



PRESSURE POINTS

**An in depth look at the 23rd Psalm
(part 5)**

How to Use This Life Group Study Guide

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

"Relieving the Pressure of My Troubles"

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over." – Psalm 23:5 (NKJV)

You certainly know by now that David was the author of this most beloved Psalm, a portion of holy scripture that may be the best known passage from the entire Bible among Christians and non Christians alike. ***What do you think it is about the 23rd psalm that makes it such a popular passage of Scripture?*** (Discuss this in your meeting)

The richness of the Psalm is tied directly to the life of the author. David's life is an intriguing study. His story could be punctuated with the word, "***nevertheless***". David succeeded in spite of numerous obstacles. His ascent to the throne of Israel is an unlikely journey. He was the ***runt*** of eight brothers, ***nevertheless*** he was God's choice to be the new king of Israel even though he was still a boy. He grew up in a home in which he apparently was neglected and overlooked, ***nevertheless*** David never blamed any of his problems on his parents. A nine foot giant named Goliath lumbered down into the Valley of Elah fully decked out in battle armor, well armed, and taunting the army of Israel until they shuddered in their boots, ***nevertheless*** David, a teenage boy at the time, walked down in to the valley to meet the giant with nothing but a sling shot and killed Goliath. While king, David committed the double sin of adultery and murder, ***nevertheless*** God called David "a man after God's own heart." **DAVID**. When you read his story you wonder what God saw in

him. You get the point, don't you? God is a difference maker. Regardless of our deficiencies, with God we can overcome whatever is putting pressure on us. ***Can you use a 'nevertheless'*** to be written into your story? Sure you can and David's story gives us hope.

Everyone experiences challenges. Periodically we all face up hill battles. Humanly speaking the odds won't always be in our favor. In the process of living life we will be injured. We will make mistakes. **The secret we are learning from David in our study of Psalm 23 is that it is the way we respond to the challenges of life that determines how well things turn out.** David focused on the Provider not the problem.

Too often we respond to trouble in our life with decisions that make matters worse. David's predecessor, Saul, is a perfect example of this. Saul was tall, dark, and handsome. He looked the part of a King, but he had a fatal character flaw. He was deceitful. He was a poser. He was dishonest. T.D. Jakes says, "Saul was perhaps more 'moral' than David, but David was by far more honest." Consequently, the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker and the house of David grew stronger and stronger. The key was David didn't pretend to be something he wasn't. He never pretended to be self sufficient and wasn't bashful about admitting his need for God. He was overwhelmed with God who would love him in spite of his many deficiencies. David's confidence was never in his own ability but in God. That is the consistent message throughout the 23rd Psalm.

Much of the trouble we encounter in life has to do with people. This was no different for David. Saul was insanely jealous of David and grew to hate him and actually tried to kill him on numerous occasions. Talking about pressure, how would you like to work for a boss like that? Yet David responded by turning to God. In Psalm 23:5, David basks in the thought that God provides for him in the "***presence of his enemies.***"

1. List some ways people frequently respond to difficulty that make matters worse.

2. Read Psalm 101:7 and discuss why honesty and transparency is so important to God. Why is deceit such a 'fatal' flaw when it comes to our relationship with God?

3. Read 1 Samuel 18: 6-29. What first made Saul angry with David?
Why did this make him angry?

What made Saul afraid of David? (v. 12) _____

4. Read Psalm 57: 1-3. Where does David turn for help from his
enemies? _____

What does 'refuge' mean for David in this Psalm? _____

What answer does David expect to receive from God? Why does he
expect that answer?

5. Read Romans 12: 14-21. How are believers in Christ supposed to
treat their enemies? Instead of revenge, what strategy does God
give his children? (v.20-21)

6. Conclude with a time of prayer for one another.