

## Psalm 23

### L-2: I Shall Not Want

#### A. Outline of lesson:

1. Principle of contentment
2. Principle of logistical grace
3. The desires of your heart – first, God changes the desires to line up with His; then He gives you those desires.

#### B. Bible verse: [Psalm 23:1b](#) “I shall not want”

#### C. The Psalm 23 Memory Verse Chart

The children should be able to quote the memory verse from last week’s lesson, which was [Psalm 23:1a](#) “**The Lord is my Shepherd;**” Put a sticker in the corresponding box for each child’s name who can say it. Tell them that with each new lesson they will need to say the entire Psalm up to that point. So, for next week, they will need to say, “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.”

#### D. Review:

1. Why do sheep need a shepherd?
2. How do we become a sheep belonging to the Good Shepherd?

#### E. The Lesson:

*There is a story of a particular sheep who was very beautiful, for a sheep. Now this sheep was about as perfect as a sheep could get. She had very strong muscles and her body was nicely formed. She had the perfect ‘sheep’ face and beautiful big brown eyes. She had a soft light brown coat that would someday make wonderful wool yarn for a sweater. Not only this, but she was a good mother. Her lambs were the healthiest, strongest, and grew up the fastest. Now, this beautiful sheep belonged to a good shepherd, one who took very special care of his sheep. He was always checking his pastures, making sure there was plenty of nourishing green grass. This particular shepherd was like the Good Shepherd we learned about in our last lesson. In fact, this shepherd studied God’s Word to find out exactly what a good shepherd should do – and then he did his best to be that kind of shepherd.*

*This shepherd lived by the sea. His pasture lands went right down to the edge of the ocean. He built his fences far out into the surf so that his sheep would never wander off and become lost or injured. However, this one beautiful ewe sheep was **discontent**. She was always unhappy. She thought, with her little sheep mind, that the brown scraggly grass on the other side of the fence looked good and exciting. So, she was constantly walking the edges of her pasture looking for a way to get out through the fence. Every so often she would find a way to squeeze her body through a place with a loose board. She would push and shove until she finally wiggled through and then she would wander off into dangerous unprotected areas. Her watchful shepherd then*

#### To the teacher:

Present the gospel and information about salvation as often as the Holy Spirit prompts you. Those who have never believed will have the opportunity and those who have will learn a little bit more about their so great salvation.

Begin every lesson with confession – the naming of sins to God. This insures the filling of the Holy Spirit for the teaching of God’s Word. It may be necessary to repeat this process throughout the lesson so learning will be maximized.

These lessons are consecutive and build on the previous lessons. It will be helpful for you to look over the previous lesson, so you can see their continuity.

One of our objectives is to have the children memorize the entire Psalm, which has only 6 verses. To help encourage this we have a “Psalm 23 chart” with each phrase and a place for a ‘lambie sticker’ when each part is memorized. With each consecutive week, the child needs to say everything so far and the newest part learned in the previous lesson. Then, a sticker can be put in the corresponding box.

Doctrinal materials for this series were taken from R.B.Thieme’s study of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm (Spiritual Dynamics 232-251) and [A Shepherd Looks as Psalm 23](#) by Phillip Keller

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had to go after her, would put his crook around her neck and drag her back. But, the next day, she would try to escape again. If the tide was very low, down past the end of the fence, she would even risk going down to the sea and would run around the last pole of the fence. Again her shepherd would have to go looking for her, often finding her eating bad grass or dried up stickers that scratched her throat. The shepherd tried and tried to teach her to not run off. He would smack her on her rump with his rod, but she didn't learn. Day after day she walked the fences, looking for a way out of her own shepherd's pasture. He named his discontented sheep Mrs. Gadabout, because she was always going from this place to that and never content to 'stay home'. But, even worse than this, Mrs. Gadabout taught all her little lambs how to do the same thing. She taught them to copy her and disobey. They would follow her down into the low tide and around the end of the fence. Or, they would also learn to squeeze their bodies through any opening they could find in the fence. Soon, other sheep were following Mrs. Gadabout and her lambs. Before long, the shepherd had many sheep in danger, because they were not at home, safe in their own pasture.

What was Mrs. Gadabout's problem? She was not content with what her good shepherd had provided. **Contentment** means you are **happy** and **thankful** for what you have. Contentment means that you are **not constantly wanting more** things. The next line in our Psalm is "**I shall not want.**" It means that we, as sheep in the Good Shepherd's pasture, are happy with and thankful for what the Shepherd has already done for us. Mrs. Gadabout was not happy with nice soft green grass. She was not thankful for the safe pasture and fences that protected her from danger. She thought the rough waters of the sea were better than the calm watering holes her shepherd had built for her. She kept thinking that she was missing out on something – that it would be more fun outside the fence. She was not content with what she had. Mrs. Gadabout had a very good shepherd, but she could never say "I shall not want" – because she kept wanting more and more. She was selfish and greedy.

"I shall not want" is how the sheep says, "I am thankful to my Good Shepherd for all He does for me." Let's find out what Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, has done for us ...

Jesus Christ has promised to provide **everything** we need. Human-sheep need three kinds of things: <sup>1</sup>things for our bodies, <sup>2</sup>things for our souls, and <sup>3</sup>things for our spirits.

1. **Physical needs:** Jesus Christ provides everything we need to keep our bodies alive and well. This includes fresh air to breathe, good healthy food to eat, clean water to drink, a house in which to live, darkness at night – so we can sleep and rest, parents to protect us from danger, and many other things. Therefore, we should never worry about these things - they are the shepherd's responsibility; and, He always does what He has promised. "**Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'... for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**" Matthew 6:31-32
2. **Needs for your soul:** Your soul is your thinking. A human-sheep needs many special things so he will have a healthy soul. First, a sheep needs to **respect and obey authority**. The Good Shepherd gives human-sheep parents to teach them about authority. Parents give their sheep rules to obey. When sheep obey the rules they have 'obedience-thinking'. This is the healthiest and strongest kind of thinking we can have. Obedience-thinking is **humility**. When a person thinks in

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*this way, he is very happy and content with himself (basic self-esteem). Another thing your soul needs to know is **the difference between right and wrong**. Parents help their sheep learn to do right and avoid doing wrong. This helps them to make good decisions in life and eliminates lots of problems. Your soul also needs to know how to absorb information – how **to learn**. This is why our nation has children go to school. There is one more very important thing your soul needs – to learn to **laugh** and have a **sense of humor**. Being able to laugh (especially at yourself when you have done something silly) is how you protect your soul from having its feelings hurt. A sense of humor helps you to not be over-sensitive and to enjoy life. “Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.” Colossians 3:20*

3. ***Spiritual needs:** At the moment you believe in Jesus Christ, God creates in you a new part. It is called a human spirit. This is the part of you that is able to learn about and begin to love God. Your human spirit has needs, too. It needs food, like your body, except it needs spiritual food. Spiritual food is **information about God**. This information is written in the Bible. When we learn lessons and principles from God’s Word, we are ‘eating’ spiritual food for our spirits. Our Good Shepherd has given us a huge Book of food. It takes a human-sheep his entire life to ‘eat’ and learn all the wonderful things in this Book. Our Good Shepherd also gives us **pastors, Sunday school teachers, and parents** to explain what the Bible says – so we can understand what it means. Parents are especially good at teaching you how to ‘use’ the food, which is remembering the Bible lesson after you get home and doing it – applying it – obeying it. We also need ‘spiritual water’. In our sheep story, spiritual water is a picture of the **Holy Spirit**. When we name our sins, the Holy Spirit comes and ‘sits on the throne of our soul’. And, while He is sitting there He is constantly helping us – to learn new information – to remember old information – to remind us to obey the things we have already learned. He is like quiet waters that calm your thinking on the inside. “But He said, “... happy are those who hear the word of God and obey it.” Luke 11:28*

*“I shall not want” means that our Good Shepherd makes sure that His sheep (us) have everything we need. “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19.*

*It is not the sheep’s job to provide for himself. Can you imagine a sheep trying so very hard to build a fence for protection? Can you imagine a sheep with a pitchfork in his hooves, hauling straw and grass so he can sleep in a soft place at night? Can you picture a sheep with the handle of a bucket of water looped over his mussel, trying to get the water from the deep well to the watering troughs? No, it isn’t the sheep’s job to do these things – it is his shepherd’s job. Human-sheep who have Jesus Christ as their Good Shepherd have the best shepherd that has ever existed. He has given us His absolute promise – I will always take care of you. You do not need to worry about anything.*

*So far we have learned that “I shall not want” means that our Good Shepherd will provide EVERYTHING we need – for our bodies, for our souls, and for our spirits. And, we have learned*

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*that we have a responsibility, too, and that is to be CONTENT, or happy with what He gives us – so ‘we shall not want’. Many times a sheep who has lots of toys and things isn’t content – so he wants more and more. “I shall not want” isn’t his story. You see, “I shall not want” isn’t about things and getting more things; it’s about having a Great Shepherd. Do you know what Mrs. Gadabout’s shepherd eventually had to do with her? He had to butcher her. She was so discontent, and she was teaching so many other sheep to disobey, that the shepherd had to have her die. When a human-sheep is as disobedient as Mrs. Gadabout was, the Good Shepherd also has him die. The difference is the Good Shepherd will take His human-sheep home to heaven where he will be happy forevermore. At the same time, the Good Shepherd is protecting all the other sheep that are still in His earthly pasture – so they will not continue to learn to disobey.*

*There is one more thing that “I shall not want” means, and it has to do with all your desires and dreams for the future – what you want to be when you grow up. Psalm 23 is not the only song David ever wrote; he wrote lots of songs. Psalm 37 is another of David’s songs. In this song David tells us what the third meaning of “I shall not want” is – it is how God gives you your heart’s desire – what you really want! Listen to what Psalm 37:4 says:*

*“Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart.”  
Psalm 37:4*

*What a wonderful promise this is! Let me explain how it works. **Delight** yourself in the Lord means: <sup>1</sup>you recognize and are thankful for everything the Good Shepherd does for you. You remember to say thank you for your food and clothes and toys. You also remember to be thankful for the rules you must obey, for your parents, and for the chores you must do. You are grateful for your teachers and do your homework with an obedient attitude – an attitude of learning. Delight yourself in the Lord means that you are **delighted** with all that the Shepherd does for you – and has for you to do. <sup>2</sup>Now, if you are delighted with all this, then you are not a Mrs. Gadabout. You are happy and content with all you have. You are pleased to be a kid in your family. You like your brothers and sisters – and especially your parents. You are also content with your things. This means that you don’t have an ‘I want’ list. You don’t go into the store with your parents and say, “Mommy, gimme this,” or, “Daddy, gimme that.” Delight yourself in the Lord means you are happy and content with your Shepherd and what He chooses to give you.*

*There is one more thing you must do to “delight yourself in the Lord” and that is – **you must want what He wants**. To do this, you must first find out, what does the Lord want? After you begin to learn about the Good Shepherd’s plan for you, you must want the same things that He wants. Your wants must match up with His wants. Now, before you get worried about never getting what you want, understand that the Good Shepherd knows everything. Long, long ago, before you were even born, the Good Shepherd looked into your soul and saw every desire you would ever have. Then, He sorted out your desires into two kinds: the pile of desires that are good for you and the pile of desires that are hurtful to you. He perfectly understands the difference between the two piles. Then, He decided to give you everything in the good pile, and instead of giving you the hurtful pile, He devised a system to change your desires – so the bad ones are transformed into the good ones. A little at a time, as human-lambs grow into mature sheep, the*

Most of these children have learned Omniscience and what it means. Even if they don’t remember the word, they should remember the concept – that God knows everything, always has and always will.
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*Good Shepherd gives you some of the desires from the good pile. At the same time, He teaches you how to change the bad desires into good ones. Then, when all your desires match His wonderful plan for you – He gives you everything – everything your heart now desires. What wonderful blessing the Good Shepherd has in store for you! Both verses have come true for you, His precious sheep ...*

*“Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart.”  
Psalm 37:4*

*“I shall not want.” Psalm 23:1b*

*The sheep that belongs to the Good Shepherd can say, “I shall not want,” because he has everything he will ever need, he is content and happy with what the Shepherd gives, and he is changing his sheep desires into the Shepherd’s desires. What a wonderful thing it is to have a Good Shepherd who keeps on shepherding me!*

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Craft: Make a sheep

Coloring Picture: “I shall not want” – sheep grazing in pasture

Take-home pamphlet:

This little pamphlet is a short version of this lesson, a picture to color, a puzzle to do, and a question and answer section at the end. It is designed to be given to the children at the end of class. However, if you need to fill time, you can give it out early. A child can read the story and all the children can work together for the answers to the questions on the back.