

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Knowing and Trusting the Good Shepherd

Based on the message by Promise Bradley

OVERVIEW

It's easy to trust Jesus when life is going the way you planned. But what happens when He leads you somewhere you didn't expect?

In this message, Promise Bradley opens Psalm 23 and John 10 to show that Jesus isn't just someone we believe in. He is the Good Shepherd who knows us personally, speaks to us, and faithfully leads us.

Following Jesus isn't about having all the answers. It's about knowing the Shepherd well enough to trust Him, even when His path doesn't make sense. Throughout Scripture, we see people like Abraham, Peter, and the older brother in Jesus' parable facing moments where they had to choose between controlling the situation or trusting God.

The same choice faces us today. Will we keep trying to control our lives, or will we trust the Shepherd enough to follow wherever He leads?

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read → Respond → Reflect → Pray → Live It

Open your Bible and read the Scriptures carefully. Let God's Word answer the questions before you answer from your own opinions or experiences.

As you work through this guide, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you, challenge you, and transform you. Take time to pray honestly, listen for God's voice, and think about how His Word applies to your everyday life.

Don't rush through the questions. Wrestle with them. Talk about them with your parents, youth leaders, friends, or small group. God's Word is meant to shape the way you think, live, and follow Jesus.

This guide isn't just about learning the Bible. It's about becoming more like Christ.

SECTION 1 — KNOWING THE SHEPHERD PERSONALLY

FOCUS

Jesus doesn't simply want us to know about Him. He invites us into a personal relationship where we know Him as our Good Shepherd.

READ

Psalms 23:1–6, John 10:11–18, John 10:27–30

RESPOND

1. What does David mean when he says, "The Lord is my Shepherd"?
2. According to John 10, what characteristics describe Jesus as the Good Shepherd?
3. What promises does Jesus make to those who belong to His flock?
4. How does knowing Jesus personally differ from simply knowing about Him?
5. What does Psalm 23 reveal about the Shepherd's care for His people?

REFLECT

- Is Jesus someone you know personally, or mostly someone you know about?
- What voices or influences compete for your attention every day?
- What would it look like to spend intentional time getting to know Jesus this week?
- How could knowing Jesus personally change the way you handle everyday situations?

Further Scripture Reading

Ezekiel 34:11–16, Isaiah 40:10–11, 1 Peter 5:4

SECTION 2 — TRUSTING THE SHEPHERD'S LEADING

FOCUS

Following Jesus means trusting where He leads, even when His path is different from what we expected.

READ

Psalms 23:3–4, Matthew 7:13–14, Hebrews 12:1–3

RESPOND

1. Why does the Shepherd lead us in paths of righteousness?
2. According to Matthew 7:13–14, why isn't the narrow path always easy?
3. According to Hebrews 12:2, what helped Jesus endure the cross?
4. How does Jesus' example encourage us to keep following Him?

5. Why can we trust the Shepherd even when we don't understand the path?

REFLECT

- Is there an area where you're struggling to trust God's direction?
- Are you asking God to bless your plans, or are you willing to follow His?
- Where do you feel pressure to fit in instead of following Jesus?
- How would trusting the Shepherd change one decision you'll make this week?

Further Scripture Reading

Romans 8:18, Philippians 3:12–14, 2 Corinthians 4:16–18

SECTION 3 — HEARING THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

FOCUS

Jesus still speaks, and His followers can learn to recognize His voice through Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

READ

John 10:1–5, John 10:27, James 1:5, Psalm 119:105

RESPOND

1. According to John 10:3–5, how do the sheep recognize their shepherd?
2. According to John 10:27, what promise does Jesus give His sheep?
3. According to James 1:5, what does God promise those who ask Him for wisdom?
4. According to Psalm 119:105, how does God's Word guide our lives?
5. Why is spending regular time in God's Word important for hearing God's voice?

REFLECT

- What voices influence you the most each day?
- How much time do you spend listening to God compared to social media, entertainment, or friends?
- When do you find it easiest to hear God's voice?
- What habit could help you spend more time with Jesus this week?

Further Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 29:13, Romans 10:17, John 14:26

SECTION 4 — SURRENDERING CONTROL

FOCUS

The Good Shepherd calls us to trust Him instead of trying to control every outcome.

READ

Genesis 22:1–14, Luke 15:25–32, Proverbs 3:5–6, John 18:10–11

RESPOND

1. According to Genesis 22, what did Abraham have to trust God with?
2. According to Luke 15:25–32, what attitude did the older brother reveal?
3. According to Proverbs 3:5–6, what does trusting the Lord require?
4. According to John 18:10–11, why did Jesus tell Peter to put away his sword?
5. What do these passages teach about trusting God instead of taking control?

REFLECT

- Where are you trying to stay in control instead of trusting Jesus?
- Is there a friendship, relationship, sport, job, class, or future plan you're struggling to trust God with?
- What would surrendering that area to Jesus look like?
- Who could pray with you and encourage you this week?

Further Scripture Reading

Isaiah 55:8–9, Romans 8:28, Psalm 37:3–7

SECTION 5 — WALKING IN SELF-CONTROL

FOCUS

The Holy Spirit produces self-control in our lives as we surrender to Jesus.

READ

Galatians 5:22–25, John 21:15–19, Acts 2:14–41

RESPOND

1. According to Galatians 5:22–25, where does self-control come from?
2. Why is self-control different from trying to control other people?
3. According to John 21:15–19, how did Jesus restore Peter after his failure?
4. According to Acts 2:14–41, what changed in Peter after the Holy Spirit filled him?
5. How does the Holy Spirit help believers live differently?

REFLECT

- What situations make self-control difficult for you?
- Are you trying to change yourself through willpower, or are you depending on the Holy Spirit?
- Is there someone you're trying to control instead of trusting God with?
- What fruit of the Spirit do you want God to grow in your life this week?

Further Scripture Reading

Romans 8:5–14, Titus 2:11–14, 2 Peter 1:5–8

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Every morning this week, pray:

"Jesus, You are my Good Shepherd. Help me hear Your voice, trust Your leading, and follow wherever You lead today."

Then write down one moment each day when you sensed God leading you. It may come through Scripture, prayer, wise counsel, or the Holy Spirit's conviction. Choose to obey what He shows you.

JOURNAL IT

What is one thing God spoke to you through this week's study?

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Jesus isn't asking you to figure everything out before following Him. He's asking you to trust Him.

The Good Shepherd knows you by name, walks with you through every season, and faithfully leads those who follow Him.

The Christian life is learning to know the Good Shepherd so deeply that we trust Him enough to follow wherever He leads.

This week, ask yourself:

- Am I spending time getting to know Jesus?
- Am I listening for His voice?
- Am I trusting His leading?
- What step of obedience is He asking me to take today?

Follow the Shepherd. He always knows the way.