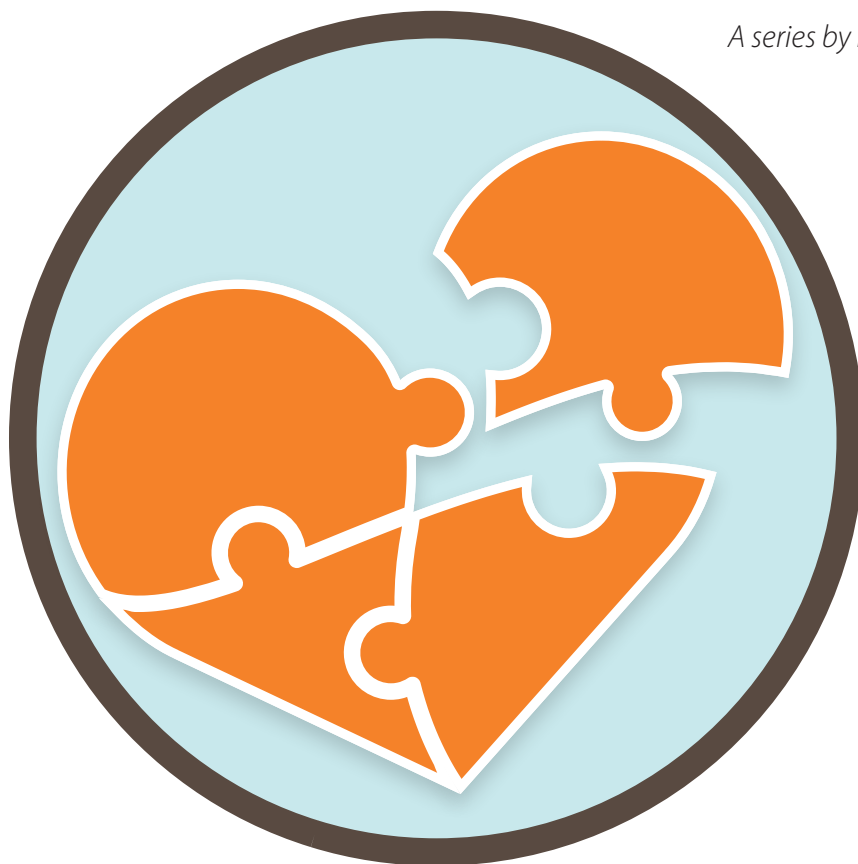


ADULT

Wholly Christian

A series by Ken Gurley



SERIES BIG IDEA

Because God desires to lead us to wholeness, we must submit ourselves to the process of becoming whole.

Lesson 1.1

I Shall Not Want

Lesson 1.2

He Leadeth Me

Lesson 1.3

Yea, though I Walk through the Valley

Lesson 1.4

I Shall Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever



Wholly Christian: I Shall Not Want

A series by Ken Gurley

Lesson Big Idea: The process of becoming whole begins with our ability to see the Lord as our answer to everything.

Foundation

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:1

Tell the story of Ebenezer Scrooge on page 20.

Frame

A. "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

- » Psalm 23:1
- » Isaiah 53:6

1. Knowing the sheep's nature, the shepherd proactively addresses the circumstances that could bring out the worst in the sheep.

- » Psalm 23:2
- » Psalm 23:4

2. **Wholeness** begins with complete and utter **dependence** upon God and culminates with genuine fulfillment of being in His **presence**.

- » *Why do you think this psalm is so well-loved?* ⚙️
- » *In what ways do we humans compare to sheep?* ⚙️
- » *What significance do you see in the fact that David left the metaphor of a sheep behind in the psalm and began to speak of himself as a man?* ⚙️

B. We live in a generation rightly called "want."

1. Humanity has **always** craved more.

2. Humanity who adopt the rat-race mentality are thus on a never-ending quest for more.

- » *In what ways do you see us as a society becoming more dissatisfied and discontent?* ⚙️
- » *In looking at Ecclesiastes 1 and 2, what were some of the ways Solomon tried to satisfy his innermost longings for more?* ⚙️
- » *From the Blaise Pascal quote comes the paraphrase of a "God-shaped hole that only He can fill." Describe how you or someone you know came to this same realization.* ⚙️

C. Only one truly **satisfies**.

1. Understanding dawns upon us when we recognize that life's starting point and finish line are found in Him.
2. God is not simply our **supply**; He is our **supplier**.
 - » Hebrews 9:3–4
 - » *Why is it important to see God not just as our supply, but as our supplier?* ⚙️
 - » *What comfort does it bring to you knowing that God's sufficiency is limitless?* ⚙️


D. We must claim Him as our own.

1. We must release any and all **substitute** saviors.
 - » Genesis 32:22
2. We must also give God access to our total lives.
 - » Ezekiel 47:9
3. We must lay claim to what He has to offer.
 - » I Kings 22:3
 - » Ephesians 3:20
 - » *What substitute saviors do you battle with?* ⚙️
 - » *Can you describe a moment that you laid claim to God's promises?* ⚙️

Finish

Tell the story of the broken tablets on pages 23-24.

Foundation

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:1 

Ebenezer Scrooge is the memorable character found in the timeless work of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. The author's initial description of Scrooge is "a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner!" Beyond this less-than-flattering depiction, Scrooge despised Christmas.

Scrooge changed in this story, but as with most transformations, his change came at a great price. On Christmas Eve, the ghost of Scrooge's former business partner—Jacob Marley, seven years deceased—visited him. Wrapped in heavy chains, Marley described his afterlife experience of being forced to wander the earth as penalty for his past selfishness. He told Scrooge to expect three visits in the night ahead.

The story unfolds with successive appearances of the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and yet to come. Each has a certain painful but poignant work to carry Scrooge to the crossroads of meaningful change. The first apparition reminded him of the joy of his youth and the painful moment his greed cost him the love of his life. The last specter showed him what his life might be if he truly changed.


When the second ghost came, that of Christmas present, he brought Scrooge from the past to the present. He did not come alone, for hidden within the folds of his garments were two emaciated children, a boy and a girl, known respectively as Ignorance and Want. They possessed ragged clothes, scowling faces, and seemed somehow wolfish in demeanor.

Scrooge withdrew in fear from their appearance. Upon further examination, he asked if Ignorance and Want had any refuge or resource to remedy their situation.

This fanciful tale is accurate in this sense: each of us is born with wants and needs that cannot find their fulfillment in the things of this life. We are born not only in sin, but also in want. The box of our lives bears the instructions, "some assembly required," but in the final analysis we sense that some pieces are missing. What the designer intended is insufficient without the designer Himself. The creature is incomplete without the Creator.


Paul said that we find completion in Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:9) and our lives are inseparable from His life (Philippians 1:21). Only through Him can we understand what's missing and how to remedy it.

Frame



Who but the Holy Spirit working through the psalmist David could coin such an opening line, "**The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want**"? (Psalm 23:1, KJV).  This sentence of affirmation introduces the reader to the most beloved psalm in Scripture and one of the most oft-read and cited of all biblical passages. The psalm does not fail to mention the trials that come to each person: fear, enemies, and shadow of death. Yet, the psalmist's hopeful tone overrides the surrounding darkness. And why would it not since his shepherd is none other than the Lord?



The analogy David used was one near to his heart. He had once shepherded his father's sheep, and later, as all Israel acknowledged on his coronation day, David was called by his heavenly Father to shepherd all God's people. (See II Samuel 5:2.) David's experience with placid but timid sheep suggested to him that humans are much like sheep.

Sheep are fearful.
Sheep are easily intimidated.
Sheep get lost . . . often.
Sheep will follow others to their own destruction.




So when David suggested humans to be as sheep, he did not display an exalted opinion of human nature. He joined chorus with the prophet Isaiah who said, “All we like sheep” go astray. (See Isaiah 53:6.)  David’s confidence, however, was not in the sheep’s nature, but in the abiding faithfulness and sufficiency of the Shepherd.

Our Shepherd is not fearful.
Our Shepherd is never intimidated.
Our Shepherd knows the way we take.
Our Shepherd can rescue the perishing.



Knowing the sheep’s nature, the shepherd proactively addresses the circumstances that could bring out the worst in the sheep. Since sheep are easily enticed to search elsewhere for food and in so doing easily grow lost, the shepherd makes certain the sheep are in the midst of “green pastures” (Psalm 23:2, KJV).  Knowing that sheep will avoid rushing water like rapids and waterfalls, whose loud noises frighten them, the shepherd leads the sheep beside “still waters” (Psalm 23:2 KJV). Recognizing that a sheep can grow easily frightened, the shepherd provides a rod and staff. (See Psalm 23:4.)  These three instances of nutrition, hydration, and protection indicate that all of life’s fulfillment is in the shepherd.

By psalm’s end, the psalmist was no longer speaking as a sheep, but as a man—one surrounded by enemies. This shifting of metaphors suggests that the transformation was complete and David was completely reliant upon the Lord. **Wholeness begins with complete and utter dependence upon God and culminates with genuine fulfillment of being in His presence.**  

This journey of completion begins with the simple statement, “I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1, KJV).

-  **Why do you think this psalm is so well-loved?**
-  **In what ways do we humans compare to sheep?**
-  **What significance do you see in the fact that David left the metaphor of a sheep behind in the psalm and began to speak of himself as a man?**

We live in a generation rightly called “want.”

Humanity has always craved more.   Eve could have eaten from any tree in the Garden, but she rested her gaze on the single prohibited tree and chose the forbidden fruit. (See Genesis 3:1–7.) We humans want both what we have and what we do not have. We crave the next edition, the latest version, the most recent update, and are seemingly unsatisfied with the status quo.

The pursuit of happiness is enshrined in the United States Declaration of Independence as an unalienable right. Health, marriage, and meaningful relationships are often associated with contentment, but many equate wealth with happiness—witness Ebenezer Scrooge. A person’s search for happiness in the materialistic realm can lead to what has been called the “affluenza syndrome,” a sickness caused by the desire for more.

Dubai is a city built on superlatives. If you want to shop, you can go to one of the largest malls in the world, which incidentally also has an indoor ski resort. The city has the largest man-made island, the only seven-star hotel, the tallest building, and the fastest elevators in the world. You get the picture. It seems that mankind wants the fastest, highest, biggest, and most expensive. Records, however, are made to be broken, and the latest and greatest will outpace the last. **Humanity who adopt the rat-race mentality are thus on a never-ending quest for more.**

LESSON BIG IDEA: The process of becoming whole begins with our ability to see the Lord as our answer to everything.

King Solomon set his mind to find the meaning of life. He applied himself to the pursuit of happiness in possessions, relationships, and accomplishments. His pursuit ended when he determined there was simply nothing better than God. (See Ecclesiastes 1–2.)

Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) asked where this human craving originates. He fastened upon the idea that mankind once possessed an innate happiness, but only a trace of it remained after the Fall in the Garden. The constant seeking for happiness is a testimony to what once was, but is no longer. Pascal concluded that nothing temporal could satisfy, “since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words, by God Himself” (*Pensees*, Section 7, Thought #425).

- ⚙️ **In what ways do you see us as a society becoming more dissatisfied and discontent?**
- ⚙️ **In looking at Ecclesiastes 1 and 2, what were some of the ways Solomon tried to satisfy his innermost longings for more?**
- ⚙️ **From the Blaise Pascal quote comes the paraphrase of a “God-shaped hole that only He can fill.” Describe how you or someone you know came to this same realization.**

Only one truly **satisfies**. ✍️ 📖

As John eloquently said in the opening of his Gospel, “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4, KJV). **Understanding dawns upon us when we recognize that life’s starting point and finish line are found in Him.** He is the source; He is the objective.

To question His sufficiency is folly. Witness the many names found for God in Scripture. Each stands as a vivid affirmation to the God who is sufficient. Nathaniel Spiers penned a book entitled *The Names of God: 1000 Names of God and Their Biblical References*, which is a staggering documentation of the adequacy and sufficiency of our God.

Many of these names for God were revealed in times of testing. When a person came to the end of his strengths and abilities, he turned to God and found Him to be willing and able. So, names for God like Jehovah-Jireh, Banner of Israel, Honey in the Rock, El-Shaddai, and more, call to remembrance how others have found God to be their source, provision, and completion.


God is not simply our supply; He is our supplier. ✍️ 📖 And His supply is endless.

The late pastor and writer Harold E. Kohn trained himself to see through creation to the Creator. He noted that an apple needs anywhere from thirty to fifty leaves on the apple tree to ensure its growth. God provided that and then some, placing over one hundred thousand leaves on the average apple tree, enough leaf surface to pull four gallons of water from the ground each hour. He noted that ground-nesting birds lay more than enough eggs to perpetuate their kind and that a female brook trout will lay over five thousand eggs each year.

Although there is a thief bent on our destruction, God supplies more than enough to supply our needs. The air we breathe is about 20 percent oxygen. When we exhale, our breath contains about 15 percent oxygen, meaning that we have not nearly exhausted the supply of oxygen available. The same God who breathed into our nostrils is not only capable of fostering life, He is capable of sustaining life, and that in abundance.

One of the most endearing illustrations of God’s sufficiency is seen in the feeding of the five thousand. So noteworthy is this miracle that it is shared in all four Gospels. The familiar details of the

story involve a large, hungry crowd and a boy with a lunch of five loaves and two fishes. He offers it to Jesus, and the Lord blesses it, breaks it, and places it in the hands of His disciples. This meager offering was multiplied to feed a multitude. When the meal was over, the fragments filled twelve large baskets. God is more than able to provide for our needs.




Three items were placed within the Ark of the Covenant: the golden pot of manna, Aaron's budding rod, and the tablets of stone. (See Hebrews 9:3–4.)  Each of these three items indicated God's all-sufficiency to meet His people's physical needs (manna), emotional needs (law), and spiritual needs (rod). And, of course, above these rested the mercy seat upon which was spattered the redemptive blood of the lamb. God quite simply has us covered.


 **Why is it important to see God not just as our supply, but as our supplier?**


 **What comfort does it bring to you knowing that God's sufficiency is limitless?**


We must claim Him as our own.

The Shepherd must become *my* shepherd. In the parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price, both of the characters had to appropriate the field and the pearl for their own. Jesus has paid the price, but we must claim the prize as our own.

How do we do this? First to claim Him as our all-sufficient one, **we must release any and all substitute saviors.**   Prior to his encounter with the heavenly being, Jacob parted company with his family and friends. (See Genesis 32:22.)  God cannot fill hands that are full. Our faith in His sufficiency causes us to release our grasp of those things upon which we once leaned.

We must also give God access to our total lives: our thoughts, our schedules, our likes and dislikes, our all. In Ezekiel's vision of the spiritual stream that flowed from God's house to the Dead Sea, he noted that only what the stream touched was healed. (See Ezekiel 47:9.)  When God touches it, He heals it.

Finally, **we must lay claim to what He has to offer.** Even carnal King Ahab recognized that Ramoth-Gilead rightfully belonged to God's people. He asked, in effect, "Why do we hesitate to claim what God has already given us?" (See I Kings 22:3.)  We once sang, "Every promise in the book is mine." We should live that way and lay hold on all that God has for us.

If the Lord is your shepherd, look to Him with the trust of a sheep. He can and will supply "exceeding abundantly above all" you ask or think (Ephesians 3:20, KJV).  More than this, He will take the pieces of your life and fill in the gaps until you are whole.

 **What substitute saviors do you battle with?**

 **Can you describe a moment that you laid claim to God's promises?**

Finish

The Jews have an interesting teaching based on a literal understanding of God's Word. You may remember that God told Moses to put the tablets of stone within the Ark of the Covenant. (See Exodus 25:16–31.) Several chapters later, Moses broke the original tablets of stone. (See Exodus 32:19.) New tablets were later fashioned that would make their way into the Ark. (See Exodus 34:27–28.)

What happened to the broken tablets? The Jews say, "The Tablets as well as the broken pieces of the Tablets were placed in the Ark" (Talmud Berachot 8b and Menachot 99b). The teaching is founded on the simple premise that Moses must have obeyed what God told him regarding the original tablets of stone. Broken or no, the Jews believe that they went into the Ark.

LESSON BIG IDEA: The process of becoming whole begins with our ability to see the Lord as our answer to everything.

If that is the case, then this provides a beautiful picture for us. The broken pieces of our lives are close to the intact ones. We are never far from who we once were.

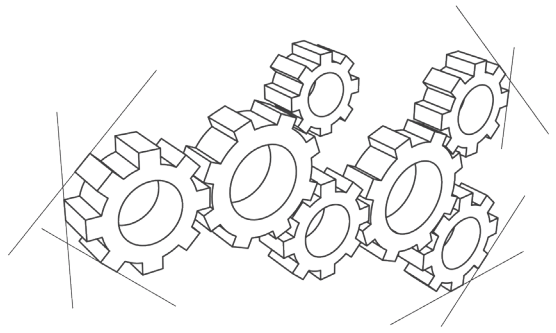
Dr. Estelle Frankel, in her book *Sacred Therapy*, suggests that the two revelations from God to Moses at Mount Sinai symbolize the stages we go through in our spiritual development. Those initial visions of our lives may be shattered, but at some point if we keep pursuing that vision, from the rubble of our early failures emerges a full and complete life. Or, as she put it, "Ultimately the whole and the broken live side by side in all of us."

Perhaps this is what you have found. Maybe you've seen that there are shards of disappointments and failures still present in your life. Accept that down here it will possibly always be that way. Yet, don't overlook that in the midst of the brokenness, God is fashioning something new in you. While the enemy may try to get you to focus on what's wrong and missing in your life, you center on the one who is making all things new in you.

David began his odyssey of wholeness in Psalm 23 by declaring the Lord to be his all-sufficient shepherd. By making this assertion, David believed God's sufficiency would meet his insufficiency and God's provision would prove more than adequate for his want.

Perhaps we would be wise to make the same declaration. Place God before all else and watch Him transform you into the person He longs for you to be.

Small Group Leader's Guide



Wholly Christian: *I Shall Not Want*

Opening Question: What is one of the biggest things you want to see happen in the next five years?

Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:1

Tell the story of Ebenezer Scrooge on page 20.

Group Discussion:

- In what ways do we humans compare to sheep? ⚙️
- What significance do you see in the fact that David left the metaphor of a sheep behind in the psalm and began to speak of himself as a man?
- In what ways do you see us as a society becoming more dissatisfied and discontent? ⚙️
- Why is it important to see God not just as our supply, but as our supplier?
- What comfort does it bring to you knowing that God's sufficiency is limitless?
- What substitute saviors do you battle with?
- What do you think it means to be "complete in Him"? ⚙️
- What are some areas of your life that you would consider broken?
- How do you feel about God's promise to heal you and make you whole?
- How has God proved Himself faithful to you?
- In what ways has God supplied your needs in your recent past? ⚙️
- What does it mean to say "the Lord is my shepherd"?
- How does it make you feel to know that God is always watching over you?
- Why is God's presence such an important thing to a believer? ⚙️
- What are some things we tend to treat as more important than God's presence at times

Prayer Focus

Lord, make me whole and complete in You. You are faithful and always supply my every need. Thank You for being my shepherd and for watching over me at all times. I want nothing more than Your presence in my life. You are everything I need, and only You satisfy the longings of my heart and soul.

YOUTH

Wholly Christian

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SERIES BIG IDEA

Because God desires to lead us to wholeness, we must submit ourselves to the process of becoming whole.

Lesson 1.1

I Shall Not Want

Lesson 1.2

He Leadeth Me

Lesson 1.3

Yea, though I Walk through the Valley

Lesson 1.4

I Shall Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever

Wholly Christian

I Shall Not Want

BLUEPRINT

SERIES BIG IDEA

Because God desires to make us complete, we must submit ourselves to the process of becoming whole.

LESSON BIG IDEA

The process of becoming whole begins with our ability to see the Lord as our answer to everything.

LEARNING TARGET

To realize Jesus is the answer to all things.

KEY SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Psalm 23:1

SUPPLIES

Bibles, paper, art supplies

FOUNDATION

Ebenezer Scrooge is the memorable character found in the timeless work of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. The author's initial description of Scrooge is "a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner!" Beyond this less-than-flattering depiction, Scrooge despised Christmas.

Scrooge changed in this story, but as with most transformations, his change came at a great price. On Christmas Eve, the ghost of Scrooge's former business partner—Jacob Marley, seven years deceased—visited him. Wrapped in heavy chains, Marley described his afterlife experience of being forced to wander the earth as penalty for his past selfishness. He told Scrooge to expect three visits in the night ahead.

The story unfolds with successive appearances of the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and yet to come. Each had a certain painful but poignant work to carry Scrooge to the crossroads of meaningful change. The first apparition reminded him of the joy of his youth and the painful moment his greed cost him the love of his life. The last specter showed him what his life might be if he truly changed.

When the second ghost came, that of Christmas present, he brought Scrooge from the past to the present. He did not come alone, for hidden within the folds of his garments were two emaciated children, a boy and a girl, known respectively as Ignorance and Want. They possessed ragged clothes, scowling faces, and seemed somehow wolfish in demeanor.

Scrooge withdrew in fear from their appearance. Upon further examination, he asked if Ignorance and Want had any refuge or resource to remedy their situation.

LESSON BIG IDEA: Answer in Time of Need

This fanciful tale is accurate in this sense: each of us is born with wants and needs that cannot find their fulfillment in the things of this life. We are born not only in sin, but in want. The box of our lives bears the instructions “some assembly required,” but in the final analysis, we sense that some pieces are missing. What the designer intended is insufficient without the designer Himself. The creature is incomplete without the Creator.

Paul said that we find completion in Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:9) and our lives are inseparable from His life (Philippians 1:21). Only through Him can we understand what’s missing and how to remedy it.

Opening Discussion


- What comfort does it bring to you knowing that God is limitless?
- What do you think it means to be “complete in Him”?

Middle-School Exercise

1. Have students read Psalm 23 as a class.
2. Distribute paper and art supplies.
3. Have students create a drawing that they feel best represents Psalm 23 as it pertains to our place as sheep and God’s role as leader and provider.
4. Discuss how God is the ultimate shepherd to His people.

Senior-High Exercise:

1. Break the class up into groups of two or three.
2. Assign individual verses of Psalm 23 to each group and have them discuss among themselves the meaning.
3. Have each group present their modern interpretation of the passage they were assigned and how it pertains to our lives today.

 *Have one or two of your students share a story of a time God provided when it seemed like there were no other options left. If you do not have students willing to share, share a story of your own or plan ahead for another member of your church to tell a story of provision.*



FRAME

I. “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”



- A. Knowing the sheep’s nature, the shepherd proactively addresses the circumstances that could bring out the worst in the sheep.
1. The analogy David used was one near to his heart. He had once shepherded his father’s sheep, and later, as all Israel acknowledged on his coronation day, David was called by his heavenly Father to shepherd all God’s people.
 2. So when David suggested humans to be as sheep, he did not display an exalted opinion of human nature. He joined chorus with the prophet Isaiah who said, “All we like sheep” go astray. (See Isaiah 53:6.)
 3. Since sheep are easily enticed to search elsewhere for food and in so doing easily grow lost, the shepherd makes certain the sheep are in the midst of “green pastures” (Psalm 23:2).
 4. By psalm’s end, the psalmist was no longer speaking as a sheep, but as a man—one surrounded by enemies. This shifting of metaphors suggests that the transformation was complete and David was completely reliant upon the Lord.



B. Wholeness begins with complete and utter **dependence** upon God and culminates with genuine fulfillment of being in His **presence**.  


1. This journey of completion begins with the simple statement, "I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1, KJV).

-  *Why do you think this psalm is so well-loved?*
-  *In what ways do we humans compare to sheep?*





II. Want

- A. We live in a generation rightly called "want."
- B. Humanity has **always** craved more.  
 1. Eve could have eaten from any tree in the Garden, but she rested her gaze on the single prohibited tree and chose the forbidden fruit. (See Genesis 3:1–7.)
 2. We humans want both what we have and what we do not have. We crave the next edition, the latest version, the most recent update, and are seemingly unsatisfied with the status quo.
 3. The pursuit of happiness is enshrined in the United States Declaration of Independence as an unalienable right. Health, marriage, and meaningful relationships are often associated with contentment, but many equate wealth with happiness—witness Ebenezer Scrooge.
 4. A person's search for happiness in the materialistic realm can lead to what has been called the "influenza syndrome," a sickness caused by the desire for more.
- C. Those who adopt the rat-race mentality are thus on a never-ending quest for more.
 1. King Solomon set his mind to find the meaning of life. He applied himself to the pursuit of happiness in possessions, relationships, and accomplishments.
 2. His pursuit ended when he determined there was simply nothing better than God. (See Ecclesiastes 1–2.)

-  *In what ways do you see us as a society becoming more dissatisfied and discontent?*
-  *How can we personally prevent that from happening in our own lives?*

 *This would be an excellent time for a personal testimony. Alternatively, consider asking ahead of time for a volunteer in the class to share his or her story.*

III. Finding True Satisfaction

- A. Only one truly **satisfies**.  
 1. As John eloquently said in the opening of his Gospel, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4, KJV).
- B. Understanding dawns upon us when we recognize that life's starting point and finish line are found in God.
 1. Witness the many names found for God in Scripture. Each stands as a vivid affirmation to the God who is sufficient.
 2. Many of these names for God were revealed in times of testing. When a person came to the end of his strengths and abilities, he turned to God and found Him to be willing and able.
 3. So names for God like Jehovah-Jireh, Banner of Israel, Honey in the Rock, El-Shaddai, and more call to remembrance how others have found God to be their source, provision, and completion.
- C. God is not simply our **supply**; He is our **supplier**.  
 1. One of the most endearing illustrations of God's sufficiency is seen in the feeding of the five thousand. So noteworthy is this miracle that it is shared in all four Gospels.
 2. The familiar details of the story involve a large, hungry crowd and a boy with a lunch of five loaves and two fishes. He offers it to Jesus, and the Lord blesses it, breaks it, and places it in the hands of His disciples.

LESSON BIG IDEA: Answer in Time of Need

3. This meager offering was multiplied to feed a multitude. When the meal was over, the fragments filled twelve large baskets. God is more than able to provide for our needs.

- ⚙️ *Why is it important to see God not just as our supply, but also as our supplier?*
- ⚙️ *What comfort does it bring to you knowing that God is all-sufficient?*

- D. We must claim Him as our own.
1. *The Shepherd* must become *my* shepherd.
 2. In the parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price, both of the characters had to appropriate the field and the pearl for their own. Jesus has paid the price, but we must claim the prize as our own.
- E. We must release any and all **substitute** saviors. ✍️ 📖
1. Prior to his encounter with the heavenly being, Jacob parted company with his family and friends. (See Genesis 32:22.) 📖
 2. God cannot fill hands that are full. Our faith in His sufficiency causes us to release our grasp of those things upon which we once leaned.
- F. We must also give God access to our total lives.
1. He must have access to our thoughts, our schedules, our likes and dislikes—our all.
 2. In Ezekiel's vision of the spiritual stream that flowed from God's house to the Dead Sea, he noted that only what the stream touched was healed. (See Ezekiel 47:9.)
- G. We must lay claim to what He has to offer.
1. If the Lord is your shepherd, look to Him with the trust of a sheep. He can and will supply "exceeding abundantly above all" you ask or think (Ephesians 3:20, KJV). 📖
 2. More than this, He will take the pieces of your life and fill in the gaps until you are whole.

FINISH

The Jews have an interesting teaching based on a literal understanding of God's Word. You may remember that God told Moses to put the tablets of stone within the Ark of the Covenant. (See Exodus 25:16–31.) Several chapters later, Moses broke the original tablets of stone. (See Exodus 32:19.) New tablets were later fashioned that would make their way into the Ark. (See Exodus 34:27–28.)

What happened to the broken tablets? The Jews say, "The Tablets as well as the broken pieces of the Tablets were placed in the Ark" (Talmud Berachot 8b and Menachot 99b). The teaching is founded on the simple premise that Moses must have obeyed what God told him regarding the original tablets of stone. Broken or no, the Jews believe that they went into the Ark.

If that is the case, then this provides a beautiful picture for us. The broken pieces of our lives are close to the intact ones. We are never far from who we once were.

Perhaps this is what you have found. Maybe you've seen that there are shards of disappointments and failures still present in your life. Accept that down here it will possibly always be that way. Yet, don't overlook that in the midst of the brokenness, God is fashioning something new in you. While the enemy may try to get you to focus on what's wrong and missing in your life, you center on the one who is making all things new in you.

David began his odyssey of wholeness in Psalm 23 by declaring the Lord to be his all-sufficient shepherd. By making this assertion, David believed God's sufficiency would meet his insufficiency, and God's provision would prove more than adequate for his want.

Perhaps we would be wise to make the same declaration. Place God before all else and watch Him transform you into the person He longs for you to be.

Discussion Questions:

- What substitute saviors do you need to deal with?
- Can you describe a moment when you chose to accept God's promises?

Middle-School Finish:

1. Discuss God and His ability to see and know all things.
2. Why is this scary?
3. Why is it a wonderful thing?
4. Do your students like the fact that God always knows what is going on? Why or why not?
5. How can your students use this as a comfort in difficult times?

Senior-High Finish:

1. Discuss the ways in which we are like sheep and God is our shepherd.
2. What do you think of when people refer to others as sheep?
3. What are the negatives of being sheep?
4. What are the positives?
5. Why is there such a difference in being a sheep in society and being a sheep in the house of God?

The Big Picture

- God has many desires for our lives.
- If we understand that He is the answer and look to Him, those desires will be fulfilled.

Final Reflections

- What significance do you see in the fact that David left the metaphor of a sheep behind in the psalm and began to speak of himself as a man?
- In looking at Ecclesiastes 1 and 2, what were some of the ways Solomon tried to satisfy his innermost longings for more?
- What kinds of things do you think God desires for you?
- Why is it hard sometimes to look to God in a time of difficulty?

 *Allow students time to share what they have written.*

SELAH

Using the following points, take this time to guide your students in prayer.

- Lord, make me whole and complete in You. You are faithful and always supply my every need.
- Thank You for being my shepherd and for watching over me at all times.
- I want nothing more than Your presence in my life.
- You are everything I need, and only You satisfy the longings of my heart and soul.

 *Allow students time to update their Personal Discipleship Guide.*

CHILDREN

Wholly Christian



SERIES BIG IDEA

Because God desires to lead us to wholeness, we must submit ourselves to the process of becoming whole.

Lesson 1.1

I Shall Not Want

Lesson 1.2

He Leadeth Me

Lesson 1.3

Yea, though I Walk through the Valley

Lesson 1.4

I Shall Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever





Wholly Christian:

I Shall Not Want

BLUEPRINT

SERIES BIG IDEA

Because God desires to lead us to wholeness, we must submit ourselves to the process of becoming whole.

SERIES MEMORY PASSAGE

Psalm 23

LESSON BIG IDEA

The process of becoming whole begins with our ability to see the Lord as our answer for everything.

STUDENTS WILL relate the Lord to a shepherd who cares for His sheep.

Early Elementary (Grades 1-3)

TOOL BOX

FOUNDATION

- PowerPoint 1.1
- Pet supplies, photo of a pet
- *Visual: Pet (TRP)*
- *Video: "Sheep for Kids: A Collection of Sheep Farm Videos for Children"*
- Books about sheep

FRAME

- Series 1 memory verse poster (TRP)
- Sheep template (TRP) , marker or pen
- Sheep template (TRP) , crayons
- Tablecloths or blankets, picnic basket, goldfish crackers
- *Visual: Jesus Feeds the 5,000 (TRP)*

FINISH

- Activity papers, pencils, crayons or makers

SELAH

- *Series song and lyrics: "Whole"*
- Prayer

Late Elementary (Grades 4-6)

TOOL BOX

FOUNDATION

- PowerPoint 1.1
- Pet supplies and photo of a pet
- *Visual: Pet (TRP)*

FRAME

- Series 1 memory verse poster (TRP)
- Template: Loaf and Fish (TRP) , scissors, markers
- Paper (1 per student), pens
- Tablecloths or blankets, picnic basket, goldfish crackers
- *Visual: Jesus Feeds the 5,000 (TRP)*

FINISH

- Activity papers, pencils
- Chairs or tables to section off "sheepfolds," sheepfold questions (TRP)

SELAH

- *Series song and lyrics: "Whole"*
- Prayer

Foundation

Early Elementary (1-3)

Show and Tell: Pets

Prior to class, gather pet supplies. Ideas include food and water bowls, blanket or bed, shampoo, brush, and toys. If possible, bring in a photo of your pet. If you don't have one, find a photo of a pet online or in a magazine.

Show students the pet supplies and photo. Talk about the proper way to care for a pet.

Sheep Facts

Search YouTube for a video showing sheep. Suggested link: "Sheep for Kids: A Collection of Sheep Farm Videos for Children."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UoBxALepKw>

Show the sheep video and discuss the characteristics of sheep with the class.

Sheep Study

Prior to class, check out books about sheep from a public library.

Ask students to choose a book to read with a partner.


After students acquire information, ask students to tell you everything they know about sheep. Write student responses on the whiteboard.

Reflection

- How does a shepherd take care of his sheep?
- How does God care for us?
- ☆ How is God our shepherd?

Late Elementary (4-6)

Pet Stories

Display the pet visual (TRP) . Have students share stories about their pets with the class.

Reflection

- How do you meet the needs of a pet?
- Does your pet ever want anything? If so, what?

Red? No, Green!

Ask students to look around the classroom for anything that is red. Instruct students to try to remember all the red things and hold them in their minds until you say stop. Instruct students to close their eyes and try to recall anything green that they may have seen while their eyes were open. Most will not be able to name a green item because their focus was on red.

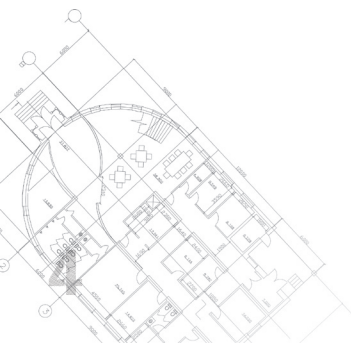
This is how we focus; other things fade and are not even seen by us when we focus on one thing.

Selective Attention Discussion

Discuss "Selective Attention" with the class.

Reflection

- Did you miss any details in the videos? Why?
- Could you name a green item?
- How does our focus affect us?
- ☆ What do you think happens if we focus our attention on Jesus?
- ☆ How does Jesus care for us?




Frame


Early Elementary (1-3)


Late Elementary (4-6)

Series Memory Verse

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters" (Psalm 23:1-2). (TRP) 

Sheep Find


Prior to class, copy the sheep template (TRP) . Write the memory verse on the sheep copies (two or three words per sheep). Hide the sheep around the room.

Display the memory verse (TRP) . Point to each word as you read it and have students read with you. Have students find the sheep and place the verse in order.


Reflection

- **What does this verse mean to you?**
- **What does the word *want* mean?**
- **How does God meet our needs?**

Sheep Memory Fun

Display and read the memory verse (TRP)  to students. Have them read it together with you as a class.

Independent Practice

Prior to class, copy the sheep template (TRP) , one per student.


Give each student a copy of a sheep and crayons. Have students write the memory verse on the sheep templates and color them.


Instruct students to take the verse home to remember that God is their shepherd.

Reflection

- **Why is it important for sheep to have a shepherd?**
- **Why do you think the shepherd leads the sheep by still waters?**
- **If God is our shepherd, should we feel content and happy?**

Loaves and Fishes

Prior to class, make copies of the loaf and fish template (TRP)  (one fish or loaf per student) and cut them out.

Display the memory verse (TRP) . Have students say the verse together.


Give each student a fish or loaf copy and markers. Assign each student a portion of the memory verse to write on his fish or loaf.

Have students work together to put the verse in order, from one side of the room to the other.

Reflection

Ask students to put the verse in their own words.

Following God's Direction

Display the memory verse (TRP) . Have students read the verse to themselves as you read it aloud.

Provide students with pens and paper. Have students copy the entire verse on the paper.

Ask students to think about a situation in their lives. Encourage them to take this verse and apply it to that particular situation.

Give them a few minutes to journal on their papers about how they feel when they look at their situation, knowing the Lord is their shepherd.

Reflection

- **Is any situation too hard for God?**
- **What are benefits of letting God be our shepherd?**
- **Why should we not want?**

Early Elementary (1-3)

Bible Lesson: *Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand* (Matthew 14:13–21)

Spread out tablecloths or blankets on the floor and display a picnic basket containing goldfish crackers. Assign students to play the roles of Jesus and the disciples. Have the actors stand during the lesson. The remaining students sit on the tablecloths or blankets.

- **Have you ever been on a road trip where, in the middle of nowhere, you got hungry?**

Tell about your experience. 

If you had been in Israel when Jesus was on earth, you may have heard whispering in the streets. (*Whisper.*) “Did you hear? Jesus left by ship. Let’s go follow Him to the desert. Maybe He will heal you!”

Can you imagine being a part of the crowd that day? The people showed up in masses of over five thousand! Jesus did not announce where He was going. He didn’t send out a text message; He didn’t tweet; He didn’t post His location to Facebook. He stood in the desert and people just showed up. (*Instruct students to leave their seats and sit on the tablecloths or blankets.*)

Imagine being one of the five thousand people who sat on the hard, dusty ground. Imagine sitting outside, birds flying overhead, the warm sun on your face, in the middle of a desert, listening to Jesus. You may have heard the roar of the crowd become silent when Jesus spoke. For hours the crowd stayed in the wilderness intently listening to Him.

The multitude may not have been thinking about their stomachs, but the disciples were. Maybe their stomachs were even growling from hunger. (*Ask students to make hungry-stomach sounds.*)

The disciples came to Jesus. (*Disciples pantomime.*) They asked Him to send the multitudes away so they could return to their homes and find food.


Jesus looked at His disciples and said, “Feed them.”

Late Elementary (4-6)

Can you imagine? If you were a disciple, what would you say to Jesus? (*Let students respond.*)

There were no grocery stores, restaurants, or market places in the desert. It would have been hard not to look at the Lord and sarcastically say, “With what?” Sometimes Jesus tells us to do things that are seemingly impossible because He knows He will supply our needs.

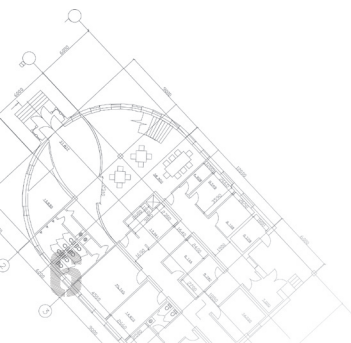
The disciples didn’t have any food, and neither did the rest of the crowd. They looked around and searched. (*Disciples should ask students if they have any food.*) In the crowd of over five thousand people, all they could find was one little boy who had five loaves of bread and two fishes. (*Give disciples the picnic basket.*) That was it.

So they took what little they could find to Jesus and He blessed it. *Show Jesus Feeds the 5,000* visual (TRP) . When He was done, He asked them to distribute it. They did. (*Have disciples give goldfish crackers from the basket to students.*) As they gave the multitude the food, something wonderful happened. They fed all five thousand people and still had twelve baskets of food left over!

We don’t have to worry and stress because we can say with confidence, “The Lord is our shepherd. We shall not want because He will supply.” He will supply all we need—with baskets left over!

Discussion Questions:

- **What did Jesus tell the disciples to do when they came to Him with their question about food?**
- ☆ **How was Jesus like a shepherd in this story?**
- ☆ **Why can you trust Jesus to supply all your needs?**



Finish

Early Elementary (1-3)

Late Elementary (4-6)

Family Connection

Review the instructions on page two of the activity paper and give students a chance to discuss how they will carry out this assignment. If your class has consistent attendance, consider offering a reward for those who return the Family Connection and provide time in class to discuss the activity.

Activity Paper: *The Lord Is My Shepherd*

Ask students to fill in the boxes with the missing words from today's memory verse. Then they should color the picture of the happy sheep.

Shepherd Tag

Have students walk around the room making sheep noises. One student is designated to be the shepherd and tag the sheep. When a student is tagged, she sits down and stays quiet. The last sheep standing becomes the next shepherd.

Activity Paper: *More Than Enough!*

Ask students to think about a time when they really needed God's help. On the basket, they should write how the Lord provided during that time. Then ask them to dig deeper, asking God to show some of the extra things He did to care for them during that time. In thanksgiving, ask students to write blessings inside of the loaves and fishes.

Sheepfold Game

Create two "sheepfolds" by blocking off areas with tables or chairs. Divide the class into two teams. Ask students the sheepfold questions (TRP). Whenever a member of a team answers a question correctly, that student will enter into the sheepfold for that team. The flock that fills their sheepfold first wins the game.

Selah


Prayer

Dear Lord, thank You so much for Your abundant blessings. Thank You for all of the good gifts You give us. Please help us to use them for Your glory. Give us ears that are in tune to the leading of Your Spirit and hearts that are open to being changed by Your Word. Thank You for supplying all of our needs with overflowing baskets of blessing! In Jesus' name, amen.

Reflection

Have students find a prayer partner and pray for each other's needs.

Follow the Leader


Play the series song , "Whole," as you lead students in a game of "Follow the Leader."

Reflection

Discuss what it means to follow God as our shepherd.

- **Why is prayer and listening in prayer an important part of following God?**

The Shepherd Listens

Play the series song , "Whole." Have students sit on the floor in a circle and listen to the song. Instruct students to close their eyes and talk quietly to God, their shepherd.

Explain how a shepherd listens to and watches over his sheep. Discuss how God is always caring for us.

Reflection

- **How does it make you feel to know you can talk to your heavenly Father about anything and He will listen?**
- **How does God show you He is watching over you?**