



PSALM 23:4

Though I walk through the valley of shadow of death, I will fear NO evil; you are with me. Thy rod and thy staff comfort me.

1. Practice saying the whole verse every single day! Just see how you do!
2. What are the causes of suffering in our lives? Of the different kinds that you list, what are the most difficult for you personally to face?
3. What is/has been the most helpful for you when you GO THROUGH the valleys?
4. Look up the verses below and discuss what they reveal in regards to suffering:  
II Timothy 1:8-10.  
II Corinthians 1:5  
James 5: 10-11  
Mathew 5:10-11
5. We cannot ignore the difficult steps that have to be taken in a valley. It is a place of walking. What are ways we get stuck and mired down in the struggles of life?
6. Sheep journey from pasture to pasture. The valley is a passageway to a better field. Many times the Valley brings CHANGE. Do you believe this? What does this mean for you?
7. What are your thoughts on suffering in the sense of what part does God play in its cause, duration and outcome?
8. What are some areas that cause FEAR in your life? How do you calm your fears?
9. There is little doubt that our culture is obsessed with the lewd, the sexual and the impure. It is woven in our cultures humor. True freedom is found in Jesus and embracing His way of life, that is the way we were fashioned to live. Psalm 23:4 States "I will FEAR NO EVIL for you are with me" read 1 John 3:8 and write or discuss what you feel it means. With that verse as a backdrop we don't need to FEAR. What are some practical things we can do when we feel attacked with evil?  
  
Other verses to look up: Isaiah 40:11. Proverbs 11:27. 1 Peter 3:9. Psalm 97:10  
Psalm 101:4 Job 1:1. 1 Thessalonians 5:22-23
10. Luke 12:4-7 How does this verse give us perspective on our fears?
11. How to the uses of the Rod relate to how God cares and comforts us?  
Security, accepted, guidance, protection, evaluation and diagnosis. Discuss these key words and think about the rod in your life. How does this comfort you?  
How do these terms relate to parenting in your life with kids.



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12. The staff is used by the shepherd to reach out and draw the sheep closer in. Have you felt the holy spirit drawing you in to be in a closer relationship.
13. The staff is also use for guiding the sheep. Guiding them down a new path, through a dangerous and difficult route. How has the holy spirit helped you navigate. Do you desire the slight pressure at this time to be guided down the proper path?
14. The staff is used to rescue sheep from dangerous situations quickly. In what ways has God cared for you especially in the context of going through the valley of the shadow of death, or the dark times in life?

#### PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Jesus, you never promised me that the journey towards the new heaven and new earth would be easy, quick, or without seasons and circumstances that are overwhelming; but you **have** promised never to leave or forsake me, even in the darkest valley. That's all I really need to know—that you are close and that you love me, and that you won't let anything happen to me outside of your perfect plan for my life.

Even when you have to discipline me, the goal is my comfort and always your glory