



ONE

READ Psalm 23:1-6. Using the PRONOUNCE IT Bible study method, READ verse 6 several times emphasizing a different word each time.

Which words mean the most to you? Why? What does it mean to you that there's never a day when God's goodness and love are not pursuing you?

WRITE your response as a prayer.

READ Psalm 23 aloud.

This time at the conclusion of each verse, add the phrase; "His goodness and love are pursuing me."

TWO

Our shepherd leads us along right paths. When facing difficulties, we tend to head toward bad paths. We may venture on the path of believing lies about ourselves and our situation.

Sometimes we think we see the entire situation and that it's permanent.

We can easily forget the truth that **our present situation is not our permanent situation.**

READ 1 Peter 1:6, 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, Romans 8:18, Psalm 13:1-2, Psalm 138:8, John 5:17, and Isaiah 55:8-9.

WRITE down the adjectives used to describe grief and suffering. What do they have in common? What are the differences?

**Sometimes God changes your circumstance, changes you in the midst of it, or does both.**

*"This is the day - yes, even this difficult day-that you have made. I may not like it, but I choose to accept it and rejoice in it.*

*And, with your help and by your grace,*

*I will do something today so that my tomorrows will be better."*

**An Honest Look at a Mysterious Journey -- John Stumbo**

THREE

READ Hebrews 12:1-3.

**When you don't know if you have any faith left, it's okay to hang on to someone else's.**

At times, when our own faith is being hammered, shaped, and possibly threatened to the core, there are others who keep believing for us.

We may resent their faith and feel angry that they can still trust and have such faith when we can't seem to find any of our own.

It's from these times we discover that choosing to hold on to the faith of others can be enough.

Who are the "clouds of witnesses" whose faith you can hold on to when your own faith falters?

Is there someone in your life who needs to grasp hold of your faith?

FOUR

READ Ecclesiastes 4:12 and Job 2:13.

**In crisis we're often tempted to isolate ourselves.**

Pain and isolation are dangerous companions, which support and strengthen one another. We were created for community and struggle best when we struggle in community.

In **An Honest Look at a Mysterious Journey** (p.120), John shares his struggle of when he least wanted to attend church and some of the reasons he, by a sheer act of discipline, continued to go:

*"Looking back over the last few months, I realize that by attending church...*

*... I think thoughts I would not otherwise think*

*... I hear truths I would not otherwise hear*

*... I sing songs I would not otherwise sing*

*... I meet people I would not otherwise meet*

*... I give offerings I may not otherwise give*

*... I rejoice in missions' efforts and in new followers of Jesus that I would not otherwise know about*

*... I receive encouragement and challenge I would not otherwise receive*

*... I shed tears I would not have otherwise shed*

*... I receive a blessing I would not otherwise have received*

*... I pray prayers I would not have thought to pray*

*... I meet God in a way I would not have met Him had I stayed home in my chair.*

*... And, perhaps, my attendance is an encouragement or testimony to someone else."*

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25

FIVE

**As long as we have God, we have hope, and we'll always have God.**

READ Romans 8:34-39, Deuteronomy 31:8, and Psalm 23.

What assurances of God's presence in our lives do these verses give us?

What can separate us from God's love?

WRITE Romans 8:38-39 as a prayer of thanksgiving to God.

*Sometimes all we have to hold on to*

*Is what we know is true of who You are*

*So when the heartache hits like a hurricane*

*That could never change who You are -- and we trust in who You are*

*Even if the healing doesn't come, and life falls apart*

*And dreams are still undone*

*You are God -- You are good -- forever faithful One*

*Even if the healing doesn't come*

Lyrics from *Even If* by Kutless