

Shepherding

Shepherd: one who tends sheep
John 12:32 —“draw to Himself”

vs.

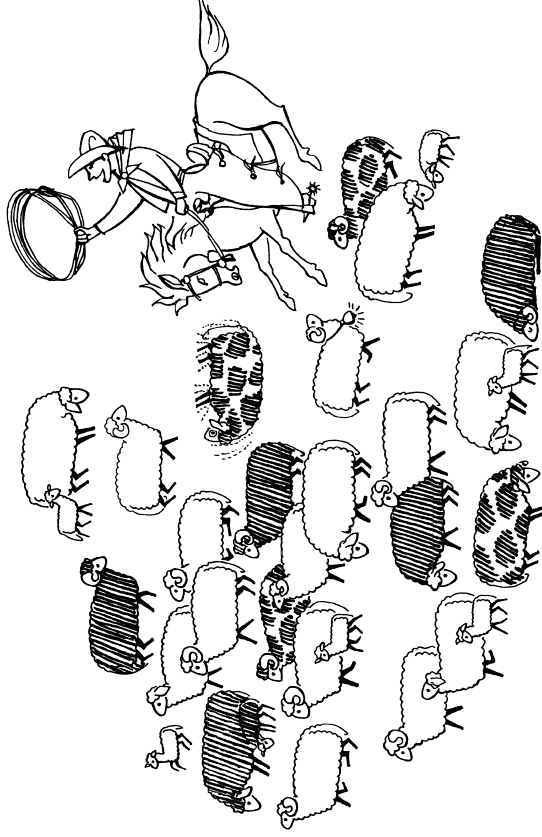
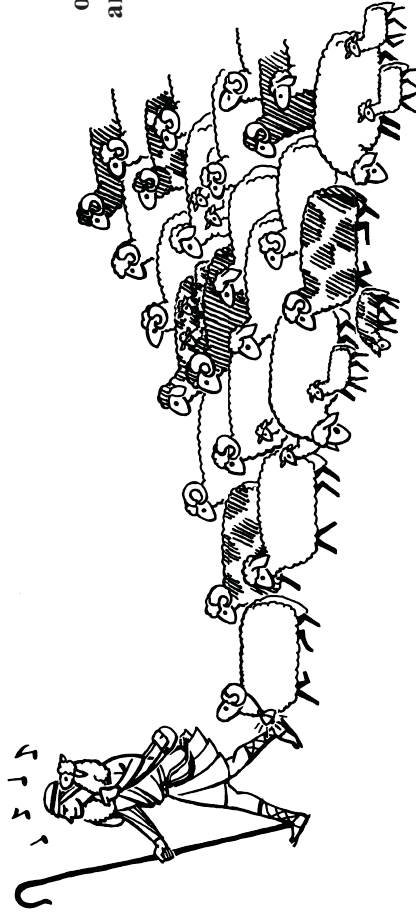
1 Cor. 4:21

Shall I come
to you with a

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O
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or with Love
and a spirit of

G E N T L E N E S S ?



Sheep Herding

Sheep Herder: one who drives sheep
Jer. 23:2 —“driven away”

- humble
- compassion
- relational
- retention

- calm
- flourish
- safe
- secure

- haughty
- contempt
- isolational
- attrition

- chaos
- faint
- scattered
- easy prey

When the Good Shepherd speaks to His own,

*Instead He gives His sheep words of HOPE, rest, VICTORY,
peace, power, JOY, triumph and LOVE!*
Roy Lessin

*He never uses words of despair, hopelessness, frustration, defeat,
discouragement, fear, confusion, failure.*

See Matthew 9:36

BOTTOM LINE: THE CONDITION OF THE SHEEP REFLECTS THE CARE OF THE SHEPHERD!

SHEPHERDING VS. SHEEP HERDING

What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod or with love and a spirit of gentleness? (1 Cor. 4:21).

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is near (Phil. 4:4).

Thy gentleness makes me great (Psalm 18:35).

Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ... (2 Cor. 10:1).

But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us (1 Thess. 2:7, 8).

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

Shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE (1 Pet. 5:2-5).

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:6, 7).

Jacob to Esau, "My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And if they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die" (Gen. 33:13).

Jesus: And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36).

Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding (Jer. 3:18).

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen (Heb. 13:20, 21).

Gracestoration

SHEPHERDING VS. SHEEP HERDING

LOVING, CARING GRACE: Leading vs. Driving; Calm vs. Chaos; Retention vs. Attrition; Grace vs. Dys-Grace

The Shepherding and Sheep Herding styles contrast the leadership differences in the treatment of sheep. A crisis in leadership exists today, not only in the secular business world, but also in the Christian world. An interesting article states that the old-style autocratic authoritarian leader or a “controllasaurus” may be extinct within the next decade. The Apostle Paul introduced the contrast, “*Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?*” (1 Cor. 4:21). In Webster’s Dictionary under “shepherding” it is described as “one who leads sheep.” Under “sheep herding,” which is more of a Western model, it says “one who drives sheep, esp. in the United States.” This lesson will emphasize the biblical leadership pattern—God’s design or God’s shepherding grace.

Leading vs. Driving

General Dwight D. Eisenhower would demonstrate the art of leadership with a simple piece of string. He would lay the string on a table and say, “Notice what happens when I pull this string; it goes wherever I lead it. Now watch what happens when I push this string; it goes nowhere at all. That’s assault, not leadership.”

The shepherding model stands out from Genesis to Revelation. David describes the profile of the Good Shepherd in Psalm 23, and the disciple John describes Him in John 10. Then to see what a shepherd should NOT look like, some very negative descriptions of shepherds can be found in Ezekiel 34 and Zechariah 11.

Biblical Shepherding is Oriental, or Eastern – one who leads, knows each one by name, only has their best interests in mind, and is willing to “lay down their lives” for the sheep. This is in contrast to the Western idea of “sheep herding” where sheep are herded like cattle and are driven against their docile nature. The *modus operandi* of the sheep herder is to drive or push. Webster’s describes “**driving**” as “to push or propel, or press on forward forcibly; urge forward with energy, aggressive.” Many English verbs like challenge and motivate come from the sheep herding Western model. (See Western “cowboy” model on illustration on right.) “**Leading**” is described by Webster as “to show the way by going in advance, conduct, escort, direct; example; to draw alongside.” (See left side of illustration.)

In both testaments, Jesus was prophesied to come to earth as a shepherd, “*...For out of you shall come forth a ruler, who will shepherd My people Israel*” (Micah 5:2 and Matt. 2:6). On earth Jesus had compassion on the multitudes, “*And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd*” (Matt. 9:36). Some of Jesus’ last words to Peter (with His disciples listening in) were: “*Feed my lambs....Tend my sheep....Feed my sheep*” (Jn. 21:15-17).

The shepherding model was also an integral part of leading or discipling in the Epistles. Hard-driving, strong-willed, do-it-yourselfers Paul and Peter learned it well. For both it was a continual process of learning humility and dependence on their Shepherd. Paul summed it up this way, “*We are so glad we can say with utter honesty that in all our dealings we have been pure and sincere, quietly depending on the Lord for His help and not on our own skills*” (2 Cor. 1:12 TLB). Peter puts it this way, “*Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves,*

therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Pet. 5:5, 6). Peter and Paul are both in agreement that the primary function of an elder in the church is to shepherd the flock. However, they also warn of predators (**Peter** in 1 Pet. 5:8, 9; 2 Peter, chapter 2; and **Paul** in Acts 20:29, 30).

The Apostle Paul gave last-minute instructions to the shepherds in Ephesus, *"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood"* (Acts 20:28). Note the insights of Peter's last words, *"Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness, nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock"* (1 Pet. 5:2, 3). And finally, the benediction of the writer of the Book of Hebrews states, *"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."* (Heb. 13:20, 21).

The *fruit* of the shepherding design is listed on the left side of the illustration: **humble, compassion, relational, retention, calm, flourish, safe and secure**. On the right side of the illustration is listed the *fallout* of sheep herding, in addition to pride: **haughty, contempt, isolational, attrition, chaos, faint, scattered** and **easy prey**.

"When the Good Shepherd speaks to His own, He never uses words of despair, hopelessness, frustration, defeat, discouragement, fear, confusion, failure. Instead He gives His sheep words of HOPE, rest, VICTORY, peace, power, JOY, triumph and LOVE!" (Roy Lessin). This is also a litmus test of what kind of leadership we are under, or what kind of leadership we ourselves are modeling.

Calm vs. Chaos

Let's reiterate by using an ordinary funnel to illustrate the differences. On the right, place the funnel forward from the horse with the wide end toward the flock. Notice the chaos of the sheep as they are being pushed out with no direction, leaving them helpless, in utter chaos, having to fend for themselves. Notice that their heads are up, they are going every which way, fanning out in every direction, fearful, not knowing where they are going. For example, in the west, in order to round up the sheep, sheep herders are known to use helicopters, pick-up trucks, ostriches, or dogs to get the sheep to do their bidding.

Now, on the left side of the illustration, point the narrow end of the funnel toward the back of the shepherd—the focal point, the leader. The sheep are very calm. They follow and can graze without fear of being used and abused. An interesting fact to note is that when a ewe is well shepherded, she may bear not just one, but two, three or sometimes even four lambs!

For example, a family in Pennsylvania had four daughters who tended the family's sheep. For their annual 4-H Club project, they would enter their sheep for showing. This family gave much care and attention to raising their sheep. During lambing season they would be up all night tending to the newborns. Sometimes they had to bottle-feed the lambs around the clock. When it came time to enter their sheep for the contest, everyone around sighed because they all knew that there was actually no contest with this family's sheep. Theirs were the best fed, had the best muscle tone, and produced the best wool of all. Their sheep would *always* win first place. Why? Because of the tender and attentive care they gave their sheep. Most of their ewes would give birth to four lambs each—a 400% reproduction rate!

Retention vs. Attrition

Sheep can be driven, but the attrition rate is about 30 percent. In our fast-paced world today, those losses are just factored in without concern for the sheep. Some sheep will become cast and not be able to aright themselves. They will die in that position unless rescued. Sheep also easily have coronaries from being overtaxed.

The following true story demonstrates how fragile sheep can be. A young boy was doing his chores one morning to feed his sheep. He carried a bucket of grain in each hand for the sheep. As he was going out to the pen, one ram got behind him and gave him a quick nudge forward, causing him to fall headlong into the electric fence. The boy, of course, was not happy about this. Not only was the grain spilled, but he got a shock too! Then, the other sheep crowded him to get at the grain. He seemed to take it well, "*Sheep will be sheep,*" he said. But the next day he thought he would have a little fun. He would play a trick on the "rambunctious" ram. As the ram was walking alongside the barn, the boy decided to head him off and just scare him. So when the ram and boy met at the corner of the barn, the boy shouted a loud, "BOO!" The sudden shock made the ram fall over. He died right on the spot! It had a coronary. This illustrates how fragile, vulnerable, and easily frightened sheep can be.

Genesis 33:13 tells of Esau wanting Jacob to go ahead with his flocks, but Jacob refused knowing that it would not be good for his flocks saying, "*They will all die in one day.*" So he decided to take his time—going at the pace of the sheep. Dr. John Walvoord, president of Dallas Seminary, pointed that concept out to me. He was saying that Pastor So-and-So had to leave his church. So I asked, "Why was that?" He responded, "He was trying to push the sheep. And you can't push sheep!" He added, "You have to gain consent—not control!"

Note these statistics. "The degree to which commercial breeders view sheep as commodities appears most vividly in pre-slaughter mortality data. Pre-slaughter mortality rates most reflect the health of young animals, in turn reflecting the amount of care given to each individual. Even when lambs are slaughtered at weaning (like those sold at Easter time), the sheep industry has a pre-slaughter mortality rate three to five times greater than that of the cattle industry. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, pre-slaughter mortality claims up to 30% of all lambs born in the U.S. or about 2.5 million each year. ...Britain claims nearly double the U.S. and Australian [retention] rates. Each British shepherd tends an average of 200 to 400 animals. U.S. and Australian sheep ranchers go the other way. Instead of concentrating on reducing losses, Americans and Australians typically try to offset the loss rate by simply breeding more sheep. U.S. and Australian shepherds often look after 2,000 to 5,000 sheep apiece, far too many for most to get any individual attention whatever." (From: *The Animals' Agenda*, May 1990).

Driving sheep also affects reproduction. Sheep do not reproduce well under stress. Reproduction is one of the main goals of raising sheep. In many churches today, the main goal is also reproduction or multiplication, but if the sheep are driven, it takes its toll. The best way to work with our sheep (which includes our children, our friends, and our whole sphere of influence) is in the spiritual reproduction or discipleship. The next generation is what is under consideration here. If we continue to drive our flocks in the churches, the health of the next generation will be adversely affected. Often, even church growth statistics factor in a 30% attrition rate, and leaders keep modifying the model to make up for the losses.

The early Christians, however, faithfully followed the shepherd model. "It was the first favorite symbol of Christian life and faith. It was a shepherd whom these early Christians loved to paint on the walls of their chapels and chisel on the tombs of their dead. They

engraved the image of the shepherd on the chalices which they used at the sacrament of the Last Supper. ...The shepherd idea has something in it which appeals to the universal heart. ...The shepherd conception haunts us, clings to us, will not let us go. Blessed is the man or woman who ponders its significance and allows it to teach him or her what it has to tell.”
(From: *The Minister as Shepherd* by Charles Jefferson)

Grace vs. Dys-Grace

This lesson is more fully developed in the **The Shepherd’s Grace/ The Sheep-Herder’s Dys-Grace** illustration. Read down the columns on the “Alphabet” card—both sides. Encourage audience response and insights. Note the words **Initiation** and **Response** on the Shepherd’s Grace side, and the **Action** and **Reaction** on the Sheep Herder’s Dys-Grace side. The sheep’s **response** to the **initiative** of a Graceful shepherd is remarkable and comforting. The sheep’s **reaction** to harsh treatment, due to the sheep-herder’s selfish **action**, is pathetic. This is a Dys-Grace! See a fuller description of a “Graceful Shepherd” (Ezek. 34:1-10 and Jer. 3:15), and a fuller account of a Dys-Graceful Sheep Herder (Ezek. 34:1-10 and Jude 12).

“Be diligent to know the state of your flocks” (Prov. 27:23).

Conclusion

The world has seen only one Good Shepherd—Jesus was truly dependent on His Shepherd Father for **His words**: “I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak” (Jn. 12:49); for **His works**: “The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works” (Jn. 14:10); and for **His leadership**: “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do: for what things soever He does, these also does the Son likewise (Jn. 4:19). **JESUS IS NOT ASKING US ANYTHING THAT HE IS NOT PREPARED TO BE IN AND THROUGH US!**

“We are being told these days that the church is dying, that we must get a ‘new look’ or a ‘new message’ or we will disappear completely. ...Human nature has not changed! Now as then our cities are teeming with people who are as ‘*sheep not having a shepherd.*’ The growing isolation and loneliness of modern society presents a great opportunity for the pastor [shepherd] who has a shepherd’s heart. May the Great Shepherd of the sheep give us grace to be faithful under-shepherds, to seek the lost sheep, to lead and feed the flock, to nurture the precious lambs, to protect them from the wolves, and to help them mature to the glory of God.” Warren W. Wiersbe in the Introduction to *The Minister as Shepherd*.

Jesus Himself said, “*If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to Myself*” (Jn. 12:32). That corresponds to Isaiah 53:13, “*He is lifted and exalted.*” As we lift Him up; He does the drawing to Himself. The glory goes to Himself; the praise goes to Himself. He is very attractive—magnetic! We are invited into a personal relationship with our Good Shepherd!

BOTTOM LINE: THE CONDITION OF THE SHEEP REFLECTS THE CARE OF THE SHEPHERD.

Review and reinforce this lesson by incorporating the notes and quotes pages and by reading the Scriptures on the back of the card.

“One of the secrets of the fascination of ‘shepherd’ as a title is that the word carries us straight to Christ Himself. It associates us at once with Him. He called Himself a shepherd. The shepherd idea was often on his mind.”

Charles Jefferson

“All His life He [Jesus] might be drawn as a shepherd with a lamb in His bosom (Isa. 40:11); never as a cruel shepherd setting his dogs upon the lambs and driving them and their mothers [ewes] away.” C.H. Spurgeon

“The age of the shepherd has just arrived. Never has he been so much needed as now. Never before have there been so many important things for him to do.”

Charles Jefferson (1912)

“The growing isolation and loneliness of modern society presents a great opportunity for the pastor who has a shepherd’s heart...No gimmicks, nothing spectacular—simply a dedicated man of God going in and out among his people with the refreshing Word of Life.”

Warren Wiersbe

A shepherd’s heart, humble and honest, will always be shown the truth. *Unknown*

The shepherd spirit is a rare and priceless gift. The true shepherd spirit is an amalgam of many precious graces:

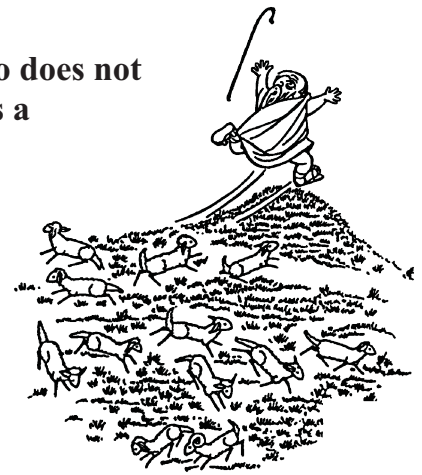
- *He is hot with zeal, but he is not fiery with passion;*
- *He is gentle, and yet he rules his class;*
- *He is loving, but he does not wink at sin;*
- *He has power over the lambs, but he is not domineering or sharp;*
- *He has cheerfulness, but not levity;*
- *Freedom, but not license;*
- *Solemnity, but not gloom.*

C. H. Spurgeon

“I pray you will have a heart for people, and that you will be a shepherd, not a rancher.”

Donald K. Campbell

A shepherd who does not love his sheep is a hireling and not a shepherd.



He will flee in the time of danger, and leave his flock to the wolf.

C. H. Spurgeon

“A hired hand will run when he sees the wolf coming. He will leave [abandon] the sheep because they aren’t his and he isn’t their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. The hired hand runs away” (John 10:12-13, NLB).

To protect the sheep from wolves which constantly harass the church, the shepherd will cultivate a discernment and sensitivity to truth and righteousness. To heal the wounds of the flock, he pours oil for soothing and healing, and gives pure water to quench the thirst. In the fast-paced impersonal world in which we live, we often underestimate the extent to which God’s people are needy, wounded and broken. Such is the extent of the shepherd’s responsibility. But his position and motives are also defined. He is a “fellow-elder,” first among equals in the flock. Furthermore, he is motivated, not by a sense of obligation, nor for the financial rewards, nor for the sake of exercising dictatorial powers over others, but rather by an eager willingness and desire to prove himself as an example to the flock. **May God give to the church such leadership.**

(See 1 Peter 5:1-4 and Acts 20:28.)

The Topical Chain Study Bible. Thomas Nelson Publishers, (p. 1532).

