

Read: 1 Peter 2:19-25

Safe with Our Good Shepherd

1 Peter 2:25

For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The little baby was just learning to crawl and climb. He was at that stage when Mom and Dad (and sometimes brother and sister) always had to keep their eyes on him. He was an adventurous little child. They did their best to baby proof the house, but he always seemed to find that one place where there was danger. It was an interesting time to see him grow, learn, and explore. But it was also a nerve-racking time, because it always seemed like they were on the verge of a trip to the emergency room.

Mom and Dad let him explore and learn, but they were never far away. They were always ready to protect him from injury if needed. They didn't always succeed. When he fell and cried, the only thing that would calm him was the safety and comfort found in the arms of Mom or Dad.

Our Good Shepherd has us safe in his arms as well. Sometimes we like to wander and explore. And sometimes, our Good Shepherd will allow dangers and challenges to come our way to remind us that we need him each and every day. It's those challenging times that can lead us to run back to our Good Shepherd for the lasting peace and security that is ours in him.

That's what happened to the people that Peter wrote to. They were facing some pretty big challenges. Like Stephen, their lives were being threatened, and some of them thought of running away from Jesus and abandoning their faith. But Peter reminds them, and us, that when we experience trials and challenges, Jesus remains our Good Shepherd who watches over us for our eternal good.

At times, we might be tempted to run away from Jesus or abandon our faith in him because it seems easier to not be a Christian. It's in those times that we can remember our Good Shepherd. Rather than running away from him during the tough times, run to him. Bring all your cares and concerns to him. And trust that he will lead you safely to your eternal home.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- Ask your parents about stories from when you were learning to walk and crawl. Did you parents get scared when you started to explore ? What are some ways they tried to keep you safe?
- Even if your parents aren't right next to you all the time, who can you be sure is always with you? What can you do when you are scared, worried, or tempted?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Do you ever wish you had more freedom? Why do you think your parents set up guidelines and rules for you?
- Jesus sends people like parents to guard and protect you. How do your parents or other authorities do that for you?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How can challenges be a blessing for you?
- Why might some people think that it's easier not to be a Christian? What makes being a Christian such a great blessing?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Good Shepherd, sometimes days are hard and we face tough challenges. When we do, lead us to run to you as our great Good Shepherd and our source of eternal comfort and peace. Amen.

Hymn: CW 342:3 – I Am Jesus' Little Lamb

Who so happy as I am,
Even now the shepherd's lamb?
And when my short life is ended,
By his angel hosts attended,
He shall fold me to his breast,
There within his arms to rest.