



The Caller

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Confidence Corner John F. Board

In this week's *Confidence Corner* I would like to consider some thoughts regarding Psalm 23:4. This psalm—probably the most widely known written by the Psalmist—is a song of confidence by

one who has experienced the LORD's love and care. This psalm has provided great comfort for thousands of years in that we have the LORD as our shepherd. How high and exalted is that thought. As a Shepherd, He provides for our needs (verses 1-2).

In addition, Psalm 23 provides some subthemes as we consider the LORD as our Shepherd. For instance, as our Shepherd, the LORD provides guidance for us (verses 3-4). As our Shepherd, the LORD is One Who cares for us by being our Host. But also in verse 4 the psalmist conveys his faith that the LORD is with him. Let us examine that for just a moment.

Scripture often contains the promise from the LORD that He will be with His people. There are ten passages in the Hebrew Bible (English Old Testament) where the Hebrew phrase translated I will be with you is found (Gen 26:3; Gen 31:3; Exod 3:12; Deut 31:23; Josh 1:5; Josh 3:7; Josh 7:12; Judg 6:16; 1 Kgs 11:38; and Isa 43:2 *BHS*). In addition there are 15 passages in Scripture where the writer of the text affirms YHWH was with certain individuals or groups (Gen 39:2, 3, 21, 23; Josh 6:27; Judg 1:19, 22; 2:18; 1 Sam 3:19; 18:12, 14, 28; 2 Kgs 18:7; 1 Chr 9:20; 2 Chr 17:3). There are even more ways and phrases that the theme of the LORD's presence is conveyed in Scripture. But here in Psalm 23, this psalm of confidence, it is the psalmist that affirms "thou art with me" (you are with me).

My point is this, though God can affirm over and over that He is with us, that really means little until a person acknowledges and accepts this fact. But when one does understand that the LORD is with them, the way they approach life will change. Is the LORD with you? Have you through faith accepted this blessing?

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Another Daily Devotional

Ok, two things...IMMUNOGUARD AND PROBIOTIC RESTORE...these are two products you must take in your body daily so that you don't get sick like you just did!!! So you say, "Hey Dad, I thought this was supposed to be the morning Daily Daughter Devo?" And guess what? It is! Because just like we have to strengthen our immune system physically, we also must strengthen our immune system spiritually...DAILY.

One way we both do that is through the Daily Daughter Devo. I must think about what I am writing and you must think about the message written. My guess is that you are much better at this than you are taking in what you need to take in physically. You have from your early days read your Bible daily (and even committed passages to memory). This is so important. You also convey to me that you pray often throughout the day.

When you get on your own at college, things can become hectic and sometimes we let things slip. Most importantly do not allow your Bible reading and prayer life to take a hit. Romans 10:17 indicates that your faith will be directly proportional to the time you spend reading God's word! Jesus himself spoke a parable for the purpose of teaching "that men (including women) ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1) If I were to translate Luke 18:1 in more common language of today it could read, "Then Jesus used a parable to teach through illustration that His followers should always pray and never give up." When you grow weary, don't give up...pray! Oh and did I mention it is also important to take care of our physical bodies? Did I mention Immuno-Guard and Probiotic Restore? Oh yeah, I guess I did!

Sunday's Sermons:

**A.M. — For Good
Romans 8:28-30**

**P.M. — Armageddon
Revelation 16:13-16**

Passion

Passion—I think we all possess it, just for different things. Many are passionate about their children. Others are passionate about making their marriage the best marriage possible. Some are passionate about a band or reality TV show. Others are passionate about their sports team. Most are passionate about their Country. Many are passionate about justice. All of these passions are great and proper! But there is one passion that we as Christians definitely should hold and that is passion regarding God and His will!

You see we do not have to guess where God desires our greatest passions to be—His Son has revealed such to us! Consider as well that these passions were not some new teaching that Jesus had revealed. The passions Jesus highlighted were as old as mankind. We definitely see instruction regarding them from the Old Testament. A part of the Torah (instruction but so much more) of the people who were God's chosen people was first a need to love the LORD (implies reign and rule in our hearts) your God with all your soul and mind (Deut. 6:5). Jesus noted that this was the most important commandment. To love God is to keep His commandments (follow His will John 14:15). To love God by following His will is most important to our lives. It is our greatest passion.

But our greatest passion will also lead to us following the second greatest commandment (and thus passion for us to follow)—to love our neighbor as our selves. Look at how important this passion needs to be in our life. Jesus noted in Matthew 22:37-40 that the commandment to love other people the same way you love yourself, is second only to the greatest commandment of loving the LORD your God with all your soul and all your mind! Jesus also emphasizes that all the other commandments fall under one of the two general headlines of loving God and loving other people as ourselves.

How do we do with what Jesus instructs as the Master Teacher should be our greatest passion? I think even those who claim no association with Christ at times can show a passion (or we might say compassion) for loving others. How many wonderful stories did we see emerge out of the many recent disasters throughout our country and the world? Even non-Christians have a passion to help when they see someone in need of saving!

I figured you caught that—I used the non-Christian's passion for saving those in physical need to highlight—or even perhaps shame us as Christians—to wake up! Jesus clearly told us our passion needs to first and foremost be loving God. He then says that next in order of importance is the loving of others as we love ourselves. There are people out there who are in need of salvation. In order to reach them, they must see Jesus in us. In order to see Jesus in us, they need to see we genuinely love them. If you have never done so read Luke's account of the gospel and see Jesus' concern for the "underdog" (the poor, sick, handicapped, slaves, lepers, shepherds, prostitutes, tax-collectors, Samaritans, Gentiles, foreigners, children, the elderly, widows and women).

So here is my point—be passionate about life and your passions! But most importantly put the passions that Jesus placed priority upon as the greatest passions of your life. Don't misunderstand; I am not saying you cannot have your other good passions. You absolutely can! I am simply saying make certain to make the main things to be the main passions of your life!

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