

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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BIG IDEA

Jesus uses the example of a Shepherd to show the heart of his leadership toward his people (his sheep). What kind of leader are you? Do you use your position to exploit people or do you use your power to serve as an example of God's love to others? Jesus came into this world to demonstrate a different type of leadership. He exemplified a leader that is filled with compassion (Matthew 9:36), he exemplified a leader that would sacrifice himself for the salvation of the world. Let's dig into scripture to learn how we can imitate our Good Shepherd in developing Godly, others-centered leadership.

John 10:11-16

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. ¹² A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, ¹⁵ just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

Psalm 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need. ² He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. ³ He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. ⁴ Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings. ⁶ Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

1 Peter 5:1-4

And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share in his glory when he is revealed to the whole world. As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: ² Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. ³ Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. ⁴ And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read John 10:11-16. How does worldly leadership differ to the way Jesus leads?
2. Read John 10:14. This term "*know*" is not just head knowledge but it is heart knowledge; it is a connectedness at the deepest level of intimacy. It is when head knowledge becomes heart knowledge that transformation can happen in a person's life. Do you feel that you *know* Jesus? What is preventing you from *knowing* Him and *knowing* his voice?
3. Psalms 23. What stands out to you from this passage about Jesus being our Shepherd?
4. Psalms 23:4 says "Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close behind me..." How does this verse challenge the way you face the "dark valleys" in life?
5. Is there a "dark valley" that you are currently going through? If you are comfortable please do share with the group so that they can pray for you.
6. Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. Just as Jesus shepherds us, we are also called to shepherd others. Just as Jesus, our Great Shepherd has laid down his life for us, we must also lay down our lives to reveal God's love to those around us. What does it look like practically to lay down our life for those around us?
7. Who has God entrusted in your care? Based on 1 Peter 5:1-4, how can we grow/develop ourselves to be a better shepherd to those God has entrusted us with?

#challengeoftheweek: Lets grow in our compassion for the people God has entrusted to us with and imitate the leadership of our Great Shepherd.