

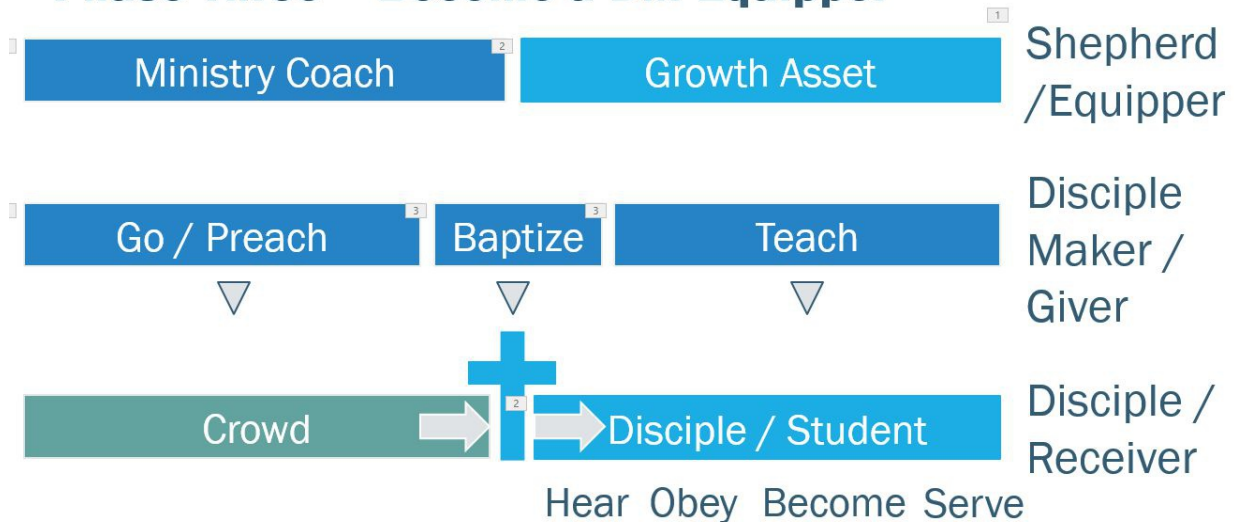
Shepherdology 101 Outline

- I. Fundamental 1: Jesus, Our Lord
- II. Fundamental 2: Jesus' Word, Our Effective Guide
- III. Fundamental 3: Jesus, Our Model Shepherd
- IV. The Need for Shepherds
- V. The Development of Elders
- VI. Ten Key Passages
- VII. Essential Function

From our ten New Testament passages, we identified seven terms that help us identify what Shepherds/Overseers/Leaders/Elders do.

- A. Elder: Man of seasoned character and maturity
- B. Overseer: One who understands his people and is watching out for them
- C. Shepherd: One who feeds, cares for, and protects the flock
- D. Leader: One who governs by assessing and identifying what is best
- E. Equipping: One who trains and outfits others for growth and effective ministry
- F. Manage / Care for: One who is attentive to others in order to actively promote what is in their best interests

Phase Three – Become a DM Equipper



VIII. Specific Responsibilities

But we also discover in our ten passages, six specific activities associated with Shepherds/Overseers/Leaders/Elders. Think of these as six vital tools in a shepherd's ministry toolkit.

- A. Guard: Alert to the condition of his flock
- B. Teach: Brings the Word to bear
- C. Illustrate: Demonstrates a positive example
- D. Help: Provides practical assistance
- E. Intercede: Prays for key needs
- F. Show Hospitality: Uses personal resources to serve others' good

Let's closely examine each of these tools / activities to get a better sense of the range of ministries employed by effective shepherds.

A. Guard

There are three different Greek words (in our 10 passages) that denote the guard tool: Be on guard (*prosexō*, προσέχω), be on the alert (*grēgoreō*, γρηγορέω) and keep watch (*agrupneō*, ἀγρυπνέω).

“Be on guard (prosexō, προσέχω) 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. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be on the alert (grēgoreō, γρηγορέω)” (Acts 20:28–31).

Whenever there is a carnality outbreak, unsettling error, or external threat to the health and effectiveness of the body, the shepherd takes appropriate action.

And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread. And Jesus said to them, “Watch out and beware (prosexō, προσέχω) of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, “He said that because we did not bring any bread.” But Jesus, aware of this, said, “You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? Do you not yet understand or

remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up? How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware (prosexō, προσέχω) of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that He did not say to beware (prosexō, προσέχω) of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:5–12 cf. Mark 8:14–21).

Jesus is protecting His flock from unseen (or underappreciated) spiritual danger. He warns them against following other shepherds whose failings as shepherds make them dangerous.

A second word used in Acts 20:28–31 is *grēgoreō* (γρηγορέω), which is translated “be on the alert” (Acts 20:31).

This is the same word that Peter uses when he says: *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour* (1 Peter 5:8).

The writer of Hebrews uses another word to represent this guarding activity of leaders.

Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch (agrupneō, ἀγρυπνέω) over your souls (Hebrews 13:17).

The verb *agrupneō* is only used four times in the New Testament, and the cognate noun *agrupnia* (ἀγρυπνία) is used twice.

The local church leader is awake to anything that threatens to work the harm of another’s soul. When an alarm bell goes off, He goes to work.

Paul specifies that an overseer must be one who is *holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain* (Titus 1:9–11).

A passive shepherd says, “Give me a call if you need anything.” So, if the phone doesn’t ring, his attention is focused elsewhere. But the shepherd on alert is the one doing the calling. He reaches out to his sheep and is tracking with them, attentive to spiritual danger. He is intentional about asking good questions. He is awake!

B. Teach

There are several different terms that identify specific forms of teaching: Exhort, refute, admonish, preach, teach, and speak the Word. Let’s examine all of these teaching modes.

1. Exhort

The overseer is *devoted to the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict* (Titus 1:9).

The verb translated “exhort” in Titus 1:9 is *parakaleō* (παρακαλέω), which appears more than one hundred times in the New Testament.

Exhortation makes an appeal to another’s will in a way that encourages him or her to embrace what is right. Encouragement motivates and empowers.

The core content of this exhortation is health-inducing truth (“sound doctrine”). Exhortation relies on truth from God’s Word to encourage.

Just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children (1 Thessalonians 2:11).

2. Refute

He will be able *both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict* (Titus 1:9).

The word translated “refute” in Titus 1:9 is *elegchō* (ἐλέγχω).

The target group is expressly identified: Paul is calling for pointed confrontation of those who are contradicting the truth.

For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed (Titus 1:10–16).

This ministry of refutation (or reproof) can require severity. But this rebuke does not have as its aim the alienation of the false teachers.

The goal is not to silence these detractors by running them off, but to silence them by winning them over.

Exhorting and refuting constitute a matched set.

The elder provides a healthy diet of truth to the sheep, truth that includes a clear and persuasive refutation of what the false teachers are advocating. The effective refutational teaching of the overseer gives the sheep the ability to clearly discern glaring truth deficiencies in the false teachers' message.

Note the little phrase "so that" in Titus 1:9.

3. Admonish

In 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13, the leaders of the church are described as *those who give you instruction (noutheteō, νουθετέω)*.

This verb also appears in verse 14: *And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men* (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children (1 Corinthians 4:14).

When someone is going the wrong way for a failure to understand a particular truth from God, admonition supplies from the word situation-specific counsel.

4. Preach and Teach

The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17).

From among elders who rule well, Paul acknowledges a subset, those who “work hard at preaching and teaching.” The term translated “especially” (*malista*, μάλιστα), is clearly used elsewhere to mark out a subset from within a larger set.

“Preaching” is *en logos* (ἐν λόγος), a phrase that emphasizes the declared word.

“Teaching” comes from the noun *didaskalia*, (διδασκαλία).

Didaskalia describes activity by which one communicates truth from God’s word that appeals to the will and shapes character.

“A pupil is not above his teacher (didaskalos, διδάσκαλος), but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40).

A *didaskalos* is a mentor, a coach who supplies from God’s word what another needs to follow Jesus well.

Although 1 Timothy 5:17 indicates that some elders may specialize in preaching and teaching, it is unquestionably clear from Titus 1:9 that all elders are to be devoted to the word.

From this devotion, they are able to impart truth to others, which produces spiritual health, and to use the truth with enough skill and poignancy to silence those who contradict it.

They speak up for (preach) God’s Word and instill (teach) truth in others that promotes life, growth, and fruitfulness in Christ.

5. Speak the Word

Hebrews 13:7: Leaders “spoke the word of God to you.” They are “truth talkers.” They communicate what God says we need to know and do.

We desperately need men who can bring the truth to bear on the circumstances of life.

Summary: Effective shepherds use exhortation to promote robust spiritual health. They use refutation when false teaching is gaining traction. They admonish when wayward sheep need fatherly counsel. They preach and teach to fuel ongoing transformation and effective service. When they speak, you hear what comes from God’s word.

C. Illustrate

So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you” (John 13:12–15).

Jesus names Himself as a teacher using the noun *didaskalos* (διδάσκαλος).

Jesus goes on to say that in light of this title, His disciples should find in His most recent behavior a model for their own.

Teachers don’t just tell you what to do, they put it on display in their own actions.

The qualifications of an elder are not just prerequisites for service but also ministry tools!

Elders are to be prudent or sensible (*sōphrōn*, σώφρων). But this same word appears in a list of virtues commended to older men (Titus 2:2) and in a list of virtues that older women are to teach younger women (Titus 2:5).

Elders are to be respectable (1 Timothy 3:2); Women are to adorn themselves in respectable apparel (1 Timothy 2:9).

Elders are to be hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8); All believers are to “be hospitable to one another without complaint” (1 Peter 4:9).

Elders are to be “free from the love of money” (1 Timothy 3:3); Ditto for all believers (Hebrews 13:5).

Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them” (Matthew 23:1–3).

There must be alignment between how a shepherd lives and what he teaches.

We find it helpful when a pastor uses a poignant illustration in his sermon. According to Jesus, shepherds are to be the illustration.

VIII. Summary of Specific Responsibilities

- A. Guard: Alert to the condition of his flock
- B. Teach: Brings the Word to bear
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Discussion Guide

Discussion Question: The responsibility to guard the flock requires shepherds to identify spiritual threats to the welfare of the sheep. Shepherds are to then provide corrective biblical teaching that reveals the nature of these threats and neutralizes their influence. What are one or two negative spiritual influences you see that are currently working harm among God's flock in our community? In our culture? What principle or Bible passage would you teach to combat this error?

Discussion Question: In what way is our Christian subculture uncomfortable with the kind of activity Paul is describing in Titus 1:9–16? Why is this? Given this, what would be a good forum for this kind of teaching?

Discussion Question: Although there may be differing degrees of involvement in teaching among elders, it seems that all are to teach and exhort in healthy doctrine. Does this mean that every elder should preach the main sermon at least once a year? If not, then describe what they should do? How could every elder at our church effectively fulfill his responsibility to teach?

Discussion Question: In order for a shepherd/overseer/leader/elder to serve as an influential example to the flock, shouldn't there be some sort of relational connection? Is it even possible for a lay shepherd to be a good example when he is rarely seen and largely unknown to the majority of the congregation? How would you remedy this or address this?