



**Christian Leadership 2**  
**Teaching Notes**

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# Lesson 1

## Course Introduction

Healthy leaders make healthy churches. And if you are in this class, we assume that either you are a leader in your church now or you are training to become a leader in the future. Whether you are a pastor, a deacon, a Bible study teacher, or any other position of leadership in your church, your spiritual health and your strength as a godly leader will have a large influence on the health of your church family. This is the reason that we have Bible schools, seminaries, and all kinds of other leadership training programs to help our church leaders.

In this course, we will look closely at what the Bible teaches about what it means to be a leader of God's people. How does God describe a faithful leader? What does he expect us to do as we lead his churches? How will we know if we are becoming the kind of pastors and leaders that God has called us to be? All of these are important questions. And if you are serving your church in a leadership role, then you need to know the answers to these questions. You need to know exactly what God has said in the pages of the Bible to help you understand what is required of everyone who is called to be a leader of God's people. To help us find these answers, we are going to study what God says about being a Shepherd Leader. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, God's favorite image for faithful leadership is the picture of a shepherd. We will explore what it means to be a faithful shepherd in God's eyes so that each one of you can grow more capable and more confident in your ministry as leaders and shepherds in the Lord's churches.

## Part 1 – What is Shepherd Leadership?

- **Definition** – Shepherd Leadership is the biblical teaching that leaders of God's people, especially pastors, are most often described using language connected to the work and character of a shepherd.

In this course, we will look carefully at many different verses in the Bible that describe spiritual leaders as shepherds and compare the work of ministering to God's people to the way a shepherd cares for sheep. We can see this teaching about Shepherd Leadership in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

- **Shepherd Leadership in the Old Testament**
  - **God as the One True Shepherd of Israel** – Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, books in which God introduces himself to the people of Israel and forms a covenant relationship with them. Within

these books, we can see God act as a faithful shepherd to Israel – teaching them about his presence, giving them divine protection, providing for their needs, and guiding them in wisdom. Even though God is not often called a shepherd in these books, his actions are described according to the work of shepherds who cared for sheep in the ancient world. All of these actions and words from God are intended to help the nation of Israel learn to trust him and obey his leadership. We will look at examples of each of these four actions that God used to show Israel that he alone is their trustworthy Shepherd: Presence, Protection, Provision, Guidance.<sup>1</sup>

- **The Presence of God**

- *Exodus 33:12-16* – When Moses intercedes for the people of Israel after they have sinned, he pleads with God and reminds him that Israel are his chosen people. In response, the Lord says, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest” (verse 14). In reply, Moses says that the only way the world will know that the Lord is truly their God is “in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth” (verse 16). In these verses, we learn that the Lord helped Israel to trust him by assuring them that his Presence would be with them wherever he leads them to go.
- *The tabernacle and the ark* – Both the tabernacle (the tent in which God’s presence dwelt in the camp of the Israelites) and the ark of the covenant were physical reminders given to Israel to remind them always of God’s presence in their midst. God wanted Israel to understand that he is not a God a who is distant and removed from them, but instead he is with them, among them, as a God and Shepherd who cares for them daily.

- **The Protection of God**

- *Exodus 14:19-20, 30-31* – Immediately after God rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt, he began to visibly protect the people every day as he led them through the wilderness. These verses tell us that the Lord set a pillar of cloud during the day and of fire by night with Israel. Even as the people escaped Egypt, God set this pillar between the last people of Israel and the army of Egypt, assuring them that he would keep them secure. The

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<sup>1</sup> The four points of God’s leadership in the Old Testament– Presence, Protection, Provision, and Guidance – are explained in detail in Timothy S. Laniak’s book, *Shepherds After My Own Heart* (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL, 2006).

result of this protection is written in verse 31, “so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.” God’s strong protection helped the people of Israel learn to believe in him and trust him.

- *Deuteronomy 24:8* – “God brings [Israel] out of Egypt and is for him like the horns of the wild ox; he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries, and shall break their bones in pieces.” This verse comes from Balaam who was hired to speak a word of cursing over Israel. Instead, Balaam saw clearly that Israel was protected by the Lord, and he declared, “Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you.” Again, we see that Israel could put their faith in God because he is a stronger protection than any of the armies or spiritual forces of other nations.

▪ **The Provision of God**

- *Psalms 105:40-41* – Over and over again as the people of Israel wandered in the desert, they complained to Moses that they needed food or water or other things. Some even said that God had led them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, questioning whether the Lord truly cared for them. However, God proved his care and faithfulness by providing for them every time they had a need, even in miraculous ways. These verses remind us of two different times when God provided quail so the people could eat meat and water from a rock so that they would not die of thirst in the wilderness.
- *Numbers 21:8-9* – Another example of God’s provision for Israel is in his merciful healing, even when the people’s sickness and suffering was a result of their hard hearts and sinful rebellion against the Lord. In Numbers 21, God instructs Moses to make a bronze serpent and lift it up on a pole so that all who look at it in obedience to God’s word might be healed. This moment helped Israel learn to trust in God’s power and provision in that, and it also helped Jesus explain how we are saved and healed by looking in faith to his death on the cross many years later (John 3:14-15).

▪ **The Guidance of God**

- *Exodus 15:13* – “In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.” This verse is a part of the song of Moses, the song Moses taught Israel to sing in worship to God after he had led them across the Red

Sea safely. The word for “dwelling” at the end of verse 13 is the same word used for a “pasture” where a shepherd would lead sheep to find good grass to eat and rest. This kind of language helped Israel to learn that God truly is a strong and kind Shepherd who leads his people to goodness.

- *Psalm 77:19-20* – “Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.” Again, we are learning that an important part of God’s Shepherd Leadership for Israel is his faithful guidance of his people. He provided leaders, and he led the nation through the sea and through the wilderness. He is never seen, but he is always present, and he is always guiding his people.

- **Examples of Shepherd Leaders in the Old Testament**

- *Moses* – Before the Lord called to Moses from a burning bush, Moses had been living in the wilderness and working as a shepherd for 40 years, doing whatever was necessary to protect and care for the sheep entrusted to him. God called Moses to become like a shepherd to Israel, drawing from the same skills and the same compassion that he had learned while caring for sheep. In Numbers 27:16-17, Moses prayed, “Let the Lord... appoint a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.” Moses understood that God’s people are like sheep, precious to the Lord, and he understood that he had been called to lead them and care for them as the Lord’s under-shepherd.
- *David* – The second model Shepherd Leader in the Old Testament is King David. When David is first introduced in the Bible, he is spoken of as Jesse’s youngest son who is out keeping the sheep (1 Samuel 16:11). As David rose to become king over Israel, we learn that he is acceptable to God because “with an upright heart he shepherded [Israel] and guided them with his skillful hand” (Psalm 78:72). David’s experience as a boy shepherd caring for sheep gave him both the heart and the skills needed to become the greatest king and shepherd that Israel would know.

- **Shepherd Leadership in the New Testament**
  - **Jesus is the Promised Shepherd and King of God's People**
    - *Matthew* – In the book of Matthew, the birth of Jesus is shown as the fulfilment of prophecy from Micah 5:2 that God would send one “who will shepherd my people.” Later in this book, we read that Jesus has compassion on the people of Israel “because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (9:36). He is also seen a shepherd at the end of Matthew separating the sheep from the goats at the final judgment (25:31-32).
    - *Mark* – Mark also writes that Jesus had compassion on Israel “because they were like sheep without a shepherd” (6:34). This is the same phrase that we heard in the prayer of Moses from Numbers 27. Moses prayed that Israel would not be sheep without a shepherd, and Jesus taught that he was the Shepherd who came for those sheep. Mark also quotes Zechariah 13, “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered” (Mark 14:27). He is showing us again that Jesus is the true Shepherd who was sent to save God's people.
    - *Luke* – Luke's gospel does not have as many shepherding references as others, but a couple of teachings are easy for us to see. In Luke 19:10, Jesus declares, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Searching for and rescuing lost sheep was a shepherd's work. In case that was not clear, Jesus told a parable in which he compares himself to a shepherd, saying that any shepherd who loses even one sheep out of one hundred will “leave the 99 in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it” (15:4). Jesus wants everyone to know that he is the Shepherd who is seeking out all who are lost.
    - *John* – John's gospel has more teaching about Shepherd Leadership than any of the others. The strongest teaching is found in John 10 where Jesus says that he is the Good Shepherd. In this chapter and the chapters that follow, Jesus explains what it means to be a Good Shepherd, gives us examples of how to care for God's people as a shepherd, and condemns the faithless shepherds who were supposed to be caring for Israel but only cared for themselves. We will study this in more detail a little later.
  - **Pastors and Leaders in the Church are Called to Be Faithful Shepherds Like Jesus**
    - *John 21:15-17* – After Jesus was resurrected from the dead, he restored Peter and commanded him to care for the Lord's people, saying, “Feed my lambs,” “Tend my sheep,” “Feed my

sheep.” It is no mistake that Jesus used words related to shepherding. He had taught the disciples that he is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. Now he is declaring that Peter and all who will lead the Lord’s people after him must become faithful shepherds also, willing to do anything needed to feed, protect, and guide God’s people.

- *Acts 20:28-31* – When Paul was saying good-bye to the elders of the church in Ephesus for the final time, he used the language of shepherding to instruct and encourage these leaders in their ministry. He told them, “Pay attention to yourselves and the flock,” “care for the church of God,” and “wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.” We can see that pastors and elders should understand that they are shepherds who have been entrusted to protect and care for the Lord’s people in their churches.
- *1 Peter 5:1-4* – We saw that in John 21, Jesus commanded Peter to care for his people like a faithful shepherd. Peter must have taken that lesson to heart, because at the end of 1 Peter, he passes on the command to all the pastors and elders who would come after him: “shepherd the flock of God that is among you.”

- **Summary of Shepherd Leadership in the Bible**

From the beginning to the end, the Bible teaches us that being a shepherd is an important part of the identity that the Lord Jesus gives to those who are called to serve him by leading his churches. In the Old Testament, the Lord himself was the Shepherd who cared for Israel, and they had to learn to trust him. He also gave Shepherd Leaders to care for his people when they could not see him. In the Gospels, we see that Jesus is the Great Shepherd of the Sheep. He is the One who God promised to send into our world to save us and rescue us. Now in the church, pastors and elders (along with other leaders who support them) are also called shepherds. We are given an assignment from God to love his people, to teach them his word, to care for them, and to guide them faithfully until death or until the return of our Lord Jesus.

## **Part 2 – Why Does God Want Shepherds?**

“And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

- *Jeremiah 3:15*

Why does God give his people shepherds? In the Bible, God makes it clear that his leaders are shepherds. We are called to lead his people with truth, love, and grace.

The greatest example of a shepherd caring for God's people is Jesus himself. When we look at his life and teachings, we can learn what God wants us to do as faithful shepherds today. This is the greatest truth we will learn in this course:

The most important part of being a spiritual leader is to love God's people the way that God loves them.

In John 10:14, Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd." This means that he is the greatest example we can look to if we want to learn what it means to be a shepherd of God's people today. Read the following verses from the book of John and ask the class to discuss how Jesus shows us the heart of a Good Shepherd in each one.

- **John 10:10-15** – A shepherd protects the sheep.  
*Jesus proves he is a Good Shepherd by loving his people and laying down his life to protect them from anyone who would harm them.*  
*Discuss: Who are the false teachers and others who are teaching lies to the people in our churches today? What can we do to protect our church members from the spiritual danger of false teaching?*
- **John 11:17-36** – A shepherd cares for the sheep.  
*When Lazarus had died, Jesus comforted his sisters and mourned with them – showing that he truly cared for them in their grief – before he raised up Lazarus from the dead.*  
*Discuss: What are some practical ways that we show people in our churches that we care for them today? What are some signs that a pastor or leader does not truly care for the church?*
- **John 13:12-17** – A shepherd serves the sheep.  
*Washing feet was a job for the lowest servant in the house or a small child. An honored guest and teacher would never do this job. Yet Jesus lowered himself and washed the feet of his disciples, then he told us that we must do the same. A faithful shepherd shows love for God by loving and serving his people.*  
*Discuss: It is very uncommon to see a pastor or leader do the work of a servant today. How can we become servants to God's people in our churches, showing them the humble heart of Jesus and the love that he has for them?*
- **John 17:20-21** – A shepherd prays for the sheep.  
*Jesus showed the heart of a shepherd by praying for his disciples and for us. He prayed that we would be united in faith and love, so that the world might believe that Jesus is the true Lord and Savior.*  
*Discuss: How often do you pray for the people in your churches today? How do you pray for them? What do you ask God to do for them? Note: We will study biblical ways to pray for our churches later in this course.*



- **John 21:15-17** – A shepherd restores the sheep.

*On the night that Jesus was arrested, Peter denied that he knew Christ three different times. In this chapter, Jesus asked Peter if he loved him three times as he restored Peter to ministry leadership. Jesus loved Peter and had grace for his sin, but he also treated that sin seriously. He did not act like Peter's denial meant nothing. Instead, he called Peter to declare his love and loyalty to Jesus, then he commanded Peter to prove his love and loyalty by faithfully caring for the Lord's people.*

*Discuss: How do we treat fellow Christians when they fall into sin? Do we go after them and seek to restore them to faith? Do we allow them to go and say nothing? Do we gossip about them and make them feel ashamed? How can we be good shepherds to those who need to be restored from sin?*

### **Part 3 – Activity: God's Expectations for Shepherd Leaders**

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.”

- *Hebrews 13:17 (ESV)*

According to this verse, pastors – who are the spiritual leaders of the church – will one day give an account for the condition of the people in the churches they lead. This a very serious requirement, and every pastor needs to consider carefully what the Bible says about how God expects us to lead and care for his people. Other leaders in the church work as a team with the pastor to instruct, care for, and serve members of the church until everyone grows together in their faith.

In this section, invite the class to study the verses below and consider exactly what the Bible says that good pastors and spiritual leaders should be doing. Read each passage, then ask the class, “*According to these verses, what should a faithful pastor or leader be doing as they shepherd the Lord's church?*”

- 1 Samuel 12:23  
*A faithful leader should pray for God's people continually and teach them what is good and right.*
- Jeremiah 3:15  
*Faithful shepherds will have God's heart for his people and will feed them (or teach them) with true knowledge and understanding.*
- Ezekiel 34:1-7  
*According to these verses, faithless shepherds use their position to make themselves comfortable, strong, and happy, but they do not care for the people or teach them. A faithful shepherd is the opposite of this, caring for*

*God's people and teaching them, even if you do not benefit greatly from the position.*

- John 21:15-17  
*A faithful leader loves God truly and cares for his people.*
- Acts 6:4  
*Faithful pastors are devoted to the ministry of prayer and the ministry of the word.*
- Acts 20:28-31  
*Faithful pastors and leaders watch their own lives and their people carefully to make sure that all are living faithfully before God. They also guard the church from wolves – deceiving teachers who sneak into the church and spread false ideas about Jesus, the gospel, and salvation.*
- 1 Peter 5:1-4  
*Faithful pastors shepherd God's people with a glad and willing heart as examples of humility, not dominating others or seeking to gain wealth.*

#### **Part 4 – Review and Discussion**

1. What is Shepherd Leadership?
2. What are the four ways that God shepherded the people of Israel in the Old Testament?
3. Who were the two great examples of Shepherd Leadership in the Old Testament?
4. List and explain at least three different ways that the four gospels reveal Jesus as a true Shepherd Leader.
5. List two different examples of Jesus showing the heart of a shepherd as he ministered to people in the gospel of John.
6. What are some things that God expects to be true of those of us who are Shepherd Leaders in his churches? Give at least 3 specific examples and verses from the Bible that explain.

## Lesson 2

### Introduction – The Shepherd’s Head

We should expect that a Bible school for pastors and church leaders will include much teaching for increased knowledge. In the next lessons, we will learn that knowledge alone is not enough to become a faithful shepherd in God’s church, but it is also true that a good leader must have knowledge. Pastors especially are expected to teach and preach the Scriptures, and we cannot do that effectively unless we have studied and gained a strong understanding of what the Word of God teaches. In this lesson we will explore several passages in the Bible which demonstrate the importance of knowing God’s word deeply and accurately.

### Part 1 – Search the Scripture

Read each passage of Scripture out loud, then ask the class each of the questions. The goal of this section is to allow the students to see that God expects his leaders to have a deep knowledge of his word so that they can teach and lead others.

**Jeremiah 3:15** – “And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

- Notice that this verse tells us two details about the shepherds that God will appoint for his people. What are they?  
*(1) They have a heart like God’s and (2) they will feed God’s people.*
- What will God’s shepherds feed to his people?  
*Knowledge and understanding*
- Knowledge and understanding of what?  
*They will feed people with knowledge and understanding of God himself and his Word.*
- Think: What must these shepherds have first before they can feed others?  
*The shepherds must have true knowledge of God and his Word for themselves before they can feed others.*

**John 10:14-15** – “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.”

- Who is speaking in these verses?  
*Jesus*
- Read verse 14 again. What does Jesus say is one piece of evidence that he is a good shepherd?  
*He says that he knows his sheep.*

- Think: What does Jesus mean when he says that he knows his sheep?  
*Jesus does not mean only that he knows information about the sheep. He is saying that he knows them personally and that they have a relationship. He is not a stranger to his people, but he knows who they are and what is the state of their souls.*
- What does this teach us who are shepherds of the church today?  
*It is not enough to simply know facts or information about God or his people. We must know them personally and closely so that we can care for them well.*

**John 21:15** – When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

- What instructions did Jesus give to Peter after Peter affirmed that he loved the Lord?  
*Feed my lambs.*
- Remember the verse we read in Jeremiah 3 above. What are God’s shepherds supposed to give to his people when he feeds them?  
*Knowledge of God and his word.*
- Is it possible to be a faithful shepherd of God’s people without teaching them God’s word in truth?  
*No, it is not possible.*
- Is it possible to teach God’s word in truth if we have not studied it for ourselves until we understand?  
*No, it is not possible.*

**Acts 20:20-21** - “I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- What did Paul declare and testify to the people of Ephesus when he was with them?  
*Everything that is profitable from God’s word, and those things concerning repentance and faith in Jesus.*
- Was Paul bold or timid in his teaching ministry with the Ephesians?  
*He was bold. He says did not shrink back from declaring anything that would be profitable to them.*
- Where did Paul exercise his teaching ministry?  
*In public places and in private (house to house).*
- To whom did Paul teach God’s word?  
*He taught anyone who would listen, both Jews and Greeks.*

**2 Timothy 2:15** – “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

- Who is Paul writing to in this verse? What do we know about this person?  
*He is writing to Timothy, Paul’s son in the faith. We know that Timothy is a young leader, but he is responsible to appoint elders in the churches and train the churches in correct doctrine and Christian living.*
- According to this verse, what should an approved worker be able to do well?  
*Handle the word of truth (the Bible).*
- According to this verse, how should a leader feel if they are not able to rightly handle (or teach) God’s Word?  
*A worker who does not teach God’s Word well should be ashamed.*
- Think: Why do you think Paul thought it was necessary to urge Timothy to “do his best?”  
*Becoming an approved worker – a capable teacher of God’s Word – is not easy work. It requires serious effort and study until we know all that God has declared and can teach it effectively to his people.*

## **Part 2 – Discussion and Application**

Use the questions below to lead the class through a discussion about the importance of the Shepherd Leader’s head – or knowledge of God’s Word.

1. Based on the verses we just studied, how important is it that the shepherds and leaders in God’s churches have a deep knowledge of God and his Word?
2. What is the risk to the churches if we have leaders and pastors who have not studied and understood the Bible well?
3. What would you say to someone who tells you that they do not need to study God’s Word because they have the Holy Spirit to guide them? How would you convince them that leaders must be knowledgeable?
4. Which one of the verses we studied above is the most helpful to you in convincing you that we must be serious about knowing God’s Word?
5. Can you think of other verses in the Bible that also instruct us to study the Word and to know God deeply?
6. Tell us about how you study God’s Word to grow in your knowledge? Do you have any study tips that have helped you? Do you have a daily time or a regular habit of studying the Bible?
7. Who do you know who is a good example of someone who studies the Bible well and has gained a deep knowledge of God’s Word? What have you seen or heard in this person’s life that tells you that he or she has studied well?

### **Part 3 – How to Grow**

Consider the following practical tips to continue growing as a student of God's Word. Discuss how students can begin practicing some of these or ask them if they have other ideas that can help them continue growing as students of the Bible.

- Make regular study a habit. Set a special time each day to study the Scripture and protect that time from distractions.
- Use the steps of the Interpretive Journey and your notes from Old Testament Survey and New Testament Survey classes to help you understand what you are reading.
- Whenever you have the opportunity, buy good study Bibles or theological books to give you deeper insight when you study.
- Find a trustworthy mentor who is more knowledgeable in the Bible than you, then commit to visiting that person regularly to ask questions and listen.
- Pray continually that the Holy Spirit would teach you, opening your eyes and your mind to understand the wisdom that God has revealed in his Word.

## Lesson 3

### Introduction – The Shepherd’s Hands

“Do you see a man who is skillful in his work?  
He will stand before kings;  
he will not stand before obscure men.”

- Proverbs 22:29

Everyone admires someone who is good at their job. A wise businessman can build a successful business, even earning enough money to become very generous in his community. An intelligent and talented engineer can design roads and buildings that will improve a city for many years. A skilled carpenter can create furniture which is strong and beautiful. But do you know what is required of a Shepherd Leader? What skills does God say that we must have in order to be effective leaders in a church? In this lesson, we will look closely at what the Bible says that a shepherd must be able to do as he cares for the Lord’s people. Here is a hint: the skills that God emphasizes are not what the world often expects to find in a powerful or successful leader. We need to develop skills that will help God’s people to grow in faith and love, worshiping God and serving him in this world until the day that we meet him in heaven.

### Part 1 – Search the Scripture

Read each passage of Scripture out loud, then ask the class each of the questions. The goal of this section is to allow the students to see from Scripture God has said about the skills and strengths that he expects his Shepherd Leaders to have.

**Psalm 78:72** – “With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand.”

- Who is this verse talking about?  
*King David*
- What does this verse tell us about David’s abilities as a shepherd and leader of Israel?  
*He was very skillful in his work.*
- Think: Why do you think that God wanted to emphasize that David had both an upright heart and skilled hands as a leader of his people?  
*God wants us to understand that both of things are necessary in a godly leader. A skilled leader who does not have a heart for God’s people will not care for them, and they will not trust him. A leader who loves the people but*

*does not have the skills to lead will not be able to help them or guide them in the right direction.*

**Acts 20:28** – “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”

- Who is Paul speaking to in these verses?  
He is speaking to the elders of the church in Ephesus as he is saying good-bye to them for the last time.
- What role does Paul say that the Holy Spirit has given to these elders?  
The Holy Spirit has made them overseers of the Lord’s church.
- Read these verses again carefully. What is the reason that the Holy Spirit calls some to be overseers?  
They are responsible to care for the church.
- What are these commanded to do so that they can faithfully oversee the church?  
They are to pay careful attention to – or watch closely – both themselves and the lives of the people in their church. If we read the next verses, we can see that Shepherd Leaders are responsible to protect the church from the dangers of false teaching.

**1 Timothy 3:2** – “Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach...”

- Most of the qualifications for an elder that are listed in these verses are about character and integrity. We will study this in the next lesson. What is the one skill that a man must have to be qualified to be an elder?  
*He must be able to teach.*
- Think: Why would God tell us that it is necessary that a pastor (a shepherd) must be a capable teacher?  
*We have read several verses that tell us that God expects his shepherds to feed the people with knowledge of his word (for example: Jeremiah 3:15 and John 21:15). A shepherd who cannot teach clearly will not be able to do the most important work that God has given him in the church.*

**2 Timothy 4:1-2** – “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the Word; be ready in season and out season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”

- What is the main command that Paul is giving to Timothy in these verses?  
*Preach the Word.*
- Read the first part of these verses again. What does Paul say to help Timothy understand how serious and important this charge to preach really is?



*He says that he is giving this command “in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom.” In other words, Paul is telling Timothy that this is so important that he should understand the command is not coming from Paul alone, but from God himself, the King and Judge of all creation.*

- According to these verses, when is Timothy expected to be preaching the Word?

*“In season and out of season.” That is, Timothy must be ready at all times to preach the Word of God in all situations.*

- Read the next two verses after one and two. Why does Paul say that Timothy needs to be committed to preaching the Word and giving careful instruction to the people in the church?

*Because a time is coming (and we are living in that time!) when people will want to listen to false teachers and people who will tell them only what they already want to hear. A faithful shepherd must teach God’s words, not only the things that are popular with people.*

**1 Peter 5:1-3** – “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”

- What is the main command that Peter gives to other elders and pastors in these verses?

*“Shepherd the flock of God that is among you.”*

- What are some of the different ways that Peter says that leaders should shepherd their churches?

*- Exercise oversight, or watch carefully all that is happening.*

*- Do the job willingly, not because you feel that you are forced to do it.*

*- Serve eagerly (even sacrificially); do not work only for the money or status.*

*- Be an example to the people of godliness, humility, and contentment.*

## **Part 2 – Discussion and Application**

Use the questions below to lead the class through a discussion about the importance of the Shepherd Leader’s hands – or the skills that are needed to serve God and his church effectively.

1. Based on the verses we just studied, how important is it that the shepherds and leaders in God’s churches have the necessary skills and abilities to care for the Lord’s churches well?
2. What is the risk to the churches if we have leaders and pastors who are not able to do the things the Bible says we must do as leaders?

3. What would you say to someone who tells you that they do not need to work hard or improve their abilities to teach and lead the church? How would you convince them that leaders must be capable and skillful in our service to the Lord?
4. Which one of the verses we studied above is the most helpful to you in convincing you that we must be serious about teaching and overseeing the churches in a skillful manner?
5. Can you think of other verses in the Bible that also instruct us to grow in our abilities and skills to lead the church?
6. Think about the different skills and abilities that you have in your service to the church? In which areas do you believe that you are the strongest? In which areas do you need the most help to improve?
7. Are there any skills that you thought the Bible would list for a Shepherd Leader that we did not see? For example, are you surprised that the Bible does not say that a leader must be skilled business manager? Or a powerful speaker? Or a visionary leader or prophet?
8. Who do you know who is a good example of someone who is very skilled in their pastoral ministry to a church? What skills or abilities do you see in that person's ministry? Do you know how he developed or strengthened the skills?

### **Part 3 – How to Grow**

Consider the following practical tips to continue growing as in your skills for leading the Lord's church. Discuss how students can begin practicing some of these or ask them if they have other ideas that can help them continue improving their ministry skills.

- Practice, practice, practice. Teach and preach at every opportunity that you have, and work hard to study well and communicate effectively so that others can hear and believe what God has spoken to us in his Word.
- Ask trusted friends and mentors to tell you the truth about what you are doing well in ministry and what areas need to be improved. Listen carefully to their advice without trying to defend yourself. True and godly friends will tell you things that might hurt to hear, but they will help you in the end.
- Carefully watch and listen to mature pastors who have been preaching and leading well for many years and learn from their example. But be careful that you are not trying to copy someone who is only popular or in a big church. What we think is successful is not always what God thinks is successful. Look for the faithful shepherds who are not trying to build up their own reputations but are only trying to serve the Lord humbly.
- Find a trustworthy mentor who is more skilled in preaching or leading the church than you are, then commit to visiting that person regularly to ask questions and listen.

- Pray continually that the Holy Spirit would help you and strengthen you to become an effective leader and shepherd so that the people of God will be cared for and built up in their faith.

## Lesson 4

### Introduction – The Shepherd’s Heart

A few years ago a teacher was visiting a shepherd who lived in the desert of a country in the Middle East. They were sitting together in the shade during the hottest part of the day, watching the sheep and the children play. The teacher asked the shepherd, “When your sons grow up, will they inherit your flock?” The old shepherd sighed and thought for a moment, then he said, “No, I don’t think so.” This surprised the teacher, and finally he asked his new friend why he would not give the sheep to his sons. The shepherd looked at the teacher sadly and said, “My sons don’t have the heart for this work. They don’t really care about the animals. *I will die before I give my sheep to someone who does not care for them.*”

Do you hear what this shepherd said about his own sons? They don’t have the heart to be a shepherd! If this shepherd cares so deeply for his animals, imagine how much God himself must love and treasure the people who belong to him. And he has asked us to serve him as shepherds of his people today. In today’s lesson, we will consider one of the most important questions for anyone who is a leader in a church: “Do you have the heart of a shepherd?”

### Part 1 – Search the Scripture

In this section, we will consider four different ways that a Shepherd Leader must be someone “after God’s own heart.” When we talk about the shepherd’s heart, we are talking about our love, our motivation, and our character. This is the part of ministry leadership that is not talked about often, but it is the one which is emphasized the most in the Bible. When pastors and leaders fail in ministry, it is usually not because they did not have enough knowledge (the Head) or because they did not have any ability (the Hands). The most common reason that leaders fail in ministry is because they did not have the Heart. Please study these verses carefully and consider what God says he requires from those who want to be faithful Shepherd Leaders

#### LOVE GOD

Read the following verses, then lead the class in a discussion about what it means to truly love the Lord above all other things. How should it look when we truly love God?

- Deuteronomy 6:4
- 1 Samuel 12:24-25
- Luke 10:25-27

## **LOVE GOD'S PEOPLE**

Read the following verses, then lead the class in a discussion about what it means to truly love the Lord's people as we lead our churches. How do people know if their pastors and leaders truly care for them?

- Psalm 23 - Consider all the ways the Lord shows love to his people in these verses. How can we show the same love to the Lord's people today?
- Jeremiah 23:4
- John 10:7-17

## **PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE**

"Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you."  
- 1 Samuel 12:23

The prophet Samuel prayed for the people of Israel. Jesus prayed for his disciples and for us. Paul prayed for the churches that he helped establish. For 2000 years, Christian pastors and leaders have committed themselves to pray to God for the people under their care. But what about us? How will we pray for our people? What kinds of things should fill our minds and hearts as we lift up our people to the Father?

To find the answer to this question, we only need to look at God's Word. Paul frequently told the people of different churches how he loved to pray for them. Look carefully at the following passages from the New Testament, then discuss how we can use these prayers to help us pray for the people in our churches.

- Romans 1:7-10
- 1 Corinthians 1:4-9
- Ephesians 1:15-23
- Philippians 1:3-11
- Colossians 1:3-14
- 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10
- 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

## **LIVE WITH INTEGRITY**

Read the following verses, then lead the class in a discussion about what it means to live with integrity as we lead our churches. Why is it important that God's leaders are holy, honest, and trustworthy?

- Ezekiel 34:2-6 – Why does God reject the shepherds of Israel?
- Matthew 23:11-31 – Why does Jesus reject and declare woe on the Pharisees?
- 1 Timothy 3:1-7 – How does God describe the character that is required for elders?

In all three of these passages, pay attention to how seriously God takes the character and integrity of Shepherd Leaders. It does not matter how intelligent you are or how skilled and popular you might be as a leader. If you do not have true integrity, or if you do not truly care for the Lord's people above yourself, then you are not qualified to be a pastor or a leader in the Lord's church.

## **Part 2 – Discussion and Application**

1. Based on the verses we just studied, how important is it that the shepherds and leaders in God's churches have a true and faithful heart before the Lord as they serve and lead?
2. What is the risk to the churches if we have leaders and pastors who do not love the Lord or his people, or who do not have the integrity to be trusted?
3. What would you say to someone who tells you that they are called to ministry and have the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so character is not very important to them? How would you convince them that leaders must have a right heart before the Lord and his people in order to lead?
4. Which one of the verses we studied above is the most helpful to you in convincing you that our hearts and character matter for ministry to the Lord?
5. Can you think of other verses in the Bible that also reveal to us what kind of heart or character we must have to serve the Lord well?
6. Think about the different verse that we read to understand what it means to love the Lord and his people with a true heart. In which areas do you believe that you are the strongest? In which areas do you need the most help to improve?
7. Take some time to talk about how you pray for the people in your churches. How often do you pray for your people? Do you pray for them by name? What kind of things do you pray for? Do your prayers sound like the prayers we read in the New Testament? How can you learn from Paul's example of praying for the people in his churches to help you pray more faithfully and more effectively for your own people?
8. Who do you know who is a good example of someone who has the heart of a true shepherd in leading the church? What do you see in that person's ministry that convinces you that he loves the Lord and his church deeply?

### **Part 3 – How to Grow**

Consider the following practical tips to continue growing as in your skills for leading the Lord's church. Discuss how students can begin practicing some of these or ask them if they have other ideas that can help them continue improving their ministry skills.

- Pray, pray, and continue praying. Only the Lord has the power to transform our hearts and purify us. If you desire to grow in your love for the Lord and his people, pray daily that God would give you a heart that pleases him.
- Read and meditate on the verses in this lesson. Make a daily habit of thinking deeply and praying about the ways that God has loved us, how we can love his church, and how we can live as people of integrity in our homes, our churches, and our communities.
- Pray daily for your people. Pray for them by name. Pray for them by families. Use the prayers we read in the New Testament to pray for your people to grow in faith and in the knowledge of God. It is impossible to pray for people regularly without growing in love for them, so start a new habit of praying consistently for your people.
- Ask trusted friends to pray with you and to watch your life. We do not want anyone to fail in ministry because of a failure in integrity and character. Find some mature friends who will commit to pray for your integrity, and give them permission to ask you serious questions about your character and lifestyle. Good friends can be a good protection against falling into immorality.
- Carefully watch and listen to mature pastors who have shepherding well for many years and learn from their example. Look especially for those leaders whose love for God and for their people is obvious to everyone who knows them. These are the people you want to imitate and learn from.
- Tell your church that you love them. It is easier for people to believe that God loves them if they are convinced that their pastors and leaders love them. So tell them that you care for them and that they are important to you. Show them that you care by the way that you serve them and teach them and help them when they are weak. As you tell them that you love them and show them that you love them, you will also find that your love for them and for the Lord will be growing.

## Lesson 5

### **Final Project – Personal Plan for Shepherd Leader Growth**

For each of us who are called to be pastors and leaders in the Lord's churches, God expects us to live as faithful shepherds who care for his people. Our assignment from the Lord is a lifelong work, and we can never stop growing in our knowledge of God's word, in our love for the Lord and his people, or in our skills to be effective leaders.

There is no written exam for this course. For the final project, each student will take time to think carefully about all that we have learned in this course. Students must complete the following form to write a practical plan for their continued growth as a Shepherd Leader. Distribute a copy of the form on the next page to every student in the class. Allow students at least one hour (more time is better) to think and pray about the answers they will provide on this form. Students may work individually, or they may discuss their answers together in groups.

Each student is required to complete this project, and a passing grade can be assigned to every student whose project shows that he or she has thought deeply and written a clear and specific plan for themselves. (Note: Non-writing students may give an oral report to the instructor which answers all of the questions in the form.)



## Personal Plan to Grow as a Shepherd Leader

Name:

Today's Date:

Instructions:

Read each of the questions below, then take time to pray and think carefully about what you will write as an answer. God has called each of us to be faithful shepherds in his churches. These questions will help you explain your understanding of what it means to be a shepherd of God's people. You will also develop a practical plan to continue growing in your love, your knowledge, and your skills to care for God's people.

### Understanding Shepherd Leadership

1. According to your understanding, what is Shepherd Leadership?
2. Which parts of the Bible help you to understand what it means to be a shepherd of God's people? List at least two biblical passages, and explain how they help you to understand this idea better.
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### Personal Reflection

Think about everything you have learned about the 3 parts of a shepherd leader that are described in the Bible: the Head, the Heart, and the Hands.

3. Which of these three do you think is a strength in your life and ministry right now? Why do you say that?
4. Which of these three do you think is a weakness in your life and ministry right now? Why do you say that?

5. Who has been a good example of a Shepherd Leader in your own life? Why did you choose that person? What do you see in their life that tells you this person is a faithful Shepherd Leader?

### **Practical Plan to Grow as a Shepherd Leader**

6. List and explain at least three different things that you can do to grow as a Shepherd Leader. Be as specific and practical as you can. For each of these three things, indicate whether this will help you grow in the Head, the Heart, or the Hands as a Shepherd Leader.

*Example: 1 – I will begin meeting with other leaders in my church to pray for our church members by name at least three times each week (Heart).*

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7. Who will you ask to help you be successful in following this plan you have made? List at least three people.

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