



Links Players

Three Fundamental Characteristics

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate, and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate, and narrow is the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalm 23:1, ESV)

Even though I walk through the valley of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. (Psalm 23:4a)

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. (Psalm 23:5)

While helping a collegiate golfer recently, I forgot that the first step in diagnosing a swing flaw is to check the fundamentals. The golfer felt like her hands were moving too far inside on the backswing. I agreed and determined it was her shoulder turn causing the issue, not her hands.

Then I noticed her ball position was back of center of her stance. If I had checked her ball position from the start (a golf fundamental), we would have made a simple adjustment of moving the ball to the front-middle of her stance, which fixed her swing path.

I love digging into the deep layers of scripture, and it's equally important to remember God's tender care and unwavering presence in our lives.

Within the well-known passage of Psalm 23, God is revealed in three fundamental roles: a shepherd, a companion, and a host.

The opening line, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," reminds us that God is our shepherd. A shepherd guides, protects, and provides. A good shepherd knows where the safe pastures for nourishment and quiet waters to rest are located. Our good shepherd watches over his flock with strength and compassion, keeping us safe. Are you listening and following the Shepherd?

In addition to being our shepherd, God is also our constant companion. The psalm continues, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." These words assure us that even in our darkest moments, we are never truly alone.

God's companionship offers comfort, strength, and encouragement in times of despair. When uncertainties darken our path, the light of his presence is with us. Are you spending time with God, your companion?

Lastly, God is our gracious host, inviting us to partake in a feast of his blessings. The imagery of a prepared table amid our enemies symbolizes his generous provision and honor. “You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows” speaks to the overflowing grace and abundance that He pours into our lives.

As a host, God welcomes us into His presence, where we find nourishment for both body and spirit, a reminder that our identity is as cherished guests in his eternal kingdom. Do you have a seat at God’s table?

Reflecting on Psalm 23 reminds us that God’s roles as shepherd, companion, and host express His deep love for us. May this psalm remind us that in every circumstance, God’s shepherding care, unfailing companionship, and hospitable embrace are fundamentals of our faith in Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, Father, thank you for who you are. Help me to follow you, spend time with you, and come to your table.

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