

In 1995, before my first Christian novel, *Evidence of Mercy*, was published, I proofread the galleys with a bit of fear and trembling. I was zealous to reach people through my fiction, but I wasn't sure I had succeeded. There's a fine balance between telling a good story and crafting a strong message. I worked hard to weave my spiritual theme into the plot in a way that would not be overpowering to the reader. But having done so, I feared some of my readers might come away with a spiritual yearning without understanding how to make the rest of the journey.

In response to this, I decided to include what I called an "Afterword" (really an Author's Note), with some of my own spiritual thoughts. In that, I didn't have to follow the "rules" of good storytelling. It was separate and apart from the story—an example of how my own spiritual yearning was finding fulfillment in my life.

Over the years, many readers have expressed their appreciation for these honest glimpses into my personal journey. Some even tell me that when they buy one of my novels, they turn to the back of the book to read my “Afterwords” first. For that reason, I’ve decided to pull out some of those “Afterwords” and put them into a book of devotionals, along with some new ones that I hope will bless you.

I hope these will be a beneficial complement to your regular Bible study and prayer, an enhancement to your quiet time with the Lord. I pray that you will use them to help you ponder God’s goodness and his nature. May God use them to bless you in every good way.

—*Terri Blackstock*

# MY SOUL IS RESTORED

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be  
in want.

He makes me lie down in green  
pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,  
he restores my soul.

PSALM 23:1-3



Last night as I was trying to relax and fall asleep, I began reflecting on the 23rd Psalm and all the riches layered in that passage. Then I came to the phrase I've repeated and read many times before.

He restores my soul.

Always before, I had been drawn to the verse before it about how he leads me beside the quiet waters. That is, after all, a wonderful

thought in such a stressful, noisy world. And I've pondered the verse after it that assures me the Lord guides me in paths of righteousness. That's particularly important to a person like me who has no sense of direction.

But this is the first time I've lingered on the thought that he restores my soul.

And he does, of course, in such a merciful way. He has restored my soul when it's been beaten and bruised by my careless actions and terrible choices. He has restored my soul when I've allowed it to run on empty. And he's restored it when I've filled it up with things it was never meant to hold. He has restored my soul when others have crushed it. He has restored it when there seemed to be no hope for restoration.

I couldn't help wondering what my life would look like if I had not allowed that restoration. What if I had pushed God away when he reached down for me like a daddy reaching for his toddler? What if I had not reached up to him, allowing him to lift me? What if I had not laid my head on his shoulder?


Where would I be if I'd had to take the punishment I deserved for the



sins I committed, and what if I'd had to walk through life without his perfect, self-sacrificing love? What if I'd had to face a future eternity with only hopelessness and fear?



Thank God for Jesus Christ, who loved me so much that he took that punishment for me, cleaned my slate, restored my soul.

I can't wait to see him face-to-face. 

DEAR LORD: How grateful I am that I can place my battered and bruised soul in your mighty hands and it will be healed and restored. I need that to happen every day. What a good and faithful and discerning Father you are. I praise you for you have redeemed me and made me your own. Lead me beside still waters and into green pastures, I pray. Keep your hand on me and restore my soul. AMEN.

---

*R*estore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain  
me.

PSALM 51:12

