

A circular opening in a tree trunk, looking out onto a sunlit forest path. The path is covered in green grass and leads into a dense forest with sunlight filtering through the trees. The text "PSALM 23" is centered in the middle of the image.

PSALM  
23

THANKGOD AKEJI

## **THE PSALM 23 BELIEVER**

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, 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 runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

### **John 10:11, 27**

"I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd gives His life for the Sheep."

"My Sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

### **Opening prayers**

- Lord, please open my eyes to see today. Where have I left you in my journey of life? In marital issues, ministry, job, business, and in my purpose for life.
- Lord, lead and let me follow only.

### **Opening Thought**

The Lord tends us so that we can bear fruit, to keep us from diminishing.

## **Preface**

The matter of provision of adequate resources to meet immediate and future needs is a major thing for all people - saints and sinners alike. However there exists an underlying difference between God's planned method of meeting the needs of His saints for that of the unbelievers in Christ. For the believer, Jesus explained clearly God's plan for his followers. *In his words:* "That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life – whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

"And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

"So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

"So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

It is therefore not for the believer to be weighed down in worries about life's needs and for that of the church of God because God's word has assured us of the work that He has already wrought to handle the problems that cause worries for his people. This is the burden that has produced this brief epistle.

Each chapter ends with a short summary of the whole. Read the book with a heart constantly praying that God's light might dawn on you as He has done before.

**ThankGod Akeji E.**  
*April 2023*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

David shows by describing the manner of relationship that existed between God and him. To him, God handled his life as a Shepherd does his Sheep. He also paints the picture of how Christ will lay down his life for us, how he would do everything in his ability to bring us to the place of abundant provisions of God's grace through his sacrificial death, which is the reason for the church to have all that God the Father ever promised to the patriarchs, under the Old Covenant.

Today, we know and believe that Christ has laid down his life for us; He has worked out all the requirements that are needed to grant unto us who believe the full access into the treasure base of the kingdom of God. In Him all the treasures of [divine] wisdom (comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God) and [all the riches of spiritual] knowledge and enlightenment are stored up and lie hidden (Col. 2:3). And he is doing everything as the firstborn Son of God to bring us [his brothers and sisters] into this place of abundant provisions of God's grace *experientially*. Now in Christ, the church shall not be in lack of anything pertaining to life and godliness because Jesus came that we might have all that pertains to life in an abundant measure (2 Peter 1:2-3; John 10:10b). But we must learn from him how best to tap these provisions daily, in every situation. David was in the power of the Holy Spirit describing God's plans: How He, in the New Covenant planned to keep the church from all forms of lack when she follows her Shepherd - Christ through the Holy Spirit.

If Jesus Christ remains your Shepherd king of your own life the journey of life will be well coordinated. In similar way if he abides over the church as her cover she church shall not lack anything. This is because in the finished works of Christ everything has been fully paid for (John 19:30), and God the Father has already made Christ the head of all things, powers, principalities etc. All this is for the benefit of the church for the benefit of the church (Eph. 1:22). And since everything has been paid for, God can now give unto us everything we need for life and godliness freely (2 Pet. 1:3Rom. 8:32). We need to learn how to lay hold on them all. *Faith begins where the will of God is known; We put faith when God gives His word for anything*. We also seek to learn to wait for and to follow the Lord of the work as he leads; always fully determined to yield to His Shepherd roles over every area of our lives.

As we follow him daily, there are likely to be several inconveniences which will come our way as faithful believers. This is due to the conditions that each Christian is called upon to meet so as to bring into reality the assurance of provision that we have in Christ Jesus. The strength to bear all the troubles that could be possibly associated with our obedience through faith in Christ has already been provided alongside.

### **Who is the Shepherd?**

The Shepherd (in this context) is Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came from heaven in human form, lived like every other man, but without sin. He was empowered by God through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, tested in every way man can be tempted, yet sinned not (Heb. 4:15). He preached about the kingdom of God and made disciples, whom he could teach how to make more disciples that are like him in every way. He as a result. He went out in the power of God to every place he could, and did many good things only (Acts 10:38). He performed many different miracles. As he ended his physical life on earth, he was accused falsely by the Jewish leaders and the people and he was arrested by the Roman authority. He was tried and found guiltless yet condemned to die. He was crucified. He died and was buried but rose on the third day. He appeared to many people, but ascended into heaven, to present himself to the Father. He promised of a second coming, in which he would become the judge of the whole worlds (Acts 1:11).

Through his death, he terminated the legal right which Satan always had against humanity, for which he tormented them. All the unfavorable records of sin from Adam and Eve's disobedience, the past, present and the future was completely rendered void (Col. 2:14). When he cleaned off the records, he pronounced those who would ever believe in him as 'righteous people' before God. They are righteous now, not because of their religious piety or their own good works and bodily discipline against sin, but because God declared them righteous since the evil records were removed through Christ's death (2 Cor. 5:21).

But before he ascended into heaven, he commissioned his disciples to go throughout the world and make other people his disciples as well, just as he did to them (Matt. 28:18-20). He expects that some, they should call, and some others the Holy Spirit will move to submit to them. But that everyone who profess to follow him must be trained and taught the principles of the life of the kingdom of God. This life will they live with here on earth, which would also become the pass to seeing the kingdom of God on the last day.

### **Who is the Sheep?**

A Sheep (in this context) refers to one who is a disciple of Jesus Christ. He is a follower and learner of the ways of Christ; he is fully committed to practicing the lifestyles of Jesus in order to become like him. He is ready to give up the pursuit of all other things that are outside of God's plan for his/her life on earth, so as to follow his Master wherever he leads (Matt. 4:21-22).

#### Chapter Summary:

*Jesus Christ is God's Shepherd manifested unto every believer. Every Christian is expected to relate with him, just as a flock of Sheep relates with their Shepherd.*

## CHAPTER TWO

### The LORD Is My Shepherd; I Have All That I Need

For many believers, knowing this by heart is a great spiritual achievement. In my country, if you go to church and you do not know a verse like this one, you may be counted a most unserious Christian. But as simple as this chapter sounds it is easily misunderstood by many when they try to apply it to their daily lives. Some just merely recite it as a faith confession when in need and some do not even care to know its essence. Either way, *“when the purpose of a thing is not well defined, through understanding, abuse of such will come by easily.”*

It was easier for David to express how much of God he was experiencing at the time he psalmed this chapter, because he grew up as a Shepherd boy, always taking care of his father’s flock. He understood the life of a typical keeper of Sheep, the risks and comforts attached to it. He knew how much he must be in search of the most nutritious pasture for the flock to graze, he was indeed the pastor of his own Sheep. David understood that he could hardly keep his eyes away from the flock for too long, he must have served as a security personal for the flock, always on the watch against the attack of the wild animals in the bushes where he led his Sheep to graze. He was familiar with the bushes that hurt him and could harm the Sheep as well. When Goliath came up against the Israelites, David testified of how he dealt with the lion and the bear which came after his Sheep (1 Sam. 17:37), he must have put himself in the line on behalf of the Sheep several times. David was resolute that any wild animal which comes must first go through him, hurt him beyond any chances of recovery, or even kill him before ever getting access to the Sheep to cause any damage. The young boy was as a living sacrifice for his Sheep. He was familiar with moving streams that had lower flowing current so that the Sheep would not be swept away while trying to drink water. David had understood that the Sheep would need to be brought to shelter to rest from the sun and rains, and to have their strengths restored for another day while chewing their cud (regurgitation). And David knew that the loss of one Sheep was as painful as the loss of the herd altogether, keeping them safe was his responsibility and their being alive was a reason for his living too. It was as though his life was tied to theirs, he really loved them, because they were his father’s. for these reasons, he would do his best possible to lead them in the paths that are right, in his sight and in his father’s sight. He generally worked hard to keep the flock in the best condition possible. And even when one of them strays away or wanders away unknowingly, he would go in search of it to restore it to the correct path like the others.

This psalm therefore is like a description of the assignment God has saddled upon Christ for every believer he has saved and will save. Being his Sheep, Christ is given power and authority to rule over God’s flock which he has saved through his blood. **All the Sheep will ever need is in his care.** In 1 Peter 5:7, Peter said, *“Let him have all your worries and cares, for he is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you.”* TLB

Jesus cares for you and of course for all that concerns you, and you've got to trust him enough to let him perform his Shepherd roles over your life. Don't be hasty. The Sheep always need to receive a command from the Shepherd before moving; the voice of the Shepherd which is known to the flock must be heard before they ever move out to graze wherever he will lead them. When you hear a voice that is strange from that of the Good Shepherd, you are not expected to act in obedience to it, no matter how appealing, forceful, or promising the voice and its commands may sound to your heart. The bible has admonished that Christians who have a pastor over them should allow him to do his work effectively, they should not strive with him, but to follow him as he follows the Lord with all patience and humility. So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. John 5:19-20

Bear this in mind that Jesus Christ is the pastor of the church. King David could have as well said, the Lord is my pastor, I shall not lack anything. Let us all relate with the Lord Jesus as the pastor in charge of our souls. He must remain the one who is always interceding on our behalf before the Father. Why then should we not allow him to direct us in the way he chooses, if we are truly benefiting from his intercessory role over our lives (Romans 8:34)!

Chapter summary:

*Just relax! The reason why you will not lack anything is that Christ loves you unconditionally. He is more interested in your welfare than you think you are. He saved you from sin and Satan. God is committed to giving you every other thing free along with Christ. He will also save you from lack. He knows all you will ever need at every juncture of your life, because he is the one leading you through the paths you follow, i.e. if you indeed are following him.*

## CHAPTER THREE

### Why Jesus Christ Is Your Shepherd

God, through Jesus Christ, made the way possible for you to be reconciled onto Him in a Father-son relationship (2 Cor. 5:18). You are a member of his family and you are His child if you have been saved from your sin by putting your faith in the work of salvation which Jesus Christ did, when he came to the earth humanly.

In the Lord's best interest everyone who comes to Him and who has been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ receives the rights of the sons of God (God-sonship) (John 1:12). Part of the blessings that has been deposited for all believers and followers of Jesus Christ [for all time] is that they now have a Shepherd over their lives. Jesus Christ becomes our common Shepherd because, he did what a real[good] Shepherd would do; he laid down his own life for the Sheep to live. Hear this testimony that Jesus gave concerning himself: He said,

"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd risks and lays down His [own] life for the Sheep. I am the Good Shepherd; and I know and recognize My own, and My own know and recognize Me. Even as [truly as] the Father knows Me and I also know the Father – and I am giving My [very own] life and laying it down on behalf of the Sheep." John 10:11, 14, 15 AMP

Before moving on from here, it is good to be sure of this. Jesus says, he knows his own Sheep and they also know him. One can claim to know the Lord even when the Lord may not know him/her. So it is better to establish right here whether you truly know the Lord and that the Lord also truly knows you. If you do not truly know the Lord, pause reading and do that now; *kindly turn to the last page and pray the prayers there all alone by yourself with all sincerity.*

The most important thing for Jesus then was his life. But because of the depth of love he has for the Sheep, he chose to forfeit his own life, so that through his own death, his Sheep may have every ground to live eternally. If he could lay down his life for you [through death], then there would be nothing else in or outside existence that he cannot give up for the sake of his Sheep. He lives in constant relationship with the Father. The Father owns everything. But as Jesus paid with his blood for the salvation of the whole world, he won it to himself; he was given all the authority in heaven and on earth. And he was given unto the church as its head forever (Ephesians 1:21). Now the authority of the universe now lies upon the shoulder of Christ in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah in Isaiah 9:6.

Part of Christ's assignment was to have you to himself as Sheep in his flock, now and for the future since he has saved you from the past record of sin which Satan had held against man.

Prophet Isaiah in one of his prophecies disclosed thus:

But the Lord was pleased with this humble servant who suffered such pain. Even after giving himself as an offering for sin, he will see his descendants and enjoy a long life. He will succeed in doing what the Lord wanted. After his suffering he will see the light, and he will be satisfied with what he experienced.

The Lord says, "My servant, who always does what is right, will make his people right with me; he will take away their sins. For this reason I will treat him as one of my great people. I will give him the rewards of one who wins in battle, and he will share them with his powerful ones. I will do this because he gave his life for the people. He was considered a criminal, but the truth is, he carried away the sins of many. Now he will stand before me and speak for those who have sinned." Isa 53:10-12

The ground for which Jesus has become our Shepherd, and in fact, the Good Shepherd is in the fact that he died. King David foresaw what he was coming to do many years ahead and then spoke as he was moved by the Spirit of the Lord who knows everything. He spoke to describe what the Lord Jesus would represent to all his followers, just as he saw the Lord was relating with him in the Old Testament. He was experiencing the foretaste of the *Lord's Shepherd acts* over his life and psalmed to express it.

The living bible puts it this way:

...However, when his soul has been made an offering for sin, then he shall have a multitude of children, many heirs. He shall live again, and God's program shall prosper in his hands. And when he sees all that is accomplished by the anguish of his soul, he shall be satisfied; and because of what he has experienced, my righteous Servant shall make many to be counted righteous before God, for he shall bear all their sins (Isa. 53:10-11).

This implies that: for Christ, taking up the responsibility for your life as you live in him here on earth is a glorious accomplishment for him. When he sees the extent to which your life is being tended through the anguish of his soul, **as a Shepherd tends his Sheep, he shall be satisfied. Consequently, your satisfaction is his satisfaction.**

*Chapter summary:*

*Jesus Christ is your Shepherd because he is God made flesh. He is the 'yes' to all that God has said concerning you, and 'Amen' to all of God's promises concerning you (1 Cor. 1:20).*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Sheep That Will Not Lack Anything

FIRSTLY, God already provided in Christ Jesus all you will ever need in the new life, even before you were saved. To withdraw any supply for your use each one needs to be on the correct path of his/her life, just as the Father has purposed. The provisions can only come to and work with God's chosen location and position per time but also, God's grace and mercy are new every morning. If God has already made provision for all that a believer will ever need until such gets to heaven, then it is better to follow the leading Shepherd in order to lay hold of every supply easily and readily as at when due, through faith. 1 Peter 1:2-4

*"When the Lord becomes your Shepherd, then you can be sure and boldly say, 'I shall not lack.'"*

All a believer ever needs for life and godliness has been made available in Christ Jesus, but as promises (with full assurance of their fulfillment). They shall become manifest as one learns the Lord's ways and gets to do so by knowing the Lord personally better and better, day after day, through voluntary and deliberate commitment to his/her relationship with Christ.

Truly, a Shepherd is responsible for the well-being of a flock regardless of the owner of the Sheep and their population. But it is also good to state here clearly that it is only the Sheep that remains under the control of the Shepherd that gets cared for properly. That's when Jesus told his disciples that he ordained them to bear fruit, but a particular kind - fruits that will abide, remain in him, and prefer him to every other so that he can care for them adequately. Naturally, a flock of Sheep must follow the path which their Shepherd creates for them otherwise they could get caught and destroyed by enemies (wild animals and human beings). A Sheep may even wander far away if it loses sight of the one leading them and goes somewhere else. The flock has to trust the leadership of their Shepherd completely to be able to follow him wherever he leads them. Do you trust God enough to allow Him to lead you? And do you trust God enough to follow him in the way He chooses?

In the same way a believer must completely submit to the Shepherd of his soul, Jesus Christ before such a believer can boldly profess that he/she shall not want or be in need. Because needs are glaring, and only one true to faith in Christ will have what is believed come into existence (Heb. 11:1). Jesus Christ is trustworthy. The possibility of handling your responsibility as a Sheep in his flock is much if and only if you let him truly lead you by his Spirit (Rom. 8:14).

God's provision for the Israelites as they journeyed from Egypt to Canaan was intact; as often as they were on the right path (the path He showed them) he strengthened and cared for them, that is why the psalmist said, "He restores my soul. He leads me in the

path of righteousness for His name's sake." But each time they rebelled or murmured; they were punished for it. Even today, some believers claim to be under the Lord's leading for their lives and still dictate for him (their Shepherd), they insist upon what they want and unless he does it, they begin to threaten him, what a life! He who was loving and merciful enough to despise his own life through death so that we might live, will he not also be that merciful enough to guide us through the best pathways for our lives? Ask yourself. Paul writing the Romans in Rom. 8:31-33 says,

**"So what should we say about this? If God is for us, no one can stand against us. And God is with us. He even let his own Son suffer for us. God gave his Son for all of us. So now with Jesus, God will surely give us all things."** ESV

You never told God you needed salvation, or advised Him on how He must save you, He did it His own way, you only need to believe in what He has done and fix your attention there (Col. 3:1). **You need to keep knowing that God is not against anyone who remains in Christ Jesus.** And as any believer remains in him while journeying through the earth, God has resolved to be with such every day. Jesus said, "...and behold I am with you, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20. Since nothing can separate a true believer from the love of God, that makes God to be on our side everyday of our lives. He kept providing for the Israelites as long as they remained in His word, leading them from one place to the other. You need to be reminded that, if you are actively and currently following Jesus Christ 's leading for your life on every matter there may be, then relax, he is surely on the driver's seat, and you've got to let him drive. And be confident that with him driving your life daily, all necessities shall be adequately provided. Gbenga Odebiri in a sermon once said, "*...I have all I need. What I don't have is what I don't need.*" This is a true saying. With Christ as the Shepherd whom you are currently following, go with him to wherever he leads you, turn to whichever direction he chooses best for you, and accept whatsoever he presents to you, you ought not to be in need of any other thing outside of his plans for you (Jer. 29:11). This is because for everyone following Christ, all he gives you is all you need. And whatever appetite you have for other things must be crucified, otherwise it will look like he is unfaithful, and the word of God is not true. Beloved, God's word is true, just check your heart to know whether you are truly following the chosen path, for your own course with him. His words have been tested and proven several times.

That is what makes the writer of Hebrew say that we should keep looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (12:6). Because once one stops looking at Jesus so as to know what direction he is taking, the person becomes distracted with the world and how other person's lives are going, one might eventually develop an appetite for what is not in the path which Christ has chosen for the him. Crucify comparison and live, walking simply after the order which Christ has laid out for you. King Solomon said, "God has made man very simple, but man has devised complicated ways for himself." (Eccl. 7:29). Would you be willing to pull down all that you have erected for yourself

which stands against the will and purpose of God for your life, you will be preparing for a result likened to that of Christ Jesus.

But because many believers are neither familiar with his voice nor his pathways, the Lord Jesus offers to become the teacher unto anyone who chooses his ways. He does this to keep us from all excuses so that we might follow him easily as we learn his path for our life. The path he chooses for one believer is usually different from that of the other believer(s) (John 21:20-22), though all are on pilgrimage to the celestial city (Heaven).

SECONDLY, The Shepherd (Jesus Christ) is committed to leading a Sheep in Sheep's clothing, rather than a wolf in Sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). It might be necessary to consider this as a major factor for the kind of Sheep that will not lack anything. You need to also establish in your heart as you read along that you must be an actual Sheep (an obedient disciple of Christ) among other Sheep, and not a wolf in the garment of Sheep. This class of people refers to deceivers, hypocrites and those self-acclaimed Christians who live a double-standard life. They hold to a form of religion but they deny the power of it that can bring eternal changes to their lives. They are wolves in their closet, but appear as Sheep when they are seen in the public by others. When the Lord opens your eyes to see their secret life you will discover that it is as decayed as rotten as a decaying corpse.

Check your heart right now because Jesus is the Shepherd of real Sheep not of men and women who parade themselves in the public but inwardly possessing the nature of wolf. They live as God's enemies because of their sinful state of life. When a person becomes an unrepentant church goer he becomes a wolf before God. When a believer is full of deceptive characters which are known only to him and any other like himself, such a person will hardly find Christ's Shepherd roles playing out over his/her life; things can begin to happen to him anyhow, just as it happens to every sinner alike. The Lord Jesus finds it fulfilling to direct the life of any believer who is committed to being his disciple.

A wolf in Sheep's clothing cannot eat of the pasture which Christ feeds his Sheep with no matter how hard the wolf tries. Naturally, a wolf eats raw flesh (being a carnivorous animal), and a Sheep eats fresh green grass or dry hay (being an herbivorous animal). It is not in the nature of a wolf to eat fresh grass and it is not in the nature of a Sheep to eat fresh or roasted flesh of another animal. Therefore when the Good Shepherd, Jesus is providing food for his flock he makes provision for the Sheep, and he provides only what they can take. If the wolf must partake of the food given to the flock of Sheep, then it must change its nature completely. The Sheep receives directions good enough to keep them in the Lord's will while enjoying day to day blessings and the manifestations of his grace. Believers who remain true disciples can bear God's instructions which He gives unto them ay by day; it is not difficult for them to agree with anything that the Lord is saying on any matter they present to him. But not wolf. Wolf is wild and

stubborn. Its desires are wild and strange to that of the master and of his Sheep. A believer like this (wolf) has strange desires, strange prayer points, funny and unbiblical method of bible interpretation and application, strange methods of judging situations etc. he does not do as Christ does. He calls God's instructions conspiracy, and/or a mere punishment which no one can fully obey yet the same instruction is taken by a Sheep as God's gracious direction for his life. When a wolf in Sheep's clothing is given divine instruction(s) he prefers to discard it as soon as he finds it hard to obey. He prefers to embrace his heart's dispositions and what welcomes the applause of the public. Meanwhile, the Sheep is proud of the master's teachings and the directions given for his life. He talks about it boldly and with readiness to obey it; he is resolved to live his life on it. On the other hand, the *wolf-in-a-Sheep-clothing* kind of Christian questions God's authority on a similar instruction which a Sheep thanks Him for. This happens because the nature of a wolf is in complete opposition to the nature of the Shepherd and the Sheep he leads. Anyone who must declare the Lord as his Shepherd and who will not lack anything must be sure that he does not possess the human nature. The human nature is full of deception, dirty, unrepentant and a complete stranger to the nature of Sheep (the nature within genuine disciples) in whom the divine nature has been inputted fully (Col. 2:9-10).

Unless one practically obeys God in the kind of command which Abraham obeyed, it will be difficult for Christ to truly Shepherd such a soul. Many Christians who live according to the flesh still think every day, that God is the one Shepherding them, but not at all. For many it is the self-life which controls all or most of their activities. God told Abraham,

"Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. Gal 4:30 NKJV. Throughout the bible this seems to be the best solution God provides, to enable the son born by the Spirit (new creation life) to get rid of the slave woman's life (human nature). Because unless the human nature and its sons (habits) are cast out, it might be hard for any believer to truly follow the Lord as a Sheep follows the Shepherd. The two natures frequently oppose each other. The human nature is so possessive and does not want to be displeased. It always wants its way. Just as adult mosquitoes are kept alive by feeding on the blood of their host so also does the sinful nature desires to be satisfied and its cravings obeyed. It is what keeps it alive in man, even though the spiritual life remains stunted and keeps diminishing every day. So, one of them must go, and it has to be the old sinful nature because it is the reason Christ was made manifest. Unless the self-life is gone completely you might never find the Shepherd leading you to that position of no lack *practically* as you journey in life through Christ.

One should not expect Christ, the Shepherd to lead him into that place of abundance when he has not allowed Christ to exercise the right of influence over other areas, such as in speech and in other life activities. If he Lord is responsible for your welfare then he must also be Lord controlling what comes out of your mouth towards others and what

manner of attitude you relate with people around you. If they give him glory for taking care of your welfare then they should equally praise him for the modest and humble life they see you exhibit in your neighborhood, in your workplace, amidst your colleagues, in the lecture hall, in your office, on the football pitch, or wherever you may be. In this way, the earth will be covered with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14).

*Chapter summary:*

*The Sheep that won't lack anything or derail in life is the one that follows faithfully in the direction which the Shepherd leads him/her. This Christian will not fail because he is always looking at Jesus who is the author of his faith to also complete all that pertains to faith in God. Christ is not Shepherd of wolves but Sheep. Only Christians who are true and genuine will experience his special Shepherd roles over their lives.*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Open Secret – Knowledge of Christ is The Key

*"I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!" Philip. 3:10-11*

*... the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. Daniel. 11:32-33 NKJV*

The only thing that could have made David express so much confidence in the Lord, for which he was able to say that he would never lack anything would be that he knew the Shepherd personally and the Shepherd, also knew him in the same way. Read Psalm 23 again gently and thoughtfully, verse by verse. You will notice a level of confidence that can be born out, only from one who has a deep-rooted personal (intimate) relationship with his Shepherd. David declared his confidence out of a loving assurance and a good level of trust in a person he truly knew, and who knew him also. The Lord testified that He also knew David, "After God took Saul away, God made David their king. This is what God said about David: **'David, the son of Jesse, is the kind of person who does what pleases me. He will do everything I want him to do.'**" Acts 13:22. Jesus in John 10:27 said, **My Sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me.**

We lack grace and peace because we really do not know the Master, the Shepherd. We are often impoverished of all spiritual prosperity and freedom from fears. We suffer agitating passions and moral conflicts in our beings (our souls) because we do not know the Lord Jesus. And many times several believers have shown their lack of interest in knowing him. Peter revealed that when we commit our lives to learning of Christ, to knowing him, and understanding his ways, we would eventually realize that the Almighty has already provided for us everything we need, to become truly religious people who fear and honour Him in every way possible. This honour which we will give God includes having all our needs met. If you get to know the Shepherd better and better your spiritual life will become richer and richer, and physically, you are bound to enjoy increase of God's favour upon your life; His peace which he gave us when he came will be multiplied in your heart as you journey through the earth. What brings troubles and heartache to non-followers of Christ cannot do so to you, why? You have the knowledge of the holy one. You will be saved from serving God according to the wrong pattern; you will be delivered from always writing and crying out for helps here and there over what should be left for God as His own business. You will be saved from worrying about needs that should be accounted as Christ's in which he is committed to meet. Knowing Christ more and more is the only key that keeps a man's heart firm, and free from all possible agitations when it comes. Do not forget that Jesus was in the same boat which was being hit by the storm on the river, while he was sound asleep his disciples were crying and troubled that they might perish in the raging storms, but they woke Jesus up, not because they had faith, but because they feared they were going to perish. But when Jesus rebuked the storm and bringing great calm, they also became

calm and wondered what manner of man he was. By this, another deeper knowledge of Christ's personality was just revealed unto them, their fears ceased immediately. Let us read it briefly: Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" Jesus responded, "Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!" Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly all was calm. The disciples were amazed. "Who is this man?" they asked. "Even the winds and waves obey him!" Matt 8:24-27.

*"Jesus can never fear any storm. He created all storms and when one comes against you as you follow him, just stay calm and peaceful because of faith in him. Call upon him out of faith but not out of fear. Then rebuke the wind like it is him rebuking the storm in you. You will be amazed at the great calm that will come by in response to your faith."*

Peter, through his intimate knowledge of Christ wrote to those who have received equal privilege in this precious faith with them (the early disciples). This privilege exists in and through the righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He revealed that God has already provided the way to increase in grace and peace for all believers. And he also revealed that God already made provision for the church, to enable Christians live the godly lives that please him. He said all things they need for life and godliness (both physically, morally, socially, spiritually, economically etc.) has been provided for. This is true. Tapping it now depends on how much of Christ one gets to know; how much of Christ's presence abides in the life of any believer continually. So if you care to commit your heart to [continually]learning of Christ and knowing him daily, you will as well be experiencing the increasing grace and peace that follows people who know they are being constantly provided for (2 Pet. 1:2-3).

The psalmist reports that he would not lack anything because the Lord was His Shepherd. He had indeed come to know that the Lord was really his own Shepherd, God's got his back! This requires a faith as small as mustard seed to walk in practically. The Lord wants you to believe that he is your Shepherd, he has provided all you will ever need in life. Come to agreement with him. He promises that he will never leave you nor forsake you. In Hebrews 13:5-6, the writer of the book of Hebrews quoted God's word to Joshua when God commissioned him for an assignment. He said: ... *"I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."* So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?"

Tapping them depends upon you; it depends on how much of the Shepherd's personality you now know. The extent to which you follow him will reveal to you the location for your supplies each time. It is not right to follow someone you do not know. It takes knowledge to build trust in a man. Just as a woman only agrees to marry a man she knows, so also, we follow the leaders we know. So, do you know Jesus personally? If you do, to what extent? And are you still striving to know him today?

*Knowledge builds confidence and makes trust possible. The more of Christ you know personally the more firm your heart becomes as you continue to follow him through the way he leads. One will go any length to believe in Christ and his word if adequate knowledge of Christ is available. The power to carry out mighty and unheard-of kind of exploits is available in intimate knowledge of Christ. Through this one could as well go to any length in following the Lord's leading, whenever he reveals it, and in whichever direction.*

*Chapter summary:*

*Those who know their God shall be strong and do exploits. As you grow in your knowledge of Christ, you will be learning about the locations of your provisions each time easily. Just be committed to knowing him daily. Give attention to learning of him now that time still permits. "For you to really declare that 'I shall not want', you need to be sure that the Lord is truly your Shepherd (and the only one), whom you are truly knowing every day."*

## CHAPTER SIX

### Behold Your Teacher And Follow Him

Take time to read the following quotes slowly and with interest, to believe and obey (*all bold fonts are added for emphasis, take note of them*):

Though the Lord gave you adversity for food and suffering for drink, **he will still be with you to teach you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes. Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, "This is the way you should go," whether to the right or to the left.** Then you will destroy all your silver idols and your precious gold images. You will throw them out like filthy rags, saying to them, "Good riddance!" Isa. 30:20-22

"There are some things that the Lord our God has kept secret. Only he knows these things. **But he told us about some things. And these teachings are for us and our descendants forever.** And we must obey all the commands in that law. Deut. 29:29

Always remember what is written in that book of law. Speak about that book and **study it day and night.** Then you can be sure to obey what is written there. **If you do this, you will be wise and successful in everything you do.** Josh 1:8-9

**Ezra gave all his time and attention to studying and obeying the law of the Lord.** He wanted to teach the rules and commandments of the Lord to the Israelites. And he also wanted to help the people follow these laws in Israel. Ezra 7:10

The Lord says, **"I will teach you and guide you in the way you should live. I will watch over you and be your guide.** Don't be like a stupid horse or mule that will not come to you unless you put a bit in its mouth and pull it with reins." Ps 32:8-9

**When people choose to follow the Lord, he shows them the best way to live.** They will enjoy good things, and their children will get the land God promised. The Lord tells his secrets to his followers. **He teaches them about his agreement.** I always look to the Lord for help. Only he can free me from my troubles. Ps 25:12-15

**He tells us everything over and over** – one line at a time, one line at a time, a little here, and a little there!" Isa 28:10 NLT

**When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.** He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. **He will tell you about the future.** He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, **"The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.** John 16:13-15 NLT

These and other relevant verses point clearly that God is committed to His leadership roles over the life of all His Sheep (the Christians). He will either show, teach, or speak to each one of us what things He plans to do in and with our individual lives. Once you are in Christ, God's agenda for you becomes priority. What you used to feel about yourself or what the society and people around keep saying matters less than what the Lord plans to bring upon your life. Believers learn God's will and ways by dedicating a good time to come before Him by faith, most preferably alone with him (Luke 6:12). There He teaches what path one must take for any situation at all. Even before life's decisions are taken, the Lord must be confided in.

It is expected of every believer to be found by heaven in the position Christ has kept the person. When a believer misses his/her divine position in life or is dislocated from the place God has ordained, such misses the remaining resources meant for his/her welfare. Struggles becomes inevitable, and regrets and losses becomes the outcome.

**The Lord is good and glad to teach the proper path to all who go astray; he will teach the ways that are right and best to those who humbly turn to him.** And when we obey him, every path he guides us on is fragrant with his loving-kindness and his truth. Psalm 25:8-10 TLB

If there is one assignment that the Lord has to fulfill in the life of every believer, it is to teach each of them the correct path to follow when they have any good destination in mind. He knows all things; all who confide in his abilities are never put to shame. It is always best to wait for the Lord to lead in the right path, how to handle every situation. His grace is required for us to follow Him readily, carefully, and acceptably. His ways may be against all odds. It may appear awkward before others but remember that no one is wise enough to advise him on what to do or how he must direct the lives of his creatures. Christians are required to follow God's will that is good, acceptable and perfect in His sight (Rom. 12:2). But identifying such will of His is possible only when He teaches it to us. The world system is always working against the ways of the kingdom of God. This makes it very essential for every child of God to come before the Lord continually, and open their hearts to be taught the ways of the kingdom. Otherwise it might become so confusing and sometimes difficult for one to clearly understand what exactly God would have preferred. The world system is so forceful and would do all it can to influence the heart and decisions of a child of God. But following the Lord gently and humbly will keep all impending troubles away.

Note therefore, that, you are not going to be in need because you make the Lord Himself who owns and controls all earthly and heavenly resources to be your Shepherd. He will tend you, govern, teach, and direct you in the best pathway for your life, your family and ministry, so as to keep unnecessary troubles and shame away for His own glory. When he becomes the one leading you he becomes responsible for all you will need as you journey through the direction he leads you, that is why you shall not lack, if he Shepherds you.

A lot of people have gotten themselves into all manner of trouble, shown in debt or in raising of funds against God's instruction and will for His own work. This is simply because they fail to receive teachings from Christ, how they should go about a task, and even many of those who receive teachings still fail to obey it. Whatever keeps a believer away from following the Lord and his teachings can as well bring the believer into needless wants and struggles. We are designed to live a life of total dependence on the a Lord; any other life outside of it is far below the standard of living which heaven has created for God's children living on earth.

In Christ, all the ways of a natural man antagonizes the will of God. One must deal carefully when obeying a thought, perception or feeling in order to avoid any reason for future regret. Many times, several believers have fallen into Satan's trap when they follow the auditions of their mind without first acknowledging the Lord's mind in it. Giving one's self to Christ's teachings will fasten the rate of transformation that occurs in the thought faculty of every true believer. This is because the word that Christ speaks to us cleanses us each time we receive from him and resolve to believe and stand upon it.

The secret of a successful followership of Christ which enables the believer to bear the right kind of fruits is tied to having a good understanding of the life that is dead to the world and its standard. Paul, speaking to the Roman believers urged that they should not conform themselves to the standards of this world (12:1), now it has to be in every way, otherwise one might find his heart trying to listen to the Lord, but lacking the inner power to obey what the Spirit might be saying; one might eventually find himself hearing the Lord, sure enough, and yet following the dictates of the sinful self [which breeds sin] (Galatians 5:16).

We must therefore get to the understanding that one of the major purposes of the Cross is the **'termination of the self-life and all that are tied to it.'** Knowing this is one leg of the victory, walking daily in view of this truth is the second leg of the victory; it completes the whole thing.

In Chapter six verse four of Paul's letter to the Romans, he told them, "Your old sin-loving nature was buried with him by baptism when he died..." TLB.

He went further to say in verses 6-9,

" Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with him; that part of you that loves to sin was crushed and fatally wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, no longer needs to be a slave to sin; for when you are deadened to sin you are freed from all its allure and its power over you. And since your old sin-loving nature "died" with Christ, we know that you will share his new life." TLB

You see, knowing this alone by faith and living with this truth, being constantly resolute in it with unwavering determination to stand in it, and with the ability

provided by the Spirit is what makes the blessings and the experiences associated with the crucifixion of Christ come by. We are meant to walk in total victory; succeeding in everything we do as children of God in this world. The plan of God is for each believer to be holy because He is holy (Deut. 18:13), and to be perfect [growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity], as our heavenly Father is perfect (Matt 5:48). But the possibility is tied only to faith in the death of Christ, the power of his resurrection and the believer's readiness to continually believe and walk in them.

*Chapter summary:*

*Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. The more of him you see, the more of him you know. The more of him you know, the more likely you are to get provided for, because following him means knowing him, and knowing him means following him. The two are inseparable.*

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### The Shepherd's Conditions

Having established earlier on, that Jesus Christ is the Shepherd, it's also very essential to note that anyone whom he Shepherds and who will lack nothing must be ready to embrace his light yoke and burdens (Matt. 11:29-30). To really live the life which God presents every believer, the life that keeps them from wanting things outside of God's design, one should bear the following condition in mind every day and in every case. The psalmist testified, how he had the Lord as his Shepherd, and so lacked nothing. It was because he understood the ways of the Shepherd and committed his life to it, no matter what may come his way or what the world would say. It is just as David was separated from his brothers by life. He was just called out of the bush and was just as ready as those who had undergone purification, he was always ready for the anointing. His daily life met the condition.

In verses 2 and 3, David opened a process. Hear him,

*"He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.*

*He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake."*

If you will indeed allow the Lord to make you live in the sphere of life he prepared for you, and if you will truly let him lead you through the paths he has chosen for you, you shall not lack anything [outside his knowledge and ability]. Paul, in Ephesians 2:10 said, God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us new people so that we would spend our lives doing the good things he had already planned for us to do.

Every other thing David said in verses 4, 5 and 6 of Psalm 23 were built upon these secrets he revealed. These other verses were the manifestations of what transpired in verses 1, 2 and 3; they are **founded upon the previous verses**. Take a careful look at the italicized sentences above again. David is reporting that, for him to walk in the valley of the shadow of death and yet feared no evil, was because God was with him, obviously guiding, guarding, and comforting him with His divine rod and His divine staff. It was because he allowed God and so His role was playing out in his life. He also said, His Shepherd prepared a table before him in the presence of his enemies, anointed his head with oil; and made his cup overflowed. It was because God's **making** process, and **leadership** process were at work over his life, both humbling him and bringing him into positions he could never have been able to bring himself.

*And it is good for people to submit at an early age to the yoke of his discipline: Lam 3:27*

As for David, God was the one at work making him to take rest where He chose, and leading him beside still waters, his soul was often restored as his strength was being renewed. And that it was God at work daily. He testified that he was being led by God

to walk in the paths that are righteous before Him. Until it is God leading your life you cannot know the right path that pleases Him; no man can be wise enough to direct God. David could then affirm that God's goodness was in His future waiting for him, with all these happening. Then he said, "Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

*Anyone whom the Lord Shepherds can rest assured of the security of their future.*

One could say verses 2 and 3 were further descriptions of how God actually Shepherded David, such that he felt he had all his needs met. Literally, he may even have had physical needs or others daily, but he was without doubt convinced that following the one who is the Shepherd of his soul, he had those needs adequately catered for. He must have released himself to the Lord's disciple-making processes to possess such capacity of faith and trust, to record such a testimony. And Peter said in 1 Peter 5:7, Give all your worries to him, because he cares for you.

**The condition clarified:** Now, in our own days, the same challenge which stood before the patriarchs also stands before us – the need for self-denial, taking up one's cross daily, while following the Master, step by step.

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, **let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.** For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels. Luke 9:23-26 NKJV

These verses presented before us are the challenges with the present-day church. Obedience to this was what kept the earliest Christians together, making them to bear fruits that remained in Christ eternally as the Master had so ordained them. Their lives pleased God, the word of God grew, disciples multiplied, and the power of God's Spirit worked with them so much, as God's presence dwelt amongst them practically (Acts 2, 3).

Jesus hereby states clearly to the Christians of today: Regardless of your position in your local church assembly, social or political status, "**Any of you who want to be my follower must stop thinking about yourself and what you want.**

**You must be willing to carry the cross that is given to you every day for following me.** Any of you who try to save the life you have will lose it. But you who give up your life for me will save it. It is worth nothing for you to have the whole world if you yourself are destroyed or lost. **Don't be ashamed of me and my teaching.** If that happens, I will be ashamed of you when I come with my divine greatness and that of

the Father and the holy angels. Believe me when I say that some of you people standing here will see God's kingdom before you die." ERV

Without much to add here, each believer is supposed to be resolute on this. Enough of professing this religion and denying its life-changing power.

It is strange to God when a man thinks that he can keep his own life by himself. The world is ruled by all manner of spiritual forces, powers and principalities, the Lord of all which is Christ. All these wage war against the souls of men every day. It is those who remain on the Lord's side, under his divine care and leadership that will remain victorious. Our fight is not against people on earth. We are fighting against the rulers and authorities and the powers of this world's darkness. We are fighting against the spiritual powers of evil in the heavenly places. Eph 6:12-13. God raised Jesus Christ to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name. And so, in honor of the name of Jesus all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees, and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philipp. 2:9-11

This is why Jesus now possesses all rights required to be our Shepherd. He knows the way and he is himself the Way (John 14:6). He knows how to lead a man through pathways that keeps the devil under control. When a believer begins to live his life, outside of Christ's step-by-step leadership procedures, as if he knows the way better, such a Christian will begin to appear like a fool before the Lord, who himself is the way. Paul, sermonizing the Ephesians in his letter said, "...don't be foolish with your lives, but learn what the Lord wants you to do." Eph. 5:17-18. A lot of believers have preferred to run things in their lives as if they actually own their lives. Jesus says, anyone who is running the life God gave them, as if they own it, will lose it.

**"...whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.** For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and is himself destroyed or lost." The moments you prefer to follow the world's way instead of Christ, you are already trying to save yourself. You actually lost your earthly life at calvary, and now receives the new life in Christ Jesus. You are now a sacrifice; you are as good as dead to yourself and the world, but kept alive by Christ, for the Master's use (Rom. 12:2). Paul once said, "I have been crucified with Christ: and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20-21 TLB. You are living only a life, borrowed to you by Jesus. He purchased man back to God, so that those who believe might no longer live for themselves, but for him, who died to give himself up for them in love (2 Cor. 5:14). So, **where did you get the right to lead yourself from???**

If you have been living as if you can save yourself or be on your own due to your wealth of experience and wisdom, intellect and understanding only, with little care

about Christ 's thought over your life's decision(s), then know that, you are going to crash one day. The safest thing to do now is, put aside your own desires and conveniences and carry your cross with you every day, and keeping close to Jesus!

Determine to keep looking unto Jesus, who is the author and the finisher of this faith (Heb. 12:6) You must now turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow Jesus. It is the same thing which Jesus said to the congregation that gathered to hear him speak. He said to all, If any person wills to come after Me, let him deny himself [disown himself, forget, lose sight of himself and his own interests, refuse and give up himself] and take up his cross daily and follow Me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying also].

**If you have come to faith in Christ, you have handed over the key of your life into his hands, you've got to let him drive, being the Shepherd.**

The MESSAGE bible puts it this way: "Anyone who intends to come with me has to **let me lead**. You're not in the driver's seat — I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? If any of you is embarrassed with me and the way I'm leading you, know that the Son of Man will be far more embarrassed with you when he arrives in all his splendor in company with the Father and the holy angels... Luke 9:23-26. When as the Shepherd He is leading and you are following, no doubt, it attracts some measures of sufferings, it is such that the strength has been supplied for the saints through faith; the sufferings attached is part of the fellowship (Philipp 3:10). Do not like many do, follow him, only to get to a junction of difficulty and turn away. Whoever tries to preserve their own life by shying away from difficulties that come along the way will lose their lives. For whoever would preserve his life and save it will lose and destroy it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he will preserve and save it [from the penalty of eternal death]. Luke 9:24 AMP.

Then he also added,

Don't be ashamed of me and my teaching. If that happens, I will be ashamed of you when I come with my divine greatness and that of the Father and the holy angels. Luke 9:26-27.

**The Lord's teachings are what spells out the road through which he leads his Sheep daily.**

If you decide to shy away from embracing whatever shame/suffering that is attracted to following him, he warns that, he will also be ashamed of you on the last day, before the Father and the Holy angels. May God give us the divine enablement.

If you are drowning in sin, self-help and pious bodily discipline is not the way. You have to embrace the direct leadership of the Master, the way out is all in his Shepherding skills. His teaching still holds that in Christ, all died. So, sin died, the self-life died; we died (Rom. 6), the world is crucified to us and we are dead to the world (Gal. 6:14).

Sometimes, doing it the way you know how to, or the way you have been taught may seem best but it may never be counted an option if your life is being Shepherded and controlled by Jesus, the Master. Many people have, with their wisdom put up a lot of things which appear like success to them today. Many of such so-called successes will not bring a heavenly reward to their bearers here on earth, and on the last day, their works will be destroyed with fire. It is whatever you acquire while following the Lord that is judged as good success.

**Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials – gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames. 1 Cor. 3:12-15**

All others will be burned with fire, no matter how much praise and applause men may accord it today. Until it is from the Lord, it is a dangerous commodity in your possession. Stop seeking applause and praises from men rather than from God. It is better that heaven rejoices with you while men mock and slander you for following the path of the Shepherd. David also said, **he leads me in the path of righteousness for his name's sake** (Psalm 23:3). The Lord is only committed to leading you, his Sheep in the way that is right before the Father – the way of righteousness.

Many times in the bible, when a man indicates interest in the Lord's way, the first condition he gives them is that they should leave everything and follow him. This has also been the way from Genesis. Abraham, the father of faith left all and followed the Lord (Gen. 12:1). The twelve disciples that Jesus called left all and followed him. They would have those things again, here on earth in hundred-fold plus persecution, but they had to first, leave the one they acquired by their power and might. The Shepherd requires such, so that all the praises can be unto God alone, and nothing accrued the strength of man.

As for David, he allowed God to govern him in all areas of his life. That was his secret of success. His failures were because he broke out of **God's making and leading processes**, the way many believers are doing today. The serpent bit David when he removed his eyes from the Shepherd's leading to follow his heart. He lusted after a soldier's wife and committed adultery with her, both in his heart and physically. God punished him, but he repented (2 Sam. 11:1-5). It is biting many today and can still bite

whoever breaks out of God's boundaries for his/her life. God testifies of him in Acts 13:22, "...This is what God said about David: 'David, the son of Jesse, is the kind of person who does what pleases me. He will do everything I want him to do.'

**The Lord is still saying to you, that if you will not lack anything, if you will not fear the horrors of death and hell when they come near you, if the powers of worldly traditions and witchcraft activities will not harm you, if Satan's net must not catch you, if secret sin(s) must not close your mouth, if He will comfort you with His rod and staff daily and in every situation, and if God must cause his goodness and mercy to follow you all the days of your life, then you need to also embrace His conditions.** Jesus has said it clearly.

And He said to all,

"If any person wills to come after Me,

- let him **deny himself** [disown himself, forget, lose sight of himself and his own interests, refuse and give up himself] and
- **take up his cross daily** and
- **follow Me** [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying also].

*Chapter summary:*

*If the Lord must truly be your Shepherd, and you won't lack anything in your life, family, and ministry (spiritually, physically, socially, emotionally, morally etc.), then God presents to you the way out. These conditions must be met simultaneously (that is, altogether at the same time). As you follow the Shepherd determine to put aside your own ways and desires so as to embrace his own. And as you follow him daily, accept all that might come upon you because you are putting away your human ways. Accept them as his will and keep giving thanks. Some may hurt or make you appear like a fool to your contemporaries, keep looking unto Jesus, keep believing and keep giving thanks all the way. You will succeed.*

If you have gone through this short booklet and have received an understanding, then you need to respond to God. You need to check your heart again. Is the Lord your Shepherd? Has he always been the one, is He the one still managing your life, family, ministry and business? Are you allowing him to do so daily? Give yourself and God the sincere response now.

### **Summary**

David said that God usually made him laid down in green pastures so that he rested while enjoying all round abundance. He usually led him beside still waters, because as his Shepherd, his peace was God's major concern. Journeying in life with all the quietness that God is composed of was His daily plan for him. He usually restored his soul and renewed his strength whenever he was crushed and down due to life's battles. God usually made him follow the right path for His own name's sake. God

was determined to get honour for His great name by leading him through the paths that He (God) regarded as righteous in all things. These are reasons why he called God his Shepherd.

We should therefore be ready to release ourselves to the Lord, to be Shepherd to us in marriage, how to become the best spouse. Let him be to us a Shepherd in business, leading us to work with all diligence into achieving excellent results for the glory and honour of His name, and of His Kingdom on Earth.

In the work of ministry, Jesus whom you serve must be the Shepherd of his own work. Otherwise, like so many are busy making mistakes and doing works of error without even knowing, one might as well become so preoccupied wrongly. Many ministers of the gospel have become zealous and yet foolish (Eph. 5:17). This is because they have the heart for sincere service unto God but do not ask how He also wants them to do the works He sends them to do. It is dangerous, as some do, running with incomplete instructions from the Holy Spirit over an assignment. Because you cannot love the souls of men more than Christ does, and you cannot do the work itself more than Christ, the owner. It is always better to inquire how best he wants his work done per time, or how best he wants to do his work one time and at another time. Please learn to wait for and to follow the Lord of the work, as he leads; determine to yield to His Shepherd roles over every area of your life.

## Prayers

1. LORD, I repent from my evil ways, in wherever I have not allowed you to play your Shepherd role in my life.
2. Today, I confess that you are my Shepherd, and you can lead me in the paths that you have chosen for me.
3. I open my heart to receive of the abundance that usually follows everyone who are abides in your care, and who releases themselves to your Shepherding responsibilities on them.
4. In your mercy and power, undo all the negative effects that has taken place in my life so far, as a result of my neglect of your Shepherd role and refusing to submit to you as the leader of my life.
5. From today, make all that I have lost as a result of such stubbornness to be restored to me in 100-fold dimension.
6. Take your lead in my life in matters of marriage, the job all the business I do, my academic Pursuit, my relationship with my spouse and children, my relationship with my neighbours and every venture that I am engaged in life.
7. Lord Jesus Christ, I present myself unto you. With faith, I accept that you paid the price for my salvation from sin. And as a result, you received the right to redeem my life for yourself, and you became the Shepherd of God's flock. I release myself unto you today. Be my Shepherd and lead me in the everlasting way forever. Amen.
8. Thank you for the answers. Amen

Kindly write to share your response with us. And for further helps on follow-up, comment, and prayer, contact us on +2348148961631, +2348065792749 [ict.theology@gmail.com](mailto:ict.theology@gmail.com) or [eneojakeji@gmail.com](mailto:eneojakeji@gmail.com)