



Shalom

שלום

How much of your anxiety is due to worrying about what may happen tomorrow, or at some other future time? Jesus said, "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." How can we stop worrying about tomorrow and focus on *today*?

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life
and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water,
and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives
with forethought of grief.
I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light.
For a time I rest in the grace of the world,
and am free.

— Wendell Berry

The Hebrew word for peace, *shalom*, means perfect wholeness or completeness. It can refer to political peace (no conflict), social peace (no quarrelling), or having all of our needs met with abundance. Shalom can be defined as all of God's creation living in harmony.

Shalom is a blessing of divine grace.

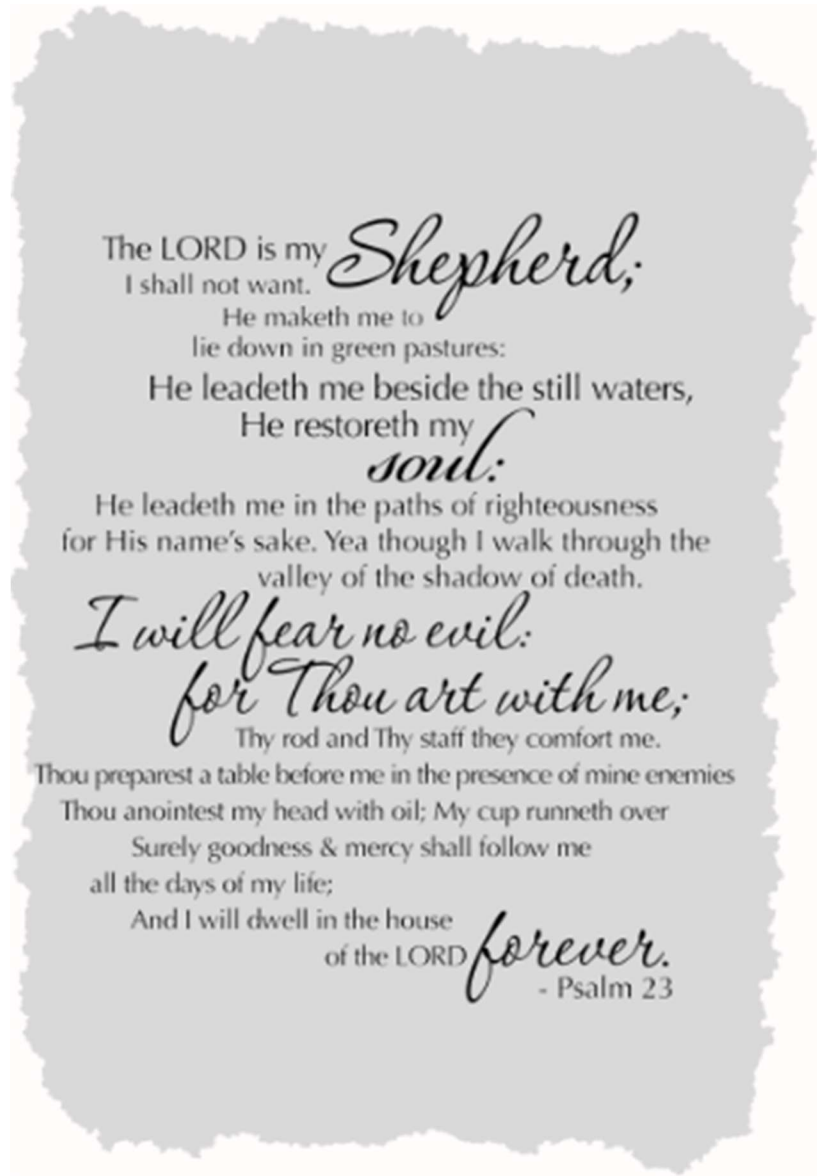
David shares with us his experience of God in these words to a song.

As a youth, David was a shepherd. He spent time in the fields and protected his sheep from harm.

As a young person, David killed a large, derisive man in a public fight.

As a king, he never knew who he could really trust.

As a man, David made a poor decision, believed he deserved God's wrath, but received God's mercy.



Shalom and Justice: If justice is too strict, or if justice is applied without a splash of mercy, it can provoke hostility.

Shalom and Truth: If statements of truth are offered without first thinking about the right time and place to share them, relationships can be hurt.

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Justice, truth, and peace should harmonize and complement one another. "By three things the world is preserved, by justice, by truth, and by peace, and these three are one: if justice has been accomplished, so has truth, and so has peace." (JT Ta'anit 4/2)

Shalom

"You should sit in meditation for twenty minutes every day – unless you're too busy; then you should sit for an hour."



Try these three simple types of mindfulness meditations:

1. **Savor your meals.** Be mindful during the first 3 bites of your meal. Really focus on the smell, the texture, the taste. Savor the moment.
2. **Breathe ... just breathe.** For 10 minutes, sit in a quiet room. Focus on the subtle movements of your body at rest, how each part of your body moves and feels.
3. **Stop to observe.** Each day, take one moment to stop what you are doing and watch your surroundings. Don't judge, don't think, just observe.

Aaron was instructed by God to bless the Israelites with these words.

Many priests and pastors since that time have used these same words to bless the people in their faith communities.

Can you recall a moment in time when you felt God's face turn toward you and give you peace?

*"The LORD BLESS you and KEEP you;
the LORD make his face SHINE on you
and be GRACIOUS to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you PEACE."
NUMBERS 6:24-26*

Shalom

1. What do you think Wendell Berry was trying to say through his poem, "The Peace of Wild Things"? How do you react to this poem?

2. While king of Israel, David had enemies. He wrote "Psalm 23" to remind himself that God wanted him to experience peace. How did David find peace while walking through the dark valleys of life?

3. Research shows that practicing mindfulness can lower our anxiety. Which of the three meditations mentioned on the previous page are you most likely to try first? What impact do you think it could have on your daily life if you got into the habit of using all three of these meditations once a day?

4. It's been said that, no matter how hard it is raining outside, you won't get wet if you don't walk outside. God wants to rain down his blessings and peace into your life. What can you do to move yourself into the rain?



(Draw a picture of yourself standing in the rain)