | 1 John 4:10-12

I am committed to loving God and loving others.

Joy | John 15:11

Despite my circumstances, I feel inner contentment and understand my purpose in life.

Peace | Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because I have found peace with God, peace with others, and peace with myself.

Self-Control | Titus 2:11-13

I have the power through Christ to control myself.

Hope | Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

Patience | Proverbs 14:29

I am slow to anger and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness | 1 Thessalonians 5:15

I choose to be kind and good in my relationships with others.

Faithfulness | Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness | Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Humility | Philippians 2:3-4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

The 30 Biblical Basics are the skeleton of a person being formed into the image of Jesus by His Spirit (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18), a helpful framework for the Christian's thoughts, actions, and character. As we commit ourselves to growing in Christ through the process of spiritual formation, we pray these statements become increasingly true of us. When they are, we'll be able to carry out the biblical mandate to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27), and to truly **love, live, and lead like Jesus**.