

Psalm 23 Central Idea Possibilities

On the basis of our exploration of this Psalm and its contexts,
which of the following 6 sentences seem like solid Central Ideas for this Psalm?

- Eliminate any that are weak, inappropriate, or false. In a phrase, state why.
- Select one or two that best seem to state a truth about God that flows out of our work together with the text. Briefly note how.

1. God is with me in the midst of my daily hassles and failures.
2. God is tenderly, powerfully with me, overseeing my “now” and “forever.”
3. By caring well for all my needs, God guards His reputation.
4. God’s presence with me guarantees my security in this life and the next, so I should live with confidence, trusting that my shepherd is good and in control.
5. The Lord’s presence with me assures me of His tender earthly care and my eternal home.
6. The Lord’s presence is my greatest comfort in this life and the next.

Remember: a solid Central Idea states an important point to learn/remember from the text.

A Central Idea should be (1) a declarative statement, (2) God-centered, (3) specific to the passage, (4) develops out of key verse(s), (5) reflects the role the passage plays in the context of its book and the flow of redemptive history, (6) and indirectly points to a belief or behavior response (the “So What?”) Because God’s self-revelation is rich and deep, most biblical passages will have multiple central ideas! Your prayerful exploration of the text will help you focus on a particular one.

One Possible Psalm 23 Application!



**After you have made your choices and given reasons for those,
see p. 2 for some explanations.**

Some Explanations about the Central Idea Options for Psalm 23

1. Although biblically true, too general for this text and self-focused rather than God-focused.
2. OK! A key poetic line in Psalm 23 is at its core: “You are with me.” The Psalm’s specifics about how the Lord provides, guides, and protects are by-products of His powerful presence.
3. Yes, hinted at in Psalm 23 but not the main point.
It is true that the condition of the sheep does affect the reputation of a shepherd. The text affirms this: “for His name’s sake.” So, while God loves His sheep, we need to remind ourselves that He cares for them for His name’s sake. His reputation/honor/glory is at stake. But this is not what the Psalm is all about.
4. Although this sentence is true to the text, a Central Idea generally implies, not states, an application. Go with this as a CI: “God’s presence with me guarantees my security in this life and the next.”
5. OK! It is the Shepherd’s presence (verse 4) that is crucial to the well-being of the sheep.
6. No! His gift of salvation is my greatest comfort! That I belong to Him in life and in death is my greatest comfort! The superlative “greatest” is a red herring of sorts. For a useful Central Idea, just adapt this to say: The Lord’s presence is a great comfort in this life and the next.