

LESSON 1 | THE HEART OF A SHEPHERD

1 Peter 5:2–4 (NLT): “² Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly, not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. ³ Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. ⁴ And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.”

THE HEART OF A SHEPHERD:

1. A SHEPHERD’S HEART IS _____.

John 21:15–17 (NLT): “¹⁵ After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ Peter replied, ‘you know I love you.’ ‘Then feed my lambs,’ Jesus told him. ¹⁶ Jesus repeated the question: ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ Peter said, ‘you know I love you.’ ‘Then take care of my sheep,’ Jesus said. ¹⁷ A third time he asked him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, ‘Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Then feed my sheep.’”

2. A SHEPHERD'S HEART _____.

Acts 20:28–29 (NLT): ²⁸ *So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock—his church, purchased with his own blood, over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders. ²⁹ I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock.*

3. A SHEPHERD'S HEART _____.

Psalms 23:2–3 (NLT): ² *He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. ³ He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.*

4. A SHEPHERD'S HEART _____.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NLT): *“And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.”*

5. A SHEPHERD'S HEART _____.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 (NLT): "We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too."

PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR PASTORS

_____.

Regularly check in with members outside of Sunday services.

_____.

Make every person feel known and valued.

_____.

Show up in times of sickness, grief, and crisis.

_____.

Recognize birthdays, victories, and spiritual growth.

Keep the focus on Christ and sound doctrine.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between managing a church and shepherding a church?
2. In what ways can you show more love to your congregation this month?
3. What's one recent example where you needed to protect your church?
4. Which comes more naturally for you: guiding the flock or guarding the flock? Why?
5. What does "smelling like sheep" look like in your ministry context?

ASSIGNMENT

This week, personally meet or contact **five members** of your church outside of Sunday service. Ask about their lives, pray with them, and note any needs they have.

Write down one specific next step each person could take in their spiritual growth, and pray for wisdom on how to help them take it.