

We continue to look at Psalm 23 and the wonderful privilege we have to be in relationship with God, where we can experience what it means to know God as our Divine Shepherd.



In today's world, materialism is only one of a number of problems that has beset our society. Busyness has become a major problem. Some folk are now working longer hours than ever before. With contract employment people are expected to achieve growing quotas with no increase in staff. For others they are driven to achieve as a means of acceptance by their peers, or to obtain significance in this world, or to improve their self-esteem.

I am sure for a lot of us busyness is always a problem. For me the next deadline is looming on the horizon and I must achieve that goal. I remember one writer saying that if we don't take time to come apart, we simply come apart. That is definitely true as one views the number of people taking stress leave from work. One health professional I spoke to said he was dealing with record amounts of stress related health matters, and it was continuing to increase.

When we read in Psalm 23v2 *"He makes me to lie down in green pastures;"* it comes as a much needed salve to our bodies as we try and cope with all the pressure. I know for some of us the thought of laying down anywhere is a luxury we can't afford. Max Lucado shares in his book, TRAVELLING LIGHT, 'people are consuming literally tons of sleeping pills and other forms of medication to help cope with insomnia and other associated stress related disorders'.

The word that got my attention in Psalm 23v2 was '**make**'. I know for some of us, we block the messages our bodies are telling us because we can't afford to stop, or at least that is what we think. When we are told to take the pedal off the metal, we just fob it off and press on. However, our divine shepherd knows that we need to pull aside for a while for our sanity, for our marriage, and/or for the wellbeing of our family.

#### **PRAISE the Lord for:**

- The precious gifts we continue to receive for the ministry of Challenge
- The many ministries and individuals around the world that continue to use the paper
- Each of our Challenge team who bring various skills and abilities to the ministry

If we are not willing to listen to God, then being the good shepherd He is, He will move to make us to lie down in green pastures. If we take our eye off the shepherd we can find ourselves getting lost in a jungle of over work, busyness, stress and the like. If we are hard of hearing, God may have to make us pull aside. How might He do this?

It may involve illness. Then during the time of recuperating He can have the necessary input into our lives.

It may mean a loss of your job. It is not pleasant at the time when it happens, but with the passage of time you realise

Continued  
over

it was the only way God was going to get your attention.

It may mean God uses the loss of a loved one. During the grieving process God is able to minister to us at our various points of need. We find during these times God desires to refresh and renew us in our walk with Him. He gives us a fresh hunger to not only read His word, but to hear His word. We pray with fervency and an expectation that maybe we have not known before.

My experience with these sorts of occasions is where I have grown most in my Christian life. Verses I have regularly read have taken on new meaning and relevance, as they spoke into the situation that I was going through. All this is to show us that the shepherd is in charge and He knows what is best for us. He is the one who directs our steps and stops, but in the busyness and stresses of life we get our perspective on this a little confused.

God desires to lead us to the quiet waters of rest and balance. Leading has the idea of the need for us to willingly follow, as well as recognising that God enables us to set the right priorities for our daily lives. He enables us to set realistic goals that are not excessively stressful.

We can serve God effectively as we allow Him to lead us. This speaks of being submissive to the shepherd. We don't argue with God, but gladly follow His leading. If we are unwilling to do this then we can find ourselves getting weary and just plain worn out. This is why Jesus says to you and me in Matthew 11v28 *"Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

When we try to struggle along in our own strength it is hard going, which is why Jesus says in v29; *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*

When we look to Jesus as our shepherd, life becomes much simpler as He directs us in our daily walk. As we gladly submit to His leading He directs us to green pastures and those refreshing still waters. Why not start today and experience the difference.

#### **PRAYER needed for:**

- The ongoing discipleship of new believers in Australia and overseas
- Prison ministries we work with around the world - Crossroads (USA) + Hope Prison Ministries (Africa). Prison editions are tailored to engage prisoners with relevant stories
- The opportunity of working with an additional partner in Malawi to cover main/prison editions
- Carl and Kevin as they continue to promote the paper to churches, schools and individuals

{ CARL CARMODY  
EDITOR CHALLENGE }

Challenge Direct Deposit details :

BSB: 066162 (Commbank)  
Account: 00900455

#### **AU.CHALLENGE.NEWS**

Contact us by phone (08) 9453 3311  
Email: [info@challengenews.org](mailto:info@challengenews.org)