

The Contented Life: Restoration and Leading

Psalm 23:3

*“This psalm reflects the nature of God, and how the radiant sufficiency of the shepherd provides the life without lack” (Dallas Willard, *Life Without Lack*, 48).*

“He restores my soul”

- “In Hebrew idiom the words ‘restores my soul’ can mean ‘brings me to repentance’ (or conversion).¹
- “Since the word translated “soul” is actually ‘life,’ and since the metaphor here is that of shepherding, the words probably mean “the Lord restores me to physical [or spiritual] health.”²
- The word ‘soul’ is not here the spiritual dimension of humankind but denotes the same as ‘me,’ repeated twice in v. 2, i.e., ‘he restores me.’³
- “Many people have the idea that when a child of God falls, when he is frustrated and helpless in a spiritual dilemma, God becomes disgusted, fed-up, and even furious with him. This simply is not so.” (Philip Keller, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, 56).
- “Let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:1–2).

“He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake”

“Righteousness” (*sedeq*) here signifies in the most basic sense “right,” namely, the paths that bring the sheep most directly to their destination (in contrast to “crooked paths”; cf. 125:5; Prov 2:15; 5:6; 10:9). The shepherd’s paths are straight ... [and only] He knows what lies ahead.”⁴

Application

¹ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms*, 110.

² Boice, J. M. (2005). [Psalms 1–41: An Expositional Commentary](#) (p. 209). Baker Books.

³ VanGemeren, W. A. (2008). [Psalms](#). In *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms (Rev. Ed.)*, 5:254.

⁴ Ibid.