

Firm Foundation Bible Study
TOPIC: Following the Example of the Great Shepherd

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John 10:11, *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12) But he who is a hireling and not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13) The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14) I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15) As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."*

- A. As we desire to be the kind of **disciples** that Jesus is calling for, we need only look to Jesus, the Good Shepherd.
1. We cannot do better than Jesus, but, together we can do more (John 14:12).
 2. We are continuing the same ministry that Jesus started (Acts 1:2).
 3. Since it is the same ministry, we should not alter it, we should expand it. Disciples learn to emulate their teachers.
 4. "Methods are many, principles are few; methods always change, but principles never do." (Rick Warren)
 5. We always function under the delegated authority of Jesus – He alone is the Chief Shepherd who owns the sheep.
 6. He provides for His sheep directly and through those leaders He has chosen and set apart for the work of ministry.
 7. Jesus is our paradigm (a template or pattern from which other identical objects are made).
- B. The responsibility of being an example
Hebrews 13:7, *Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.*
1. Leader/disciples have an awesome responsibility in light of what God is requiring of them. They must model the right behavior so that others can take note of how Jesus works through human vessels.
 2. People do not see Jesus, therefore they must be inspired by a good example that encourages their walk of faith in Him.
 3. The earthly ministry of Jesus was in the form of a team. He and his disciples accomplished great works together. God does not allow individuals to accomplish everything on their own.
 4. As Christ sought to be one with His Father, even so we seek to be one with Jesus (Head and body).
 5. Jesus did not begin ministry until He received the power of the Holy Spirit and fulfilled "all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). He submitted Himself to John for water baptism.
 6. Disciples live with a sense of spiritual need
 7. Disciples seek to abide in divine order
- C. Leader/disciples who follow Jesus' example will function in the following ways:
1. **Not ask anything of the sheep that they are not willing to do themselves.** Leadership by definition means to "go first where others are expected to follow."
 2. **Leaders know the sheep** in order to better relate to them.
 3. **Leaders allow themselves to be known**, because sheep do not follow strangers. Being transparent is important. People must see your heart and your humanity. Discovery of a fault in a leader does not diminish his place before God. The message cannot be disregarded through finding fault with the messenger.

4. **Go before the sheep preparing the way for them to follow.** Most leaders are more like ambulances in that they only respond to casualties and problems. Leader should be more “pro-active” (going before to clear obstacles and use preventive wisdom). While some mistakes are inevitable, many other mistakes can be avoided through effective prayer and planning.
5. **Give their life for the sheep.** Jesus laid down His life for the sheep and exhorted us to do the same (1 John 3:16).
6. **Be committed to the flock that God has brought into the sheepfold.** Since it is not possible to effectively care for everyone everywhere, you must focus on those who receive you as a leader/shepherd.
7. **Unite the sheep.** The body of Christ needs to function as an integrated, interrelated, interdependent whole. Therefore, dis-unifying factors must be dealt with as the Lord directs. “Little ones” should not be stepped on, pushed aside, or discouraged by the example of sheep who are willfully straying. For this reason, Jesus grants authority to admonish and even rebuke those whose behavior adversely affects others (2 Tim. 4:1-4).
 - a. A shepherd/disciple’s job is to keep the flock together and go after those who are wandering. Some sheep have a habit of wandering. These people will need more encouragement and/or correction than others.
 - b. Scattered sheep become easy prey for the enemy.
8. **Feed the Sheep.** Jesus spent a lot of time feeding through teaching on kingdom principles. The diet contained a variety of satisfying and healthy items. This balance contains a mixture of that which is:
 - a. practical
 - b. devotional
 - c. inspirational
 - d. instructional
9. **Guard the sheep.** Sheep do not have natural weapons of attack such as claws or sharp teeth. As believers, we are not without defense, but those principles must be imparted by teaching and sharpened through use. A good shepherd will be aware of the “predators” of false doctrine, spiritual “fads”, demonic strategies and more. There are dangers that sheep do not see – only the shepherd sees them. This is why all believers must be submitted to those who “watch for our souls.”
10. **Direct the sheep.** Sheep who get lost, usually do not try to rejoin the flock – they wander around aimlessly eating whatever is available, both good and bad. Leader/disciples must work to impart a sense of vision and corporate destiny so that the sheep can fulfill their divine purpose within the context of the flock.