



PRESSURE POINTS
An in depth look at the 23rd Psalm
(part 6)

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 members.

Relieving the Pressure of My Anxiety over the Future

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." – Psalm 23:6 (NKJV)

When the terrorists flew airplanes into the World Trade Center back in 2001, September 11 joined December 7, 1941 as dates "*that will live in infamy.*" The events of both days served to fan into flame a fear that seems to always live just beneath the surface of our lives. Actually 9/11 has seemed to give birth to a new term: "the politics of fear". Now it may be a new term but it is actually nothing new at all. Fear of the unknown, of what lies ahead, has always been with us and unfortunately some people take advantage and prey on people's fears. Sometimes even preachers will do this to their congregations. But I remind you fear does not come from God. Paul told Timothy, "***God has not given us a spirit of fear.***" (2 Timothy 1:7)

So, how does a person of faith battle the natural fear all men seem to have in the face of signs that point to an ominous future? David, seemed to do so by clinging to the analogy of how a shepherd cares for his sheep and allowing God to be his Shepherd, and accepting his role and position as a sheep that is in constant need of shepherding in order to survive. **Do you have such an intimate relationship with God?**

Are you willing to humble yourself and accept the truth that you are like a sheep that needs God as his shepherd in order to survive?

1. We live in a world that often seems bent on self destruction. The power to annihilate humanity has, it seems, been placed in the hands of people who are more than willing to do so. **What ominous realities in today's world have the most power to frighten you?**

2. Earthquakes have been occurring with increasing frequency in recent days. Remind you of anything you have read about in the Bible? **Read Matthew 24: 1-14**. It is almost as though Jesus was counseling His disciples, "Bad stuff is going to happen, but don't freak out when it does." **Do you have a personal action plan for dealing with bad stuff? If so, what is it? If not, why not? Where would you start?**

3. Think of an occasion when an emergency situation arose in your lifetime. What observations could you make about how people handle difficulties?

4. One of the primary things Jesus warns His disciples about in the text from Matthew is the likelihood of false prophets. Why do false teachers inevitably point people away from Jesus and to other people? How well do you know Jesus? Would you be able to tell if someone was painting a false picture of Him? Explain.

5. Read Psalm 46: 1-11. What kind of fears do verses 2-3 and verse 6 mention? How do verses 8-11 allay our fears of major catastrophes?

6. Read Revelation 2:10. What kind of suffering is promised to some believers? What does God promise to those who overcome their fears and remain strong in Christ?

7. Read Romans 8:28. Do you believe bad stuff can serve God's will? If so, describe a time in your life when God used something bad to serve His will.

8. A friend of Max Lucado says, "***Everything will work out in the end. If it's not working out, it's not the end.***" Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not? How could this statement bring comfort and alleviate fear?
