



PSALM 23 WEEK 3

ENGAGE YOUR SOUL (YOUR MIND, WILL AND EMOTIONS)
IN THE FOLLOWING EXERCISES THIS WEEK

Our focus this week for our workout in Psalm 23 will be verses 4-5.

1. Warm up Part 1... READ and SPEAK

- READ Psalm 23
- SPEAK Psalm 23 out loud

2. Soul Plank Verse 4 *“Even though...”*

***Note:** Planking is an exercise in which a prone person balances on the toes and forearms while holding the rest of the body up off the ground for a set amount of time. It requires strength and continuous focus. In Soul Pilates, we won't be planking physically, but we do Soul Plank! **Soul Planks are moments when we stop to give some continued focus to looking downward at our souls, the way we think, feel and make decisions...** and as we gaze, being intentional to raise ourselves upward toward God's better way.

Keeping that in mind... let's soul plank in the first two words of verse 4, *“Even though...”* As David, the writer of Psalm 23, wrote these words, he was in the midst of real struggles that he called, *“the valley of the shadow of death.”* And yet, through these two words, we see he was intentionally raising his soul up above this dark valley into the truths of God's love and care. It takes confidence in the Lord and gritty faith to raise our souls up to an, *“even though”* position and hold ourselves there in unwavering belief. Maybe you too are in a dark place, or maybe just experiencing some smaller challenges. Whatever your current season, can you soul plank in these words, *“even though”* too? Journal your thoughts.

3. In the Valley... His Presence

As the Psalm continues, David expresses what He experiences in this *“even though”* position. His first experience is *“I fear no evil; for Thou art with me.”* We all struggle with fear in one way or another but the powerful presence of God can diffuse our fear. For this exercise, make a list of any fears that you struggle with. Then, take at least 15 minutes and posture yourself in the presence of the Lord, perhaps putting on some worship music in the background. Do not allow any distractions to have your attention, but invite His presence into this moment. As you do, telling Him about your fears and ask Him to show you parts of His character that will silence your fear. Journal anything the Lord shows you.

4. In the Valley... His Comfort

David also describes another of his experiences in this *“even though”* position. He says, *“Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.”* He was really speaking of the same instrument used by the Shepherd, but describing two of its uses, one focused on correction, and the other focused on protection. It is easy to see how His protection would bring comfort, but more challenging to see how His correction could bring comfort. However, as we consider the relationship between Shepherd and sheep, we gain understanding. A sheep trusts his shepherd and knows his shepherd is always working for his good. In the midst of that loving trust, comfort comes from both correction and protection. Considering these things, journal your own thoughts about the ways you respond to both the Lord's correction and protection. Are they both a comfort to you? Why or why not? After pondering and journal, pray about what you discover.

5. In the Valley... His Provision

David's last description reveals a great provision both physically and emotionally... a table of food and affirmation of belonging. Our Shepherd is so good! He will not leave us on our own, but He steps in the darkness and provides a spread and oil of acceptance upon our heads. God does this beautifully and creatively! It is a wonder to experience His provision like this! Ponder a moment where God has done these kinds of things for you in the past. Write out some notes that describe your experience. Then pray with expectation of His provision for your current season. Write your prayer in your journal.

6. Use the Scripture Prayer Image to pray Psalm 23:5 into your current season.