

The Call of a Shepherd

JOHN 21:15-19

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed **my lambs.**" **16** A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend **my sheep.**" **17** He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed **my sheep.**" **18** Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." **19** *(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.)* After this he said to him, "Follow me."

EZEKIEL 34:1-6

The word of the LORD came to me: **2** Mortal, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel: prophesy, and say to them—to the shepherds: Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the **sheep?** **3** You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the **sheep.** **4** You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. **5** So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. **6** **My sheep** were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; **my sheep** were scattered over all the face of the earth, with no one to search or seek for them.



Why might Jesus have asked Peter this question?

What does it mean to love Jesus?



What are shepherds supposed to do for the sheep?

What are they not supposed to do?

What is the cost of bad shepherding?

The High Call of a Shepherd

LOVE JESUS = _____ HIS SHEEP = _____ YOUR LIFE = _____ JESUS

- ▶ To _____ what He did
- ▶ To _____ where He went
- ▶ To _____ what He loved

The High Cost of Poor Shepherding

1 _____ Using the leadership role to meet one's own emotional needs for friendship. Ingratiating; acting in some way as to require or demand a reciprocity of friendship from those being led. Shepherding springs here from a neediness for intimacy, not an abundance found in God.

2 _____ Abuse of the leadership role to induce members of the flock to fulfill organizational roles because of the pressing need. Pressing people into service or even leadership with concerns and agendas beyond what is best for them.

3 _____ The leader's concern is to look like a good leader, or an attractive or successful person, and is willing to manipulate people to get them to do what will make him or her look successful.

4 _____ The leader sees the sheep as romantic prospects or objects. Even for married leaders it is an issue: inappropriate dependency and attention from attractive followers is ego-satisfying.



SHEEP EATER A leader who gets needs met inappropriately from the sheep or from his/her leadership role.



WOLF Doesn't pose as shepherd but simply picks off a vulnerable sheep. The bad shepherd lets this happen. For example, predatory romantic interest on the part of an older male in the group of younger women. Even when the wolf is unsuccessful, the actions of the wolf scatter the sheep. Evidence: wise sheep avoid this character.

Case Studies

- 1 Kathy spoke to Irene, a Sunday-school helper, about becoming a lead teacher. Irene was hesitant, partly on the basis of time commitment and partly due to a lack of confidence that she could do a good job. Kathy said, "We really need you, Irene."
- 2 You find yourself annoyed with and critical of the people who are in the small group you lead. Sometimes you are able to hold your tongue, but increasingly your impatience has come through in the way you've spoken to them as a group and individually.
- 3 Cindy is a member of Luke's small group. Cindy opens up to Luke about her uncertainty about God's work in her life. As Luke takes initiative with Cindy to help her understand and feel God's presence, he begins to have feelings for her. Soon he asks her to dinner. She is confused but flattered by his attention.



DISCUSSION GUIDE

- ▶ What is the issue?
- ▶ What could be done?

The Call of a Shepherd

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- = do what Jesus does
- = love what Jesus loves
- = go where Jesus went

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Why might Jesus have asked Peter this question?

Peter had previously boasted that though the other disciples would fall away, he would not. Then he denied Jesus three times.

What does it mean to love Jesus?

Love Jesus = feed his sheep
 = follow Jesus
 = lay down life
 = be a shepherd

Jesus isn't the only one who is supposed to be a shepherd



What are shepherds supposed to do for the sheep?

Feed, strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the injured, bring back the strayed, seek the lost.

What are they not supposed to do?

- rule the sheep with force of harshness; eat the sheep
- allow them to be scattered

What is the cost of bad shepherding?

The flock is scattered and lost

The High Call of a Shepherd

LOVE JESUS = FEED HIS SHEEP = LAY DOWN YOUR LIFE = FOLLOW JESUS

- ▶ To do what He did
- ▶ To go where He went
- ▶ To love what He loved

The High Cost of Poor Shepherding

Needs inappropriately met by a sheep - eating "shepherd"

1 EMOTIONAL NEEDS ■ Using the leadership role to meet one's own emotional needs for friendship. Ingratiating; acting in some way as to require or demand a reciprocity of friendship from those being led. Shepherding springs here from a neediness for intimacy, not an abundance found in God.

2 ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS ■ Abuse of the leadership role to induce members of the flock to fulfill organizational roles because of the pressing need. Pressing people into service or even leadership with concerns and agendas beyond what is best for them.

3 SOCIAL NEEDS ■ The leader's concern is to look like a good leader, or an attractive or successful person, and is willing to manipulate people to get them to do what will make him or her look successful.

4 ROMANCE ■ The leader sees the sheep as romantic prospects or objects. Even for married leaders it is an issue: inappropriate dependency and attention from attractive followers is ego-satisfying.



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WOLF Doesn't pose as shepherd but simply picks off a vulnerable sheep. The bad shepherd lets this happen. For example, predatory romantic interest on the part of an older male in the group of younger women. Even when the wolf is unsuccessful, the actions of the wolf scatter the sheep. Evidence: wise sheep avoid this character.

Case Studies

1 Kathy spoke to Irene, a Sunday-school helper, about becoming a lead teacher. Irene was hesitant, partly on the basis of time commitment and partly due to a lack of confidence that she could really need you, Irene."

Organizational needs: It is never right to say, "We need you." Kathy needs to communicate how Irene is ready for this step and how she will grow by taking it.

2 You find yourself annoyed with and critical of the people who are in the small group you lead. Sometimes you are able to hold your tongue, but increasingly your impatience has come through in the way you've spoken to them as a group and individually. *You are seeking to have your own needs met by the group, but they don't meet your expectations. You need to receive from God so you'll have more to give.*

3 Cindy is a member of Luke's small group. Cindy opens up to Luke about her uncertainty about God's work in her life. As Luke takes initiative with Cindy to help her understand and feel God's presence, he begins to have feelings for her. Soon he asks her to dinner. She is confused but flattered by his attention. *Romance - "Sheep Eater" or thief*



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