

REFLECTION QUESTION: What things do you need to change about your daily life (both now and when life returns to normal) so you can focus more on following Jesus and hearing His voice?

IV. SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Day 2 Challenge— Scripture Study:

Would you like to learn more of what the Bible has to say about something? Choose a topic—maybe something you are struggling with right now—anxiety, joy, trust, suffering, fruit of the Spirit, etc. Use an online concordance to search for words that connect to your topic. Simply Search “Bible Concordance” and then search for the topic of your choice in that tool. If you have a print version or another Bible app, by all means, try using those concordances as well.

Look up several of the verses. Read the surrounding verses to see what that passage means in context. You may even want to search Bible commentaries or Study Bible notes to see what scholars have to say about those passages. Read a wide range of passages throughout the whole Bible, Old and New Testament, to get a bigger picture of what the whole Bible has to say about it. Journal about what you see in each of these passages, particularly any consistent themes you see. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His wisdom to you through your study of His Word (1 Corinthians 2:6–16). He promises to do so! His Word is living and active and His voice is always comforting to those who are His own.



*Daily Devotional Day 2:
Knowing the Shepherd's Voice
[Individual Version Version]*

I. START WITH PRAYER AND THE WORD

READ: John 10:1–6

REFLECTION QUESTION: How does this passage describe the relationship between the sheep and the shepherd?

REFLECTION QUESTION: Why is it important for the sheep to recognize their shepherd's voice?

II. DIGGING DEEPER

“He leads me beside quiet waters . . . He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake” (Psalm 23:2–3 ESV).

The most important role of a shepherd is guiding the sheep to green pastures and clean water where they have enough to eat and drink. In the arid deserts of Israel, which the Psalmist would have had in mind, there is not much green grass or still waters. It is easy for the sheep to quickly consume the food and water in one area, so shepherds move their flocks around a lot. The sheep know when it is time to go and where to go by listening for their shepherd's voice.

In the ancient Near East, different flocks often grazed together in the same open pasture. When a shepherd was ready to move on, he would let out a unique call, click with his mouth or audible sound. When his sheep heard it only his flock would come out of the pasture and follow him. If another shepherd would call his flock at the same time, only his sheep would follow him in a different direction. The sheep knew where to go because they recognized their shepherd's voice.

The relationship Jesus describes here is intimate. He *knows* His sheep and they *know* Him. He even calls them by name (v. 3). But He describes the voice of a stranger who calls to his sheep too (v. 5), thieves who try to steal his sheep (v. 1). When Jesus calls Himself the good shepherd, He promises to guide us into green pastures and lead us to quiet waters (Psalm 23).

- We can trust Him to provide.
- We can trust Him to keep us safe.
- We can trust Him to lead.

To make it safely through this world, we need to follow the Good Shepherd. Trying to walk through life on our own will only lead to our being hurt, lost, hungry, or alone. All we have to do is listen for His voice. That's easy to say and hard to do. Many other voices compete for our attention. Especially amid seasons of fear and uncertainty. How can we recognize His voice in all the chaotic noise of the world?

We must know Him so well that we know what His voice sounds like.

Now, I don't mean His literal voice, of course. Most of us don't hear an audible voice from Jesus, at least not very often. But the Holy Spirit does speak to us today, and the way we can recognize His voice is to really know His *written* Word. The better you know a good friend, the more time you spend together, the more easily you could say, “Oh, that sounds like something John would say” or, “That doesn't sound like Jane at all.” The more time you spend studying Scripture, the more easily you will be able to say, “That sounds like something Jesus would say.”

So, this week, when you aren't sure what to do or where to go, turn to Scripture. The Bible includes everything we need to know about how to love and serve others and find peace in a time of crisis and fear. Paul says the Bible has all the instruction we need to live a godly life (2 Timothy 3:16–17), and Peter says that the divine power of the Spirit has given us “everything we need for a godly life” (2 Peter 1:3). Keep reading, praying, and listening. He will guide you.

III: APPLYING IT TO LIFE

REFLECTION QUESTION: What things make it hard to hear God's voice in this world in general? What about right now?