



PRESSURE POINTS
An in depth look at the 23rd Psalm
(part 3)

How to Use This Life Group Study Guide

1. Review your message notes from Greg's sermon
2. Write out your answers to the questions below.
3. Discuss your answers with your Life Group.

Relieving the Pressure of My Failure

"He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." - Psalm 23: 3 (NKJV)

The Bible makes many references to the soul. Have you ever thought much about your soul? What is it? Do you have any control over it? In simple language the soul of man is the inner man; his or her true self. The Greek word for soul is 'psyche' which means 'of the mind' or 'personality'. Just as each person has a unique DNA so each person has a unique identity called the soul.

The book of Proverbs tells us the soul can experience **pleasure** (Read Proverbs 2:10). Jesus explains that the soul is more **valuable** than any worldly possession (Read Matthew 16:26). In Mark's gospel Jesus expresses that a soul can be **depressed** (Read Mark 14:34). The soul also has the ability to love for we are commanded to love the Lord our God with "all our soul" as well as all our heart, mind, and strength (Read Luke 10:27). In Psalm 63:3 David said, "My soul thirsts for you (God)." Elsewhere we can read where our soul can get sick and in Psalm 42 the Psalmist speaks of his soul being downcast.

The soul is where man's supreme battles are fought, and when pressure comes to bear on our soul we are in a critical condition. Our very identity is being violated. Nothing pressures our soul more than a sense of failure. Failure damages us deep within. It alters the way we see ourselves and often the way we see God. That is why the words of David

in Psalm 23:3 are so important to grasp and understand. David writes of God, "***He restores my soul***".

Recently there have been a host of public figures who have tasted the bitterness of personal, not to mention public, failure. Ask Tiger Woods or Senator John Edwards and they would tell you how deeply their failure has affected them. The good news is that God offers to restore our soul.

For Further Study and Personal Reflection and Discussion:

1. Discuss the term 'soul'. What comes to your mind when you hear the word? Do you think everyone has a soul? Why do you think Jesus said the soul was more valuable than anything? Define what your soul is.

2. When a person is caught in some failure it is more than his/her reputation that is harmed. Why do you think a person's moral failure scars a person so deeply? How does failure scar us?

3. Name other things that you believe deeply wound or harm a person's soul. Explain your answer.

4. What do you think it means for a person's soul to be restored? Why do you think it is so important for a person's soul to be restored?

5. When we fail the most important thing that needs to happen is to adjust our attitude toward God and ourselves. Otherwise we tend to give up. Often when we fail we think God is through with us primarily because we are in many ways through with ourselves. We think we are worthless, hopeless, beyond repair. This is why the final line of Psalm 23:3 is so important: **"He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."** Why is God's name at stake? How does allowing God to lead us after we have failed help God's reputation? How does it help others?

6. Why is confession such a vital ingredient in the restoration process?
