

STUDY GUIDE
BASED ON PSALM 23

DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

IT'S TIME TO WIN THE BATTLE OF YOUR MIND . . .

LOUIE
GIGLIO

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Don't Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table Study Guide

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CONTENTS

Introduction 5

How to Use This Guide 7

SESSION 1: The Table Before Us 9

SESSION 2: The Tactics of the Enemy 29

SESSION 3: The Battle for Our Mind 47

SESSION 4: The Path to Victory 65

SESSION 5: God’s Invitation Always Stands 85

SESSION 6: In the Presence of Our Enemies 103

Leader’s Guide 121



INTRODUCTION

Every day we fight a battle against an enemy who wants to wage war in our minds. At home and at work, at school and at church, in our neighborhoods and in our communities, we are faced with a barrage of demands, distractions, responsibilities, obligations, and perspectives. The relentless assault of so many forces competing for our attention can be overwhelming.

Perhaps the greatest casualty in this battle is our own peace. We worry, feel edgy and anxious, and give in to fears or doubts. We seek comfort in old habits to find temporary relief from the battle fatigue. We might even feel guilty for having these struggles, thinking that if only we had a *stronger faith* we wouldn't feel unsettled so often. Our self-assessment only makes us feel worse and leaves us feeling more weary, uncertain, and frustrated.

The good news is that we don't have to live in this mental war zone! We have the power, through Jesus Christ, to defeat the enemy and take authority over our minds. We can take back our freedom and control our thoughts and emotions. We can overcome feelings of fear, despair, and frustration. We have

DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

been invited into an intimate relationship with the Almighty. We don't need to wrestle any longer with harmful and negative thoughts. As Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

In Psalm 23, David wrote that God will not only guide and shepherd us through life but will also protect and provide for us along the way. "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies . . . Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (Psalm 23:5–6). God has prepared a table for us—a table for two—set with an abundance of peace, clarity, and purpose.

It's worth noting before we go too much further on this journey together that this table is set for *two*. Our enemy, the devil, is not intended to join us there. That's why we can't *give the enemy a seat at our table!* Instead, we must allow our Good Shepherd to lead us through the dark valleys into green pastures and quiet waters where He has prepared a banquet for us. His invitation is to linger at this table and find nourishment, rest, and deep intimacy with the King of the Universe.

It's time to win the battle for your mind. *Are you ready?* Let's jump in and begin.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

GROUP SIZE

This six-session video Bible study is designed to be experienced in a group setting such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or other small-group gathering. If your gathering is large, you may want to consider splitting everyone into smaller groups of five or six people. This will ensure that everyone has enough time to participate in discussions.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Everyone in your group will need a copy of this study guide, which includes the opening questions to discuss, notes for the video teachings, directions for activities and discussion questions, and personal studies in between sessions. We also encourage you to get a copy of the book *Don't Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table*, which will provide further insights into the material you are covering in this study. To aid your study

DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

experience, you will be asked to read specific chapters in the book to prepare for the group's next meeting.

FACILITATION

Your group will need to appoint a person to serve as a facilitator. This person will be responsible for starting the video and keeping track of time during discussions and activities. Facilitators may also read questions aloud and monitor discussions, prompting everyone in the group to respond and assuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate. If you have been chosen for this role, note that there are additional instructions and resources in the back of this guide to help you lead your group members through the study.

PERSONAL STUDIES

During the week, you can maximize the impact of this course with the personal studies provided. Treat each personal study like a devotional and use them in whatever way works best for your schedule. You could do one section each day for three days of the week or complete them all in one sitting. These personal studies are not intended to be burdensome or time-consuming but to provide a richer experience and continuity in between your group sessions.

SESSION ONE

THE TABLE BEFORE US

The enemy wants to crush you. He wants to steal from you everything you value. He wants to kill everything in your life that's good. He wants to destroy you. If he can claim the victory over your mind, he can claim the victory over your life. But you don't have to let him get a foothold. For you have been invited to an intimate relationship with the Almighty. Your Good Shepherd has set a table before you . . . and the enemy has not been invited to join.

LOUIE GIGLIO

—FROM CHAPTER 1 OF *DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE*

WELCOME

Have you ever sent a text in the heat of the moment? Maybe you are dealing with a situation where someone at work takes credit for your idea. Or perhaps you are facing yet *another* argument with a family member. Or maybe it is neighborhood gossip, divisions in your church, or aggressive online posts that cause you a level of angst.

Whatever the situation, it stirs up feelings of defensiveness, insecurity, frustration, or even anger within you. So you reach out to a trusted friend, family member, or confidante with a text to recount the latest strike in your battle. Your hope, of course, is that the person will come alongside you in your dismay and frustration and offer a show of support. You want to be affirmed . . . and you know you can count on your supporter to reinforce your viewpoint.

You're eager for the validation your ally can provide. You stare at your phone as you see the signal that your text is being read. You wait for the response to come through. But when it does, it is not at all what you expected. Your wise confidante simply tells you to not allow the other person to lead you into harboring feelings of hostility, resentment, and bitterness.

Your initial reaction is disappointment, followed by anger and confusion. What is your friend talking about? Didn't they read your message? Doesn't your friend understand how you are feeling? But suddenly, your perspective shifts. You recognize the gift you've just been given. Your friend's response may

THE TABLE BEFORE US

not have been what you expected, but it was certainly what you *needed*. The roiling emotions and jumbled thoughts weren't really about the situation that caused your rant. No, they were about what is going on in your *soul*.

You are in a spiritual battle, and the enemy is trying to wedge his seeds of doubt, fear, anger, and distrust into your consciousness. He is trying to get a seat at the “table” of your mind so he can lead you down paths he wants you to travel on. The good news is that you don't have to go there. You can win this battle. But first, you have to recognize what you're up against.

SHARE

If you or any of your group members are just getting to know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to get things started, discuss one of the following questions:

- On average, how many texts do you send or respond to each day? Is texting more of a convenience for you or an intrusion?

— o r —

- Have you found yourself in a situation like the one described in the opening story? If so, how did you react? What was the result of your actions?

DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

READ

Have someone read aloud Psalm 23. While these words may be familiar to you, try to imagine that you are hearing them for the first time.

¹ *The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing*

² *He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,*

³ *he refreshes my soul.*

*He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.*

⁴ *Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,*

*I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;*

*your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*

⁵ *You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.*

*You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.*

⁶ *Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.*

THE TABLE BEFORE US

What image or description stands out the most to you in this psalm? Why?

Did you grow up hearing this psalm or perhaps memorize it when you were young? What personal associations do you have with this passage?

What is it about Psalm 23 that people find so comforting and reassuring? How did it make you feel when you heard it just now?

DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

WATCH

Play the video segment for session one. As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

“Don’t give the enemy a seat at your table.” Those nine words can change your life. Don’t allow the enemy access to your conversations, thoughts, attitudes, or emotions. Don’t allow the enemy into your story. You will only end up having a conversation with a killer.

Psalms 23 is perhaps the most beloved and well-known psalm of all time. But this is not a soft, fluffy, spiritual lullaby. David, a warrior and the king of Israel, drew on his gritty experience shepherding sheep as a youth to express a powerful metaphor about how we relate to God.

“The LORD is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1). You were created to be led. If God is not leading you, it means you are being led by someone else. If you think you are leading your life—calling the shots—then congratulations . . . you are your own shepherd!

THE TABLE BEFORE US

"I shall not be in want" (Psalm 23:1 NIV 84). David didn't always get what he wanted every day. But he never lacked what he needed any day of his life.

"He makes me lie down in green pastures" (Psalm 23:2). When Jesus makes you do something, it's for your own good. You—His sheep—need guidance and rest. Sometimes, He uses His shepherd's crook to get you moving in the right direction.

David's words in Psalm 23:3–5 describe your faith as you learn to trust your Good Shepherd. He will guide you in paths of righteousness. He will be with you as you walk through the valley of the shadow of death. His rod and staff will comfort you. He will anoint your head with oil.

"Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (Psalm 23:6). This is the capstone of the psalm. You can count on God's goodness and love to follow you all the days of your life. This is what you get when you trade whatever shepherd that you've been following for Jesus leading your life.

DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies" (Psalm 23:5). God will not extract you from a broken world. Rather, He sets a table for two in the presence of your enemies. You have been invited to dine with the King in the middle of the battlefield.

DISCUSS

Take a few minutes within your group to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture.

1. According to Psalm 23, what are the attributes of your Good Shepherd? What does He promise to provide? How have you seen these traits in the way that Jesus leads you?
2. How do you feel about being compared to sheep in this psalm (see also Matthew 18:12–14; Luke 15:4–7; 1 Peter 2:25)? In what ways does this comparison ring true based on your life experience? In what ways do you struggle to accept this comparison?

THE TABLE BEFORE US

3. What are some of the “bad” shepherds in your life? Why is it often so tempting to follow after them? In what ways are you tempted to be your own shepherd?
4. David didn’t always get what he *wanted* every day of his life. But he never lacked what he *needed* any day of his life. How would you define the difference between the two?
5. How does your Good Shepherd make you lie down in green pastures? What does this look like in your life? Are you allowing Him to lead you in this area?
6. What comes to mind when you imagine the Good Shepherd preparing a table for you in the presence of your enemies? What does your “battlefield” look like at the moment? Why is it important that your enemies are *present* but not *invited to sit* at your table?

DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

RESPOND

Briefly review the outline for the session one teaching and any notes you took. In the space below, write down the most significant point you took away from this session.


PRAY

End your session by sharing any requests that you would like the group to lift up in prayer. Thank God for bringing you together for this study so you can draw closer to Him and win the battle for your mind. Ask your Good Shepherd to help you recognize his voice in your life and focus on his ways instead of your own—and definitely not the enemy's ways.




SESSION ONE

BETWEEN-SESSIONS PERSONAL STUDY



This week's group discussion is just the start, and we want you to keep digging into how you can claim the victory for your mind. So we've created this section as a guide for your personal study time to further explore the topics you discussed with your group. Before you begin, read or review chapters one and two in *Don't Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table*. Note that there will be an opportunity at your next group session to share any responses or thoughts that you have.



CONNECT

Check in with your group members during the upcoming week and continue the discussion you had with them at your last gathering. Grab coffee or dinner, or reach out by text and share what's going on in your heart. Use the following questions to help guide your conversation.

DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

What are some key words and phrases that have continued to stand out to you from Psalm 23? Why have those especially continued to resonate with you?

When have you experienced a situation in which you became aware of the enemy's presence at your "table"? How did you handle it?

How do you wish you had handled this situation? What would you do differently if you were able to do it over again?

REFLECT

Act

Winning the battle for your thoughts requires time, attention, and deliberation. In this first session, you started the process by exploring Psalm 23 and considering what it means to dine at God's table as you follow Jesus, your Good Shepherd. You've also started thinking about ways that you might be leaving space for the enemy to sit at your table.

This process requires you to become a better listener—to learn to recognize God's voice in your life. As Jesus said, "[The shepherd] calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow because they know his voice" (John 10:3–4). So, consider how well you know your Good Shepherd's voice. How do you recognize it when you hear it? Spend a couple minutes in silence, stilling your heart before God as you ponder this question, and then answer the following questions.

What are some of the ways that you hear God's voice? Do you hear it more when you spend time in His Word, or during your prayer times, or through the words and actions of a fellow believer in Christ?

DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

In Psalm 23, David describes God as a Good Shepherd who provides for our needs. David carries out this metaphor by noting the Lord makes him “lie down in green pastures,” leads him “beside quiet waters,” and refreshes his soul (Psalm 23:2–3). What are the most common obstacles you encounter to spending more time with your Good Shepherd in “green pastures” and resting “beside quiet waters”? What steps can you take to change that?

When have you experienced the kind of soul rest and spiritual refreshment that David describes in Psalm 23? What impact did these experiences have on your life?

Worship

Translating the original languages of the Bible have always presented challenges for scholars . . . but also unique benefits. Most biblical translations seek to balance the idea or message of the original text in expressing God's truth with the stylistic elements—such as diction, syntax, figures of speech, and poetic devices. One of the advantages of comparing such different renderings is often a deeper and richer perspective on God's Word.

Given that the psalms are primarily songs and poems, comparing translations can be especially helpful. Some images and descriptions may not seem to work together until you look at the psalm from different linguistic angles. Others, like Psalm 23, may be so familiar that they lose their meaning over time once committed to memory. With this in mind, today you will compare the text of this psalm from one of the oldest and most famous translations, the King James Version, alongside a more contemporary paraphrase, *The Message*.

Read through both versions slowly and thoughtfully, underlining key words and phrases you want to compare. Use the questions that follow to help you gain a better perspective on this timeless, beautiful, gritty psalm and its application to your life. Make your study of these two versions a time of worshipping God and thanking Him for all He provides for you.

DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

PSALM 23 (KING JAMES VERSION)

- ¹ *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*
- ² *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*
- ³ *He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*
- ⁴ *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*
- ⁵ *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*
- ⁶ *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*

PSALM 23 (THE MESSAGE)

¹⁻³ GOD, my shepherd!
I don't need a thing
You have bedded me down in lush meadows,
you find me quiet pools to drink from.
True to your word,
you let me catch my breath
and send me in the right direction.

⁴ Even when the way goes through
Death Valley,
I'm not afraid
when you walk at my side.
Your trusty shepherd's crook
makes me feel secure.

⁵ You serve me a six-course dinner
right in front of my enemies.
You revive my drooping head;
my cup brims with blessing.

⁶ Your beauty and love chase after me
every day of my life.
I'm back home in the house of GOD
for the rest of my life.

DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

Which particular word choices, phrases, and descriptions did you underline in each of these translations? Why did you select those parts of the passage?

What stood out to you the most about the different ways these translations express the same ideas? Why did those items stand out to you?

Which version resonates with you more at this point in your life? Why?

DEEPER

Our Good Shepherd Is Always Near

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me” (Psalm 23:4). It’s amazing that our Good Shepherd walks with us right through the valley of the shadow

of death. God is there with us through real hardship. He's with us when a loved one gets sick. He's with us when we bury someone we care for. He's close when our heart is shattered. He's close when we lose some sort of good thing we'd hoped for.

Maybe you're experiencing the death of a relationship or the loss of a dream. You tried to get into a certain program, but it didn't work out. You were heading for a certain job but didn't get it. You were positive a certain person was interested in you, but it turned out that person wanted to be only friends. Maybe you and your spouse were trying to conceive a child, but that window has closed.

We can experience any number of losses in the valley of the shadow of death. Loss is a part of our story as humans. We all walk through grief, disappointment, and discouragement. That's why it's so key that *even though* King David walked through such great difficulty, he declared, "*I will* fear no evil." The Good Shepherd was there to guide and comfort him.

How can we honestly say we're not afraid? The answer is shown in the second part the verse: "for you are with me." We won't solve all the problems around us. We don't avoid every problem that comes our way. Yet we don't need to fear any evil, because the Good Shepherd is with us. His rod and staff comfort us.

Let's not rush by this truth. Look at it slowly. Carefully. God Almighty *is with us*.

No matter the troubles you're walking through right now, the good news is not simply that God will help you. That's not the whole message. The message is that God *is with you*. He's with you in the sickness. He's with you at the



DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE

grave. He's with you when the job opportunity doesn't come through. He's with you when you receive hard news. He's with you in the chemo ward. He's with you in the storm, and in the wind, and in the trial, and in the valley. God Almighty—your Good Shepherd—is right there in the midst of every difficulty with you.

—FROM *DON'T GIVE THE ENEMY A SEAT AT YOUR TABLE*

What currently represents the “darkest valley” in your life?

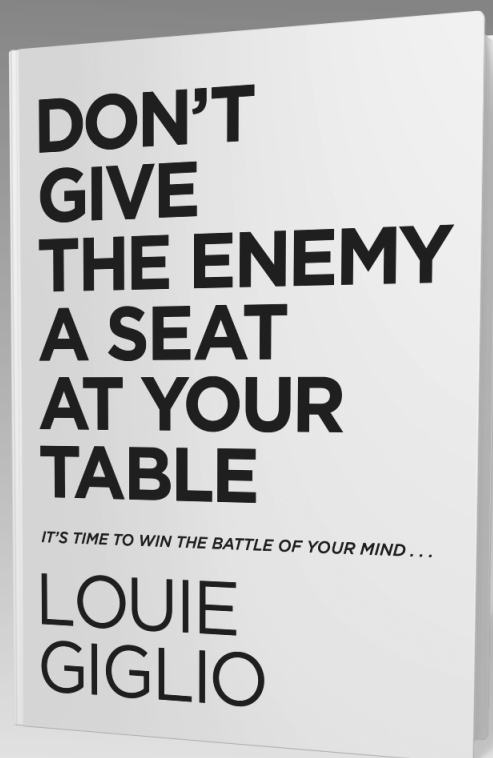
What is your prayer to God as you walk through this valley?

How does it help you to know that your Good Shepherd has promised to be with you?

For Next Week: Before your group's next session, read chapters 3 and 4 in *Don't Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table*.



COMPANION BOOK TO ENRICH YOUR STUDY EXPERIENCE



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