

PRAYING OUT OF THE PIT

A GUIDED PRAYER JOURNAL
THROUGH PSALM 23



INTRODUCTION

Have you ever found yourself in a pit so deep, so dark, that you couldn't see a way out? Maybe it's the pit of grief, the pit of failure, the pit of loneliness, or the pit of hopelessness. Whatever your pit may be, you're not alone. God doesn't leave us in the pit. He meets us there. He lifts us up and sets our feet on solid ground.

Joseph's life was a journey of highs and lows, yet through it all, God was with him, guiding him, and bringing him through to His ultimate purpose. As we reflect on Joseph's story, we'll anchor ourselves in Psalm 23, a reminder of our good Shepherd who was with Joseph, and is with us, every step of the way.

Read the assigned Scripture passages prayerfully, objectively, thoughtfully, and attentively as you listen for God to speak. Note that He may not speak to you through every verse, but He will speak. When He does, record the verse number (if applicable), what it is that God seems to be saying to you, and your response to Him. You might like to date these pages as a means not only of keeping a spiritual journal but also of holding yourself accountable to follow through in obedience.

DAY 1: THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:1

Joseph's Story:

For Joseph, the emptiness, coldness, and darkness in the bottom of that cistern must have added to the stark realization that he was alone. Waiting can feel like torture! Yet his Shepherd had not left him (Genesis 39:2). What is “the pit” you find yourself in? As life-shattering and life-altering as all these very real scenarios are, none of them have ever taken the Lord by surprise. God is with you just as He was with Joseph.

What will you do about what God has said?

- Who is the Shepherd in Psalm 23:1? (See John 10:11, 14)
- How does knowing God is your Shepherd bring comfort in difficult times?
- Reflect on a time when you felt abandoned or alone. How did God show you He was with you?

Prayer Prompt:

- Thank God for being your Shepherd, always present and caring for you.
- Ask Him to help you trust His presence, even when life feels uncertain.

DAY 2: HE MAKES ME LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:2a

Joseph's Story: Joseph faced a critical, life-defining choice. Would he walk away from the God he had known in his father's household? Or would he trust and be faithful to God despite his very painful, brutal, and unjust circumstances? When faced with the worst of circumstances and suffering that was unimaginable, Joseph humbly embraced his new life. And he thrived! Joseph thrived because he chose to trust God, and, therefore, God was with Joseph. God has a purpose for you, too, right where you are. We must make the choice to faithfully trust God with our affliction.

What will you do about what God has said?

- What do the green pastures represent? (Compare John 21:17 with John 6:35, 63)
- What does it mean to "lie down" in green pastures? How has God provided for you in seasons of chaos?
- How can you intentionally rest in God's presence this week?

Prayer Prompt:

- Thank God for the ways He provides rest and refreshment for your soul.
- Ask Him to help you trust His provision and find peace in His care.

DAY 3: HE LEADS ME BESIDE QUIET WATERS

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:2b

Joseph's Story: Like Joseph, we can learn and grow as much as we possibly can in our present situation, no matter how lowly or difficult it is. Every day has purpose! Be faithful right where you are planted. Serve well, look out for others, speak with kindness, work wholeheartedly, maintain joy, confess all bitterness, and trust God. He is molding you and making you into a beautiful masterpiece that He wants to use for His glory. Don't rush the process or settle for a premature escape. Yield to God's timetable, knowing it's perfect, and you will be prepared for what comes next.

What will you do about what God has said?

- How has your life seemed chaotic or busy with no end in sight?
- What do the quiet waters represent? (See Jeremiah 2:13, John 4:10, 13-14, and Revelation 7:17)
- How has God refreshed your soul in times of weariness?

Prayer Prompt:

- Thank God for leading you to quiet waters and refreshing your spirit.
- Ask Him to help you stay connected to Him as your source of peace.

DAY 4: HE RESTORES MY SOUL

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:3a

Joseph's Story: How did Joseph not allow a root of bitterness to take hold and infect his whole life? It was a choice! Joseph chose to faithfully work as hard as he could, completely submitting his life to God; therefore, he thrived in the worst of circumstances. His attitude reflected his absolute, rock-solid faith. Joseph lived for a higher purpose and served a greater Lord.

When you are in circumstances not of your choosing, what is your attitude? Whatever the Enemy is using to sabotage your attitude, don't let him win. Ask the Lord to give you an attitude of praise and gratitude. Even though your mind and heart may want to cry, This isn't fair! or Get me out of this! His presence is right there with you. The key to thriving is to live for the God who loves you, who wants the best for you, and whose will is perfect.

What will you do about what God has said?

- How has God restored your soul in a difficult season?
- What does it mean to trust God to restore you, even when life feels unfair? (See Jeremiah 17:7)
- How can you reflect God's holiness in your daily choices?
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Prayer Prompt:

- Thank God for restoring your soul and giving you strength to face challenges.
- Ask Him to help you honor Him in your decisions and attitudes, even when it's hard.

DAY 5: HE GUIDES ME IN PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:3b

Joseph's Story: Joseph worked hard, and God blessed all that he did. In fact, he earned Potiphar's complete trust to the point that Joseph was given authority over Potiphar's entire household and fields. But Potiphar's wife set her sights on Joseph and boldly asked him to have sex with her. He refused. Potiphar's wicked, conniving, deceitful wife lashed out. Potiphar became enraged. He immediately had Joseph thrown in prison. God gave Joseph favor in prison! Joseph used all his knowledge from working for Potiphar to benefit the warden and other prisoners. You and I are faced with temptations every day. If we are to be set apart as God's people, we must stand firm against anything that would tarnish the reflection of His holiness in our lives.

What will you do about what God has said?

- How has God guided you in paths of righteousness?
- What does it mean to follow God's guidance, even when the path is unclear? (See Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 58:11)
- How can you trust God to lead you in your current season?

Prayer Prompt:

- Thank God for guiding you in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
- Ask Him to help you trust His guidance, even when the way forward is uncertain.

DAY 6: EVEN THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:4a

Joseph's Story: Can you imagine young Joseph shackled and manhandled again? How did he feel when he was led through the prison doors only to hear them slam behind him?

God tests His children. Did you know that? He can use temptation, betrayal, injustice, loss—the list is endless—to test our faith. When we pass the test, our faith becomes stronger. If we fail the test, our faith becomes weaker and we run the risk of missing out on, or at the very least postponing, the blessing God wants to give us. Don't forget that all things work for your good on two conditions: that you love God and that you are living according to His will and purpose. Are you? Joseph was.

What will you do about what God has said?

- What valleys have you walked through in your life, or perhaps even today?
- How has God's presence comforted you in those dark times? (See 2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
- What lessons has God taught you in the valley? (See Romans 5:3-5, Hebrews 12:11)
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Prayer Prompt:

- Thank God for walking with you through the valleys of life.
- Ask Him to help you trust His presence and purpose, even in the darkest moments.

DAY 7: YOUR ROD AND YOUR STAFF COMFORT ME

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:4b

Joseph's Story: Joseph clearly saw God's divine hand in putting him in the pit, even to the point of God allowing his brothers to sell him into slavery. His life was not all about himself. There had been a much greater purpose! God never allows suffering in our lives without a reason. All of it, absolutely all of it, is for the much greater purpose of His glory. God knows and sees it all! We can fall at the feet of Jesus and know that we will find His mercy and strength to keep going. We can trust Him to guide, provide, comfort, forgive, reconcile, rebuke, avenge, and satisfy us every step, every day of our lives. Surrender to Him and stop fighting. Stop holding on to your pain and anger. Like Joseph, surrender it all to God the Father.

What will you do about what God has said?

- How has God's guidance brought you comfort in uncertain times? (See Isaiah 41:10, John 14:27)
- What does it mean to trust God's authority and protection in your life? (See 2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
- How can you lean on His rod and staff in your current season?

Prayer Prompt:

- Thank God for His protection and guidance in your life.
- Ask Him to help you trust His authority and follow His lead.

DAY 8: YOU PREPARE A TABLE BEFORE ME

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:5a

Joseph's Story: Joseph responded to his brothers not with arrogance or even a trace of bitterness but with love and kindness. Joseph was able to see the big picture—the greater purpose for which God, not the brothers, had sent him to Egypt. He reassured his brothers that the entire situation was God's plan to use him to save his family, God's chosen people, from destruction. Joseph's words reassured his brothers that they were safe. They wouldn't be executed, sent to prison, or even enslaved. An incredible thing happens when you and I choose to forgive: It sets us free! It also can set others free.

What will you do about what God has said?

- How has God provided for you in unexpected ways?
- What does it mean to trust God to prepare a table for you, even in the presence of your enemies?
- How can you extend God's blessings to others? (See Luke 6:27-28, 2 Corinthians 9:8-11, Colossians 3:12-13)

Prayer Prompt:

- Thank God for His provision and faithfulness in your life.
- Ask Him to help you be a blessing to others, even those who have hurt you.

DAY 9: SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY WILL FOLLOW ME

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:6a

Joseph's Story: How amazing that even though Joseph knew how awful prison was and even though he could have relished the idea of his brothers experiencing a taste of the misery he had experienced for so many years, in his kindness he extended mercy to his brothers, who had not extended mercy to him. When have you extended mercy to someone who hurt you or your loved one? We can choose to forgive those who have wronged us out of my deepest gratitude for the forgiveness we have received from God.

What will you do about what God has said?

- How have you seen God's goodness and mercy in your life? (See Lamentations 3:22-23, James 1:17)
- What does it mean to trust that His goodness will follow you all the days of your life?
- How can you reflect His goodness and mercy to those around you?

Prayer Prompt:

- Thank God for His goodness and mercy that follow you every day.
- Ask Him to help you trust His plan and reflect His love to others.

DAY 10: I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:6b

Joseph's Story: Joseph was home in Canaan at last! (Joshua 24:32) But, more importantly, his yearning for home one day will finally be satisfied because of his choice to place his confident hope in God. The God who had not left him in the pit, nor in Potiphar's house, nor in Pharaoh's prison, nor even on the throne of Egypt. The same God who had been with him and guided him on every step of his life's journey will bring him through to live forever in His heavenly home. And Joseph's God is our God. He is your God, and He will not leave us here. He will bring us through to streets of gold, gates of pearl, and a city where there will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain, where God will wipe every tear from our eyes, where we will see our Father's face and live with Him forever! (Revelation 21:4, 21; 22:4) One day, He will bring us through...to home!

What will you do about what God has said?

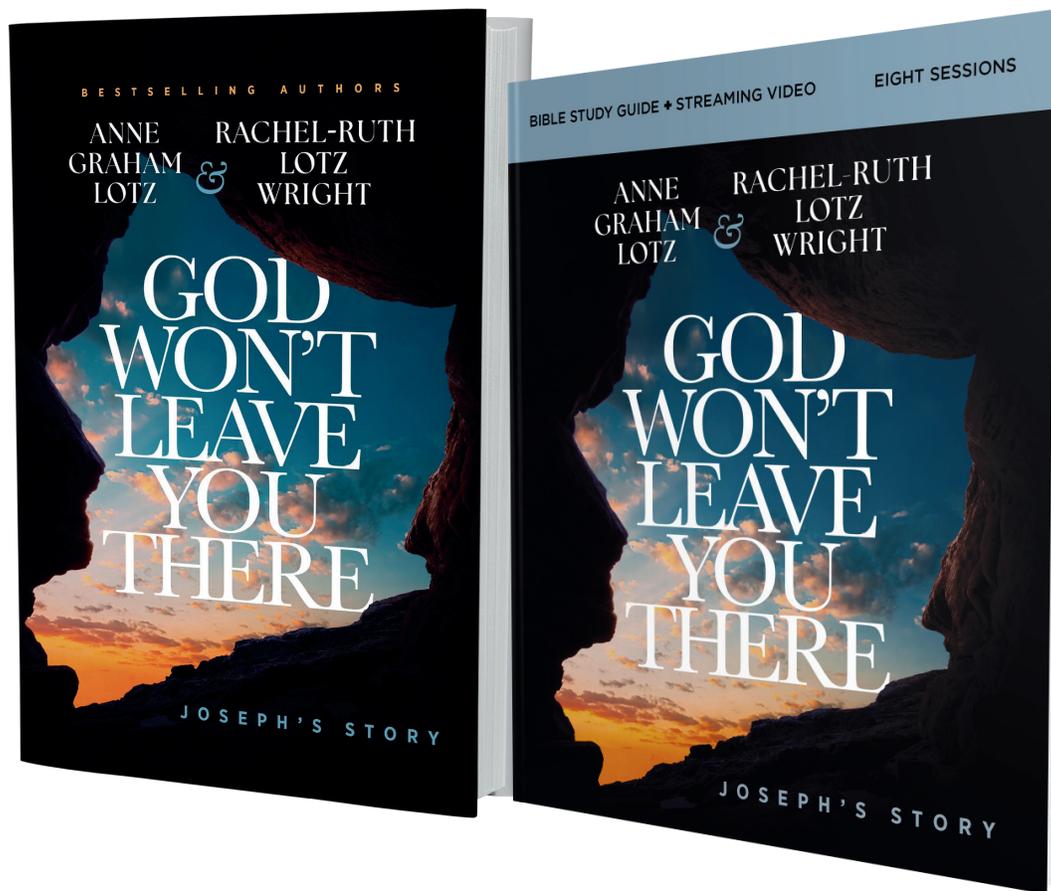
- How does the promise of dwelling in God's house forever bring you hope today?
- Revisit the Shepherd in Psalm 23:1. How has He been with you every step of your journey, like He was with Joseph? (See Genesis 48:15)
- How can you share the hope of heaven with others?

Prayer Prompt:

- Thank God for the promise of eternal life with Him.
- Ask Him to help you live with confident hope, trusting He is faithful to His promises.

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