

Shepherdology 101 Outline

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- A. Right Motivation: Doing It for the Right Reason!

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight (1) not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and (2) not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; (3) nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:1–3).

- 1. Not Because You Have to but Because You Choose To

Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God (1 Peter 5:2).

Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

In the NASB, “according to the will of God” renders just two words, kata and theos (κατά and θεός, literally “according to God”).

I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death (2 Corinthians 7:9–10).

The man who serves as a shepherd voluntarily as a response to God, does so habitually.

2. Not as a Means to an End, but as the End

The second “right way, wrong way” pair takes what Peter has already said and bumps it up a notch.

Peter counsels his fellow-elders, *Shepherd the flock of God among you ... not for sordid gain, but with eagerness (1 Peter 5:2).*

The phrase “for sordid gain” renders a single Greek adverb that is only found here in the New Testament.

The man who is “exercising oversight ... for sordid gain” (1 Peter 5:2) is leveraging his position as an elder for personal benefit.

Judas threw up a smokescreen, saying, *“Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?” Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it (John 12:5–6).*

The right way to shepherd is eagerly. The adverb translated “with eagerness” is a New Testament hapax.

Cognates are found elsewhere:

So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome (Romans 1:15).

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so (Acts 17:11).

God’s shepherds do what they do with excitement for what they do.

3. Not to Compel People to Do It Your Way but to Show Them His Way

Shepherd the flock of God among you ... nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:2–3).

And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded (Acts 19:16).

Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant” (Mark 10:42–43).

Shepherds should consistently ask themselves, “What can I do to serve the Lord’s interests in the life of this person or these people?”

“Lordship leadership” “tells”

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things (Philippians 4:9).

In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified (Titus 2:7).

Bottom line: An effective shepherd doesn’t drive people. He inspires others by his example.

Shepherd’s motives matter! In 1 Peter 5:1–3, we identify three ways a shepherd can get it right (and three ways to get it wrong).

- (1) The shepherd who effectively watches over his flock does so not because he has to, but because he has said “yes” to God’s call.
- (2) The good shepherd is not using his role as a means to some self-serving end; he is in it for the sheer joy of doing what counts.
- (3) The shepherd who cares for his flock for the right reason is not in it to compel others to do what he wants. He draws others to Jesus’ way by his inspiring example.

He does what he does for the right reason: He is called, eager, and exemplary.

B. Right Work Ethic: Doing It by Working Hard

Shepherding involves hard work.

Or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness (Romans 12:8).

In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction (1 Thessalonians 5:12).

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).

For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers (1 Timothy 4:10).

The Lord's servants are "all in" because it will be worth it.

Holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain (Philippians 2:16).

For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me (Colossians 1:29).

Summary: Effective shepherds do whatever is necessary to care for their flock. They understand what it means to roll up their sleeves and work hard at leading, helping those who are in trouble, and ministering the truth.

- C. Right Recall: Doing It from Memory
 - 1. Remembering What Paul Taught

Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears (Acts 20:31) In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother (2 Thessalonians 3:15).

He wants them to ask themselves, "How did Paul address this when we were working through it? What did he say? What did he do?"

2. Remembering What Matters

In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

"But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you" (Luke 14:13–14).

You will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous (Luke 14:14).

Summary

Shepherds/Overseers/Leaders/Elders can well fulfill their responsibilities using these effectiveness multipliers:

1. Right motivation – Do it for the right reason!
2. Right work ethic – Do it by working hard!
3. Right recall – Do it by remembering!

Discussion Guide

Discussion Question: Read 2 Timothy 2:24–26. In what way does this passage challenge you? What in it is hard for you to do? What encourages you from this passage?

Discussion Question: Have you observed shepherds/overseers/leaders/elders lead in good ways? Have you observed them leading from wrong motives? Describe what you have observed and how the relevant church was affected.

Discussion Question: What is it about eldering/shepherding that requires hard work? Describe a ministry situation where it required hard work for you to minister to someone in need or minister the word? What was the result from your effort?

Discussion Question: Describe a situation in which someone came to you and told you about a challenging situation—and you were able to use a particular passage to provide relevant counsel. What verse did you use? How did it apply? How did they respond?

Discussion Question: As you consider the “church in America,” what do you see that calls for a word of admonition? What key passage would you use? What principle would you draw from your passage that addresses where the church has veered off track?

Discussion Question: As you consider the life of Paul, what inspires you? What do you see that he did that would be a big challenge for you?

Discussion Question: In what way does this statement encourage and inspire you: It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Shepherdology Self-Check

Here are twenty questions that can be used to evaluate your mastery of the content from Shepherdology 101. If you can answer most of these questions, congratulations! You are among a very select group that has a great grasp of what Jesus wants shepherds to understand and do!

1. What kind of laborers does Jesus want us to ask the Lord of the Harvest to supply? How do you know your answer is correct?
2. How does the fact that Jesus is Lord of the church relate to the question of understanding what shepherds do?
3. Explain what is meant by the sufficiency, necessity, and clarity of God's word. What single statement captures the essence of all three?
4. How do the sufficiency, necessity, and clarity of God's word relate to the study of shepherdology?
5. What advantages are associated with a word-driven practice of shepherding?
6. Name at least three characteristics Jesus associates with a good shepherd in John 10.
7. In what way is the conversation reported in John 21:15–17 related to shepherds of Jesus' church today? What passage is key to your answer?
8. Cite the reference and give a basic content summary for the ten key New Testament passages that discuss shepherds/overseers/leaders/elders in the church.
9. How do we know that "shepherds," "overseers," and "elders" all refer to the same person? How do we know whether these individuals are also called "leaders?"
10. What are the four primary New Testament titles for local church leaders? What do these titles tell us about their function?
11. What verbs are used in a summary way to describe what shepherds/overseers/leaders/elders do? What do these terms tell us about what they do?
12. What are the six specific responsibilities in the tool kit of a shepherd/overseer/leader/elder? Summarize what each involves.
13. Explain how the qualifications of an elder should be used to evaluate a man's character. Defend your answer from Scripture.

14. List the seven basic categories of qualifications for an elder. Summarize what is sought in a man in each category.
15. What do 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 tell us to look for in a man's marriage and home to determine his suitability as a shepherd? In what way is there a connection between the home front and shepherding the flock?
16. List and explain at least three personal qualifications ("Good Heart") and three relational ("Relational Asset") qualifications for an elder?
17. Unpack what 1 Peter 5:1–3 tells us about the manner in which elders shepherd God's flock. Explain each of three vices and three corresponding virtues.
18. What is involved in "working hard" and "remembering?" In what ways are these ministry methods critical to the work of a shepherd? What should elders remember?
19. What are the four primary ways in which flock members are called to respond to their shepherds? Please explain each.
20. Explain the reward offered in 1 Peter 5:4 to shepherds who shepherd well.