

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall.
Lesson 19: David and the Psalms



Session Snapshot

Narrative Passage: Psalm 23

Gospel Focus: John 10:11-15

Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand that the psalms are creative expressions of a multitude of emotions written by God's people.
- Students will understand that Jesus is the perfect shepherd who, out of His great love for His children, rescued us once-and-for-all.
- Students will be reminded of the many ways God provides for them and will commit to being more mindful of God's provision in their lives.



Overview

God cares for us. Reread that sentence understanding "cares" to be an active verb and not just a gushy, emotional idea. God cares for us. He feeds us, clothes us, gives us shelter, and provides training and discipline. He is our caregiver actively providing, leading, and protecting. As your students read one of the most well-known Bible passages, try to help them consider the ways God's provision, leadership, and protection have impacted their lives.



Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 19 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 19, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

Psalms

Author: God inspired various authors to write a majority of the Psalms in their era, including seventy-three by David, twelve by Asaph, eleven by the Korahites and two by Solomon. Heman, Ethan and Moses each wrote one, while the authorship of fifty other Psalms remain unknown.

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Time frame: The Psalms were written during different eras of Israel's history, spanning from 1100 BC (i.e Psalm 29, 68) to 400 BC (i.e. Psalm 119).

Purpose: The Psalms are inspired by God to poetically reflect humanity's journey with Him. Each psalm serves a different purpose, such as a personal or communal lament, hymn, song, reflection or declaration. Many of these were set to music and intended to be shared publicly, even when sharing a revealing confession (i.e. Psalm 51).

John

Author: The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation, as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.

Time frame: The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.

Purpose: John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.



Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

Getting Started

- **Goal:** To get student thinking about what it may be like to take care of animals, specifically sheep.
- **Set-Up:** You're going to need a way to display the following YouTube video:
 - o <https://youtu.be/D2FX9rviEhw>
 - o If you can't show the video, be prepared to summarize it for your students.

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FIRST, ask students if they have any pets that they have to take care of. Ask them a little bit about their pets. You can use some questions similar to the following:

- **Is your pet intelligent or dumb? Can you give some examples of why you think so?**
- **Can your pet do any good tricks? What's its best trick?**
- **Do you like taking care of your pet or do you get tired of it? Why?**

THEN, ask if any of them have ever spent any time around sheep. What do they know about sheep? Show students the amazingly weird, sort of awesome, YouTube video, "Extreme Sheep LED Art." When you've finished, explain to students that in this lesson, you're going to be looking at a Biblical poem where God is described as our shepherd. We are the animals, and He's the one taking care of us. Ask:

- **Do you think God makes funny videos with His angels herding us into shapes you can only see from space?**
- **Do you think of yourself more as a shepherd, sheep, or sheep dog? Why?**
- **What do you think God thinks of us if He thinks of Himself as a shepherd?**

Leave these questions unanswered. The idea is to have a little fun and to set up the imagery of sheep and shepherd.

FINALLY, if no one has any more input, transition to The Story.

The Story

- **Goal:** Students will understand that the psalms are creative expressions of a multitude of emotions written by God's people.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find a dry-erase board is helpful to jot down some notes, but it's not essential.

FIRST, explain that in this lesson you'll be glancing briefly at the book of Psalms; "briefly," because it's the largest book in the Bible, and you're only going to look at one little chapter. Provide some of the basic background for the book using the Bible Background. Explain that the book is basically a book of worship songs for God's people, the Israelites. Although many people think of David when they think of the psalms, there were at least eight authors of the Psalms. The 150 Psalms were written over a period of nearly 700 years.

NEXT, explain that in this lesson you'll be looking at Psalm 23. If you'd like, use the "Connecting The Dots" section below to do a little review and/or fill in the gaps from your last lesson and this one.

Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **David was a shepherd whom God hand selected to be king of His people.**
- **Saul, the first King of Israel was angry that David would replace him as King. Saul pursued and tried to kill David for years. This meant that David was on the run and hiding out**

THEN, have students turn to Psalm 23. While they're finding it, inform students that you're going to be reading Psalm 23

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more than once. Explain that this portion of the Bible is short, but full of meaning and insights. Let students know that you'll want some volunteers to help you read.

Read or have a student read the entire passage. Say something like:

- **If you haven't grown up in the church and you hear Psalm 23 for the first time, perhaps you wonder if you've fallen asleep and woken up at someone's funeral. If you're more familiar with this psalm, maybe you envision mountain vistas, spectacular sunsets, and lazy meadows beside a babbling brook. Gentle music might play in the background of your imagination. By the end of our lesson, I hope you see a lot more.**

NEXT, ask students to turn and share with a friend what they think of this psalm, just the first things that come to mind.

THEN, have students to open their Bible to 1 Samuel 16. While they are finding it, explain that Samuel was a prophet of God. He was told by God to select a new king for Israel. He was told to go to a man named Jesse and God would show Samuel the new king from among Jesse's eight sons. Have a student read 1 Samuel 16:6-13. Ask something like:

- **What was David doing when God's prophet came to select the new King of Israel?**
 - o Answer: Watching sheep.
- **Put yourselves in David's shoes. He's about 13-15 years old. Let your imagination run with it. What was he thinking when THE prophet of God anointed his head with oil to signify that he would be king?**
 - o Answers will vary. Some possible answers include fear, excitement, and disbelief. He may wonder, "Who's watching my sheep?"
- **What was going through his brothers' minds?**
 - o Answers will vary. Some possible answers are: "WHAT ...!? Why not me?" They may have felt jealousy, but they also may have felt admiration and joy for their brother.

THEN, lead students to and understanding of what it is to be a shepherd. Ask something like:

- **Ok, so David the young boy gets sent out to the meadows to watch sheep. That's his job for the family. What do you think it's like to be a shepherd? What do they do, see, and experience?**
 - o Answers will vary. Some possible thoughts are: Shepherds are totally responsibility for something fragile and valuable because they're dealing with animals that are helpless, defenseless, aimless, and fairly stupid. Shepherding is probably lonely. Shepherds are constantly on the lookout for danger.

NEXT, re-read or have a student read Psalms 23:1-4 with the mind of a shepherd. Say something like:

- **While we read Psalm 23 again, try to imagine that you are a shepherd. Really focus on the imagery that David uses and what the scenarios he describes makes you think about.**

After you've re-read the Psalm, draw the students' attention to some of the phrases David used. If you have a dry erase board, write some phrases from the passage down and ask the students to describe the emotions the phrases evoke when they hear them. Some phrases to point out and potential answers include:

- **"fields of green grass" = peace, rest, food**
- **"quiet waters" = rejuvenation, water**
- **"right paths" = guidance in uncertainty, leadership**
- **"rod" = a club to beat off predators, protection**
- **"staff" = a walking stick used to gently guide/discipline sheep**

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THEN, ask students to think about times God has been their “Shepherd.” Have students turn and share with someone sitting next to them about God’s provision of some of the things on your list (e.g. peace, protection, discipline, etc).

Remind the students that sometime after Samuel anointed David, King Saul took David to live as a servant in his palace. Say something like:

- **David was so successful at everything Saul asked him to do that Saul put David in charge of the army. Unfortunately, David was so successful in battle and well liked by the people, that Saul became angry and jealous. So much so that Saul tried to kill David and David had to escape and live like a fugitive on the run with Saul and his men looking to kill him.**

Ask:

- **What do you think it would be like having to live “on the run?”**
 - o Answers will vary. Some possible answers include. He would have felt paranoia and fear and would have had little food, shelter, and clean water.

THEN, re-read or have a student read Psalms 23 with the mind of a fugitive. Say something like:

- **While we read Psalm 23 this time, try to imagine that you are on the run from someone trying to get you. What parts of the psalm stand out for you this time? What emotions do you feel when you hear the passage this time?**
 - o Answers may include: “everything I need” = Actively setting your mind not to want. Consider the stark difference between David’s life in the palace (he had everything he could possibly want), and his life in caves (God provided all that David needed). The difference is how David perceived his situation and God’s provision.
 - o “lie down in fields of green grass” = God giving peace and rest from the chase.
 - o “the darkest valley” = Wondering who is hiding in the shadows and around the corners.
 - o In the original language, “will follow me all the days of my life” has a sense of paranoia. In other words, if I start to fear that something is hunting me, I choose to know that it is God’s “goodness and love.”

NEXT, ask students to think about times God has been with them through a “dark valley.” Turn and share with a friend what it meant to have His presence during those times.

REMIND the students that eventually, King Saul died in battle. Say something like:

- **After King Saul died, David became the king in Judah, one of the twelve parts of the country. The other eleven parts were united against David with one of Saul’s sons as their king. There was a violent civil war. It was fierce and angry; people would be battling their relatives and neighbors. After about 7 years, Saul’s son was killed and the whole country was united with David as their king.**

Ask something like:

- **What do you think it would be like for David to finally become the king after so many struggles?**
 - o Answers will vary. A possible answer is that he probably felt a sense of relief. It would take a lot of faith to believe that what God promised 15 years ago, when you were just a boy, was actually true.

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Say something like:

- **While we read Psalm 23 one last time, try to imagine that you are finally being made king. After everything that happened, you are now sitting on the throne, surrounded by your allies and your enemies. They are all finally acknowledging that you were chosen by God to be the rightful king. How is Psalm 23 different this time? What emotions would you be feeling?**

Ask students to think about times God has granted them a moment in the spotlight. Have students turn and share with someone sitting next to them about that time. In that moment, did they remember that it was God who brought them there for His glory?

FINISH this section by talking to the students briefly about the book of Psalms. Say something like:

- **As you can see, this one psalm can bring a number of things to our minds and hearts depending on what's going on in our lives. That's the beauty of the psalms. They're expressions of human emotions as real life is going on around us. Sometimes they're full of thankfulness and praise. Other times we see frustration, worry, and even anger. But they always point us back to the Lord, and His rule over our lives and love for us. In the midst of the chaos of life, they anchor us to the Lord as our true foundation. As we dive into the next section, we're going to see how Jesus fits into this role of being our shepherd. As you read the psalms, always be on the lookout for how Jesus is the true fulfillment of what's being talked about.**

If students don't have any questions, transition into The Thread to see where we see the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

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FIRST, Instruct students to turn to John 10. If you choose, while they are turning pages, provide them with some brief context for book by referencing the Bible Background. Also give them some immediate contextual background.

Say something like:

- **The crowd Jesus was talking to would have been familiar with shepherds and sheep. They would know what makes a good shepherd versus a bad one. They would have also been familiar with Psalm 23 and the concept of thinking of the Lord as our shepherd. Now, Jesus is going to make some bold claims here in this passage that will really rile them up.**

NEXT, have one student read Jeremiah 23:1-4 and immediately after he or she is done, have another student read John 10:11-15. Then lead students in a discussion. Ask something like:

- **What are the glaring differences between the two passages?**
 - o Answer: Jeremiah describes leaders that lead their people astray and don't care about them. In John, Jesus says He's a good shepherd that truly cares for His people and even lays down His life for them.

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- **Jesus starts John 10:11 with “I am.” What is significant about that?**
 - o Answer: Jesus has several “I am” statements throughout the Gospels. He’s making a connection to the Lord saying His name is “I am” in the Old Testament. Jesus is drawing attention to the fact that He is God. Using “I am” is a claim to His divinity.
- **So, if Jesus begins this passage with a claim to divinity and goes on to say that He’s the good shepherd, what connection is He making to Psalm 23?**
 - o Answer: He’s letting us know that He is the shepherd David described in Psalm 23. He’s the good shepherd that leads His people in all the ways we’ve discussed, but He adds in there that He’s willing to die for His people.

If your students don’t have any questions, bring it all together for your students and transition into the Wrapping Up section by saying something like:

- **We’ve looked at two important sections of the Bible. In Psalm 23 we read about the Lord’s character and how He cares for His people. In John 10 we read about Jesus making the claim that He is God and that He is the true shepherd that’s even willing to die for His people. Now we’re going to think about our response to that promise of care and provision.**

Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** Students will be reminded of the many ways God provides for them, and will commit to being more mindful of God’s provision in their lives.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need lined paper and a pen/pencil to write with. You may also use a dry-erase board for this section.

FIRST, review the character of the shepherd described in Psalm 23. Say something like:

- **We’ve learned from Psalm 23 what a shepherd is like to his sheep. Can you list some one-word descriptions of what the shepherd is and does for his sheep?**
 - o Answers will vary.

THEN, instruct students that they are going to write their own paraphrased version of Psalm 23. The main ingredient is that their Psalm 23 has to describe how God’s presence in their own lives has provided all the things a shepherd provides. Say something like:

- **To wrap things up, we are each going to write our own paraphrase version of Psalm 23. A paraphrase is more than just re-wording. Try to grab a whole concept and write the concept in a way that is meaningful to you. For this task, you’ll want to focus on the ways that God’s presence has been all those things that a shepherd was for David. You might say, “God is my coach. He wants me to be strong even if it sometimes hurts. He makes sure I get a water break, but also pushes me beyond what I think are my limits,” and so on.**

Give students enough time to paraphrase their own Psalm 23. Then, ask students who are willing to share their Psalm 23 with the group.

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FINALLY, ask students to describe how this lesson helped them better understand God's character and His intentions for us. Once students have had a chance to respond, ask if anyone has any further thoughts or questions. Then, close your Bible study in prayer.

- If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 19 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.
- Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.