

**Made in God's Image, Part 2**  
**Like God, Group 3**

**Knowing the Shepherd**

A good long time ago, a well-known actor was attending a dinner party, and one of the guests suggested he give a brief performance for everyone in attendance. He asked his audience what they wanted him to perform, and, after a moment of silence, an elderly gentleman stood and asked the actor to recite the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. The one making the request had been a pastor for many years at a well-respected church in the community.

"I will honor your request if you will return the favor," said the actor, speaking directly to the retired pastor. "I will recite the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm if, after I have finished, you also will recite it."

"I've preached many sermons in my time," replied the minister, "but I don't have anything like the speaking and delivery skills you have. Still, if you insist, I will do as you've asked."

The actor's presentation of Psalm 23 came as close to perfection as any human performance could. His voice was smooth, his timing superb, his delivery beautiful. When he finished, the audience applauded enthusiastically. The actor sat down and nodded to the retired pastor. Now it was his turn.

The clergyman stood and began. He didn't miss a word in the Psalm, but in several places his voice faltered. His delivery was not smooth, and in places his timing was off. Even so, a resolute assurance was evident in all he said. After the man finished, the crowd did not immediately applaud, because many had been moved to tears.

The actor stood and said, "I was able to capture your ears and eyes today, but this godly gentleman captured your hearts. It was evident that I know the Psalm, but he knows the Shepherd. That's the difference."

Based on "Knowing the Shepherd of the Twenty-Third Psalm," available at <https://t.ly/H8rXr>.

Discussion Starters

How does this account highlight the uniqueness of human beings? Consider the following:

- 1) the occasion of the dinner party and the social exchanges that took place among the guests,
- 2) the request made of the actor to perform,
- 3) the responses of the audience to the two presentations,
- 4) the recognition of the actor of the clergyman's relationship with God, based on the preacher's recitation of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, and
- 5) the minister's relationship with God, which was evident in his presentation.