

Both of these tools "comforted" David, as a sheep...even the staff.

Words of faith built by walking through valleys with the Shepherd:

David - Psalm 18:1-3

Paul - 2 Timothy 4:18

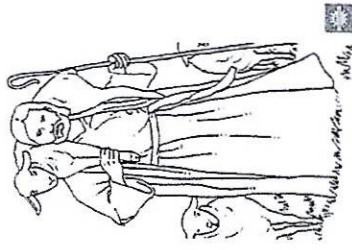
[Answers: trouble, trials, benefit, test, grow, with, never, trust, faith, respond, Jesus]

Exploring Psalm 23

Lesson #3

The Shepherd Calms and

Comforts His Sheep In Times of Trouble



Psalm 23:4

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Here's an "amplified" version of that:

Yes...there are times when *His* path of righteousness, for us, leads through dark and distressing valleys...valleys that could cause a person to fear for their life. The only way out of the valley is to go *through* the valley. Yet, the Lord's sheep do not give in to such fear. They fear no evil, even though they are literally surrounded by evil. What removes the fear? Our Shepherd goes through the entire valley *with* us. His presence is *constant*. He is equipped to *protect* us and to *guide* us all the way through the valley, which *comforts* us, keeping us calm.

Life In The Shadows...

The Christian life is not _____ free. God has designed _____ into our lives...for our _____. They _____ and _____ our faith in Him. They teach us to always walk _____ Him..._____ without Him.

David describes these trials as times of *walking through the valley of the shadow of death*.

God has given us two passages in the New Testament to help us to identify with the "Valley Circumstances" and our Shepherd's purpose in them...for building us up to be equipped for His purposes for us...and for strengthening our relationship with Him...

James 1:2-4 & 1 Corinthians 10:13

In 1 Cor 10:13 "to endure" is...

In James 1 it is the endurance of...

But don't make the mistake of over-humanizing this!
Here's what I mean...

Remember...

Jesus said:

Jesus also said: John 15:5

Paul wrote (Rom. 8)...

As a result...David said...

"I fear no evil, [because] You are with me..."

Having the Great Shepherd, ever-present, makes all the difference in the valley.

The Hebrew word for "fear" actually means...

Jesus took His disciples through such a "valley" ...
Mark 4:35-41

We must always be _____...paying attention to what the Lord is saying to us in His Word, and doing with us in our lives. That develops _____ in Him..._____ in Him.
Hebrews 11:6

Understand...this does not mean we are never troubled. This is how we must _____ to trouble. We fix our eyes on _____, our Shepherd!

We are Comforted by the Shepherd's "tools of the trade" ...

His ROD ...

His STAFF ...

Look how the staff compares to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 ...