

THE HEART OF A SHEPHERD

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The attitude of a true shepherd of God contains the same underlying wisdom, which also enables the leading of the Spirit to fulfill its work. To be dedicated towards these principles is well pleasing to Christ, because it imitates the same disciplines and efforts that he made for us. Many fail to grasp what Christ wants from us, because their lives are filled with those things that God has given them, as opposed to those things that we can do for him. It is the difference between giving and taking, between being mature and childish (the difference between being one who has moved from the milk of the word to the meat of the word).

These two attitudes made the difference between Saul and David... the first two kings of Israel.

ACT 13:22 And when he had removed him (Saul... he was a 'taker'), he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. David had a heart that was pleasing to God, because he wanted to serve God, rather than have God serve him. He learnt his skill by accepting and being faithful to family responsibilities.

David's good attitude had already surfaced with the way he took responsibility over his family's sheep... he was a shepherd.

1SAM 17:34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: David qualifies his commitment to take responsibility.

35 And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Israel was threatened by Goliath and his armies... David took ownership of the problem. This is what Jesus wants from us.

This verse reveals the difference between a good shepherd and a bad one (a good heart and a bad one).

JOH 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. The difference between a shepherd and a hireling is reflected in the way that spiritual responsibility is acted out. The true shepherd takes personal ownership of the people in his immediate care... he is loyal and faithful and will not desert his flock when trouble comes. The hireling moves on and finds another flock to manage... he takes no lasting personal interest in those who God has given him. He is loyal to nothing, but his own needs. This metaphor is very simple to understand when applied to our walk in the Lord. Givers, give their service... takers, take themselves somewhere else.

This verse is very sobering when considered in light of the above scriptural principles.

PHI 2:19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

20 For I have **no man likeminded**, who will naturally **care for your state**. Around thirty years into his ministry, Paul lamented over this astonishing truth. Out of the thousands of converts in all of the churches, he couldn't find anyone (who wasn't already shepherding their flocks), who would care for this church, like a true shepherd. This is disappointing and heartbreaking, but gives us a true insight into the value of a pure heart.

Christ wants us to learn the values that will give us the heart of a true shepherd.

EPH 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

God wants us to love his people like he loves them... not from a distance and not impersonally. He wants us to take full ownership of the people he has placed in our care. Nothing more and nothing less.