

I can write a book and cook a great meal. I can drive a car and keep my house clean. I find it difficult to control my tongue. I say things I know I should not say. I eat things I should not be eating. I have been doing this for years. I need help! Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, wants to give me that guidance and help! He is patient and will work patience in me. He will be my strength. I resist supervision but I need it. Like sheep, I go astray and want to have my own way. I need a shepherd to watch over me and keep me in his care. Many times I do not want anyone leading me. I am afraid I won't be able to get what I want. I turn from The Shepherd and go my own independent way, thinking if I ignore Him, He will not see what I am doing.

### ***Deceitful Duffie***

When we lived in the Philippines, we had a Doberman dog to guard our house. Duffie was very large, very strong and very smart. She learned how to open our front screen door. She would strike it sharply with her paw and it would open just enough for her to get her nose between the door and the door frame. With a quick whip of her head, she could enter our living room.

We raised bananas in our yard. Our house girl cut the stalk when the bananas were green and hung them upside down to ripen. Duffie loved bananas. They hung in the kitchen. Duffie knew she was not allowed to come into the house to get her food. She was fed in the back yard.

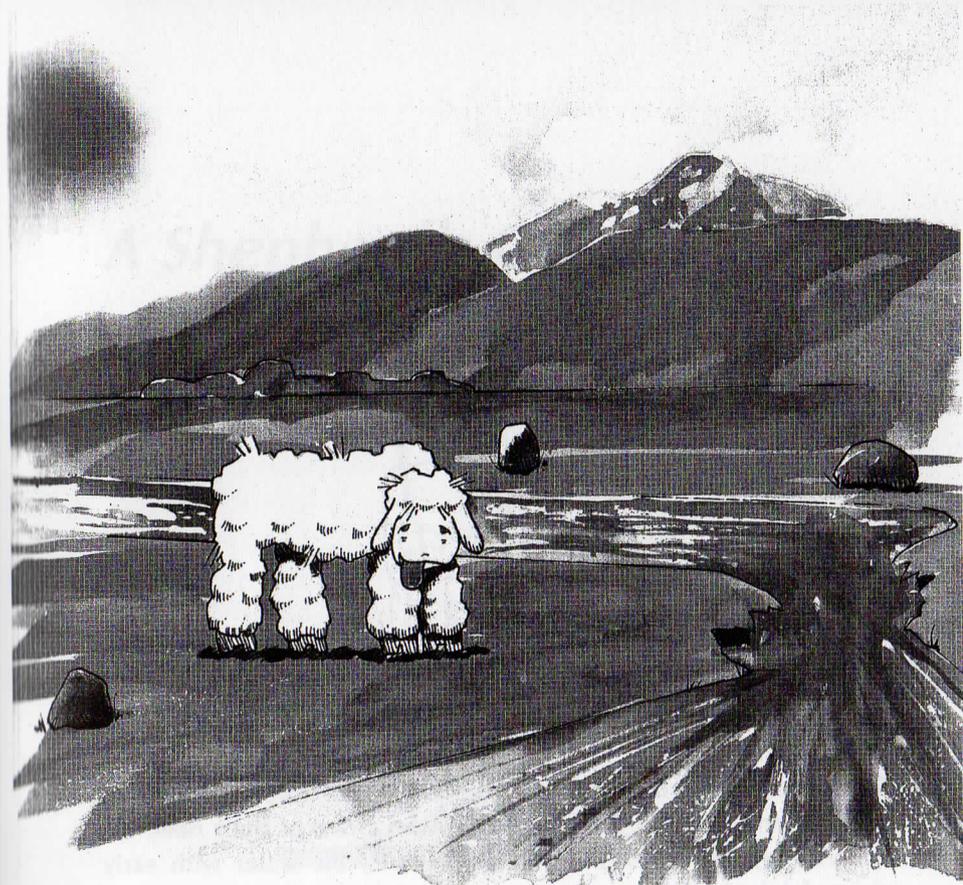
One day while we were sitting in the living room, Duffie popped open the screen door, ran through the house into the kitchen. We sat quietly and waited to see what she was up to!

In a few minutes, Duffie walked through the room with her head turned away from us. She had a large ripe banana in her mouth.

We roared with laughter as we realized what she was doing. Duffie was smart enough to open the door and go for a banana and dumb enough to believe if she did not look at us, we would not see her banana.

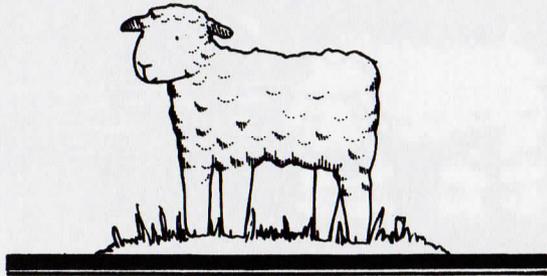
As strong, smart human beings, we often believe if we ignore God, He won't see us with "our bananas"!

It's hard to train a dog and it's even harder to train a person. Since we don't learn from our mistakes, training is difficult. It should be obvious, being like sheep, we need full time supervision!



# **Sheep Need Full-Time Supervision Because They Are Afraid To Drink From Running Water!**

## Characteristics of Sheep



Sheep are afraid to drink from running water. Still water is sometimes stagnant and harmful. Sheep are not even aware of their need for water. They are often found grazing beside the water with early signs of dehydration.

## A Shepherd's Care



An experienced shepherd is aware that sheep must be led to safe water. He must watch each animal to make sure it drinks. Often he resorts to the use of his crook to aid them to begin to drink.

Sheep aren't conscious of their dependence on the shepherd. They nibble away at blades of green grass, staying away from the running water. They can be suffering from a lack of water and be afraid to drink.

**ANOTHER REASON FOR THE SHEPHERD TO HONOR HIS COMMITMENT AND PROVIDE FULL-TIME SUPERVISION FOR THE SHEEP.**

## Characteristics of People

As a teenager I could hardly wait to graduate from high school and leave my loving, caring thoughtful parents. I felt restless and thought going away to college would calm that restless spirit. I wanted to be on my own. I was thirsty for freedom.

Arriving at the university, I found I had to do my own laundry, find my own food, manage my money and on top of all this responsibility, I had to study! I soon got tired of the dormitory life and the "rah rah" gang. That restlessness had followed me to college. My thirst had not been satisfied.

I needed to graduate and get a job and be on my own with nobody telling me what to do. I graduated and got a job. I made \$158.20 each month and paid \$60.00 apartment rent.

I found myself in a financial bind. I had too much pride to let my parents know of my struggles. I had to have at least two dinner dates each week to survive. This life style did not turn out to be satisfying! I was still thirsty!

In November of my first year of teaching school, I met a third year dental student. He was a special guy and I fell in love with him on the second date. He fell in love with me on the first date! We spent every spare minute together and when he asked me to marry him, he promised me everything but the moon! He told me I was wonderful and the greatest girl he had ever dated. He promised to spend the rest of his life making me happy. I believed him! We became engaged 7 weeks after we met and we married 6 months after our engagement.

After a glorious honeymoon we went to our new apartment and settled in for Sam to finish his last year of dental school. I continued to teach fourth grade in the public school. I had failed to realize that after we married, Sam was not going home. I had to wash his clothes, iron his shirts, plan his meals, purchase and cook his food. I had to drive him to school, pick him up each afternoon and account to him for every penny I spent.

I cried each afternoon as I ironed those terrible dental jackets with all those front and back pleats. I was smart and I would figure out a way to get out of all this work. I would get pregnant. Surely Sam would get me a maid and I would not have to do all this terrible house work. I did not feel very satisfied in this new relationship. I was still thirsty!



I got pregnant but I still had to do all the work. Now I cried and threw up as I ironed. To make a long story short, in my search for satisfaction I ended up with three babies in thirty-four months and no help with the housework, the cooking or caring for the children.

All of my fulfilled goals failed to satisfy the thirsting inside of me. I began to wish I had never been born. I was miseragble and as I looked at my life, there was no apparent reason for my misery.

I felt desperate. Sam and I had no time alone. (We were bored with each other anyway.) He worked hard at the office and did

not like bringing problems home. He did not want to hear about my problems in raising his children so we had very little to say to each other.

On occasion we would go out to dinner and end up sitting alone, face to face staring at the napkin or the plate. I hated my life.

### ***Miserable among the happy***

I was invited to a Bible class and definitely did not want to go. I was not interested in religion and did not like people who were. For two years my faithful friend kept inviting me. Finally, I accepted just to shut her up. This was a couples class so I arranged for a baby sitter. I made plans to meet friends after the class so Sam would not be too mad at me for dragging him to this class.

When Sam came in from the office I announced our plans. (With my back to him.) I did not want to see his face when I told him we were going to a Bible class. He did not say one word.

We went to the class. I felt uncomfortable being there. There were fifty happy people in one room. It is not much fun to be miserable and walk into a room of happy people. One man in the rear of the room kept saying "amen" as loud as could be. I felt that I was out of place. These were not my kind of people.

We left that group and met our friends and I had 6 drinks to forget that terrible experience. We got in our car and drove to the country club and never mentioned the class. Sam and I had never prayed together and never read the Bible because religion had no place in our relationship. It was personal, private and very embarrassing to mention God, especially the name of Jesus.

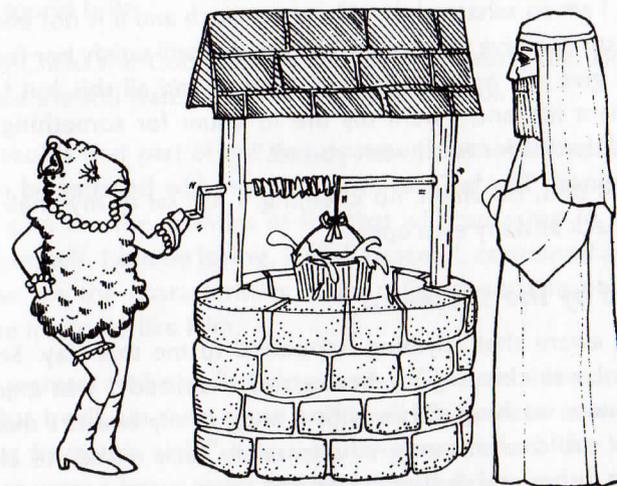
The next morning found me in bed with a hangover. Sam had gone to the office and the children were watching television and scattering cereal over the den floor. I lay in the bed wishing I could go back to sleep when suddenly out of nowhere a Bible verse flashed across the screen of my mind. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10b

## ***The Shepherd's Care***

What did it mean that Jesus would give me an abundant life? How could He? I got out of the bed to look for my old college Bible. I had a few questions that needed to be answered. How could a man who died almost 2,000 years ago help me? I realized in a flash that an abundant life was all I ever wanted. I tried college and friends and a job and a husband and children. None of these things seemed to provide consistent satisfaction. Now I am faced with the fact: Jesus Christ (I knew He was God and that He would not lie) had promised me what I wanted.

I locked the bedroom door and closed the curtains. If my children saw me reading the Bible and if they told their dad, he might think I was crazy.

I grew up believing that if you were too serious about religion you would go crazy. People who believed and studied the Bible were



narrow and thought they were the only ones who knew the truth. I prided myself on being broad-minded and I wanted to continue in that manner of thinking. I wanted to hear what everyone had to say and consider their opinions as I formed my own.

I did not know anything about this Book but I was aware that one of the books was named John. Turning there I read the 4th chapter. I found myself intrigued with what I was reading.

This was the story of Jesus and a woman of Samaria. The woman had come to draw water and Jesus was sitting beside the well. He asked her for a drink. She seemed to know from His appearance that he was Jewish. The Jewish people did not speak to the Samaritans. This woman was shocked that Jesus spoke to her.

Jesus said if she knew who He was, she would ask Him for water. He explained that the water from this earthly well would temporarily satisfy her thirst. She would soon have to drink again. Then He said, "whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:13 & 14

The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." John 4:15

I sat back in my chair. I remember saying, "God, I am so tired of trying to find satisfaction in life. I am so sick of struggling to satisfy my thirst. I am so ashamed that I have so much and it is not enough. God, if Jesus can give this woman a drink that will satisfy her forever, could He give me one, too? I don't understand all this but I want an abundant life and I want my life to count for something so if you could do this for me, I want you to."

That is all I said, no amen, no kneeling. I just sat in my chair with my head back and my eyes open.

### ***Changed by the Shepherd***

I was not aware that anything happened to me that day. Several days later I was cleaning my house and I realized I was enjoying it. Later I was washing dishes with a song in my heart. I must be sick. How could a college graduate enjoy such mundane chores as washing dishes and dusting furniture!

My children did not get on my nerves as they had before. I actually had a song in my heart for no reason. Nothing had changed about my life style but something was different inside of me.

The grass looked greener and the sky seemed more beautiful. The flowers were more apparent to me. I had never noticed their brilliant colors.

I began to have an interest in reading the Bible. I was so shocked at my interest and my understanding of it. I did not want anyone to know that I was sitting home reading the Bible. I lied to my friends when they called to ask what I was doing.

As I read this book, I began to realize that Christianity is not a way of life. It is a man. It is the person of Jesus Christ. He will satisfy the thirsty feelings deep inside of man.

One day I read a quote from a French physicist, Pascal, "In the heart of every man is a God-shaped vacuum that cannot be filled by anything created but by God the Creator made known through Jesus Christ."

I got so excited. This quote answered many of my questions. Why did I feel so good? What was happening to me? I understood that I had been trying to fill that vacuum with people, things, events, places and nothing fit. I felt that I had a round hole inside of me and I had been taking square pegs and trying to force them to fit that round hole.

Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, wants to satisfy me. He leads me beside the still waters and He restoreth my soul.

My soul is that part of me that communicates with my fellow man. I can be satisfied with my relationships. God will change my heart and give me the qualities of life that will cause me to be satisfied with myself. I can be loving, joyful, peaceful, contented and patient. These are the characteristics of Jesus Christ and He now offers to cause me to be like Him.

The woman at the well said to Jesus, "Give me this water to drink so that I will not thirst again and I will not have to come and draw water from this well." It is a burdensome task in the heat of the day to carry a heavy water pot back into the city.

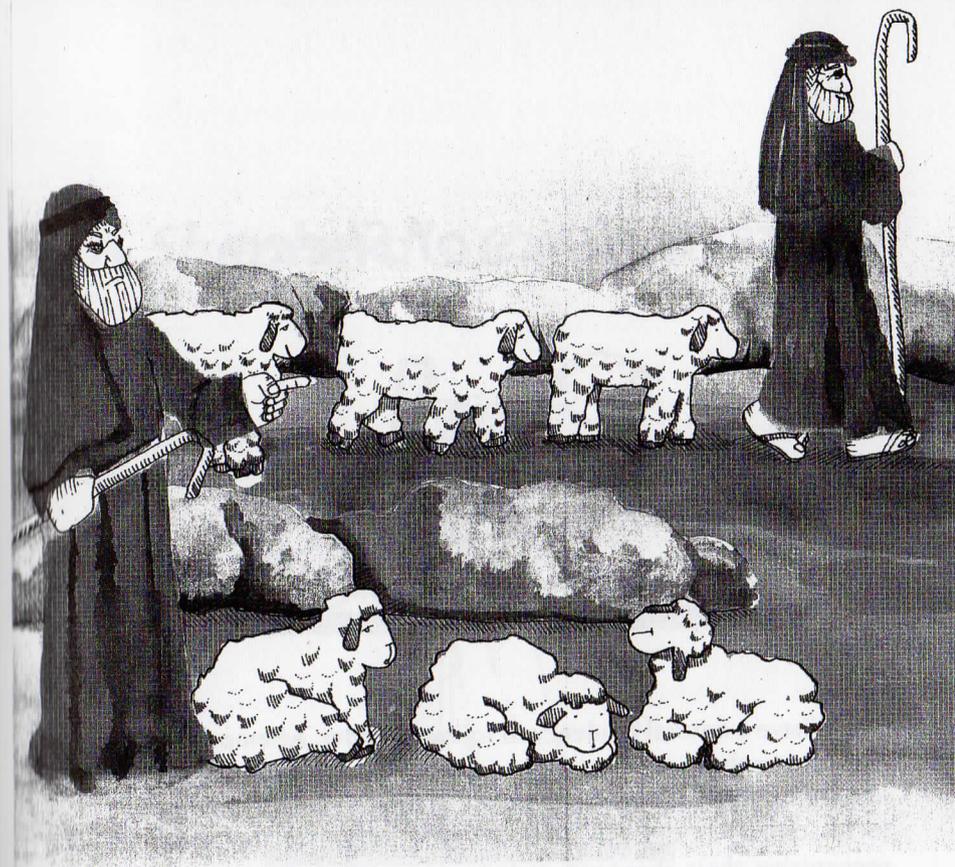
Jesus revealed who He was to this woman. He met her at her point of need. She got so excited she left her water pot and ran into the city to tell the people about Jesus.

Her excitement rested in the fact that she had found a consistent source to satisfy her thirst. Many places in the Bible show water as a symbol of the Word of God.

While grazing by the creek, sheep get preoccupied with the food they want and are blind to their need for the water nearby.

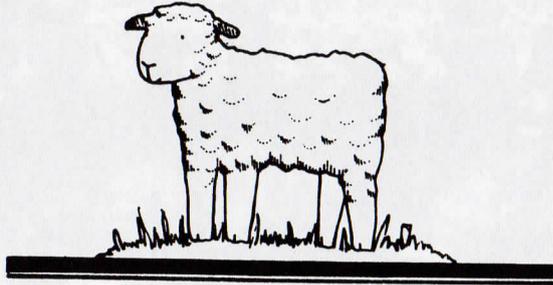
In attempting to satisfy our wants we often find ourselves spiritually dehydrated. When we turn to the Bible we find the water that we need.

We, like sheep, need a shepherd who will lead us to the satisfying still water.



**Sheep Need Full-Time Supervision Because They Are Led, Not Driven!**

## Characteristics of Sheep



Sheep have a natural tendency to follow a leader. Attempts to drive them causes sheep to scatter. They move from one location to another in a group. Sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd and respond to his call. They depend more on their ears than their eyes for recognizing their shepherd. It is important that they spend time with the shepherd to become familiar with his voice. Familiarity builds confidence in the shepherd.

## A Shepherd's Care



Any shepherd attempting to drive his flock soon becomes frustrated because the sheep begin to scatter. An experienced shepherd understands the tendency of sheep and always walks before them. The shepherd talks to the sheep on a regular basis to enable them to be familiar with his voice. It is important for him to be near the sheep to enable them to hear when he speaks. Because the shepherd leads them where their needs are met and protects them at all times, he builds strong confidence in the sheep.

**ANOTHER REASON FOR THE SHEPHERD TO HONOR HIS COMMITMENT AND PROVIDE FULL-TIME SUPERVISION FOR THE SHEEP!**

## *Characteristics of People*

Sheep can't be driven and neither can man. Most parents have to learn the hard way that they can't force their children to go where they would have them go. They can lead them there but it takes time and patience.

Children, like sheep, are going to follow someone and they usually follow in groups. I watched my son get in a group and become a leader. I discouraged the relationship because of the activities of the group. I begged and punished and cried but I could not make him change his friendships.

After all we had done for him and now he was getting involved with the wrong crowd. One morning Mark refused to get out of bed to go to work. Sam went into his room and screamed at him. This was really out of character for Sam because he is not a screamer. I could see the resentment Sam had toward Mark.

Mark jumped out of the bed, threw on his clothes and ran out the front door. I did what all good mothers do, sat down and cried. Sam was in the bathroom shaving. I knew that Mark was going to run away. This was the one thing I was afraid I could not emotionally handle.

Sam came out of the bathroom and saw me crying. This is the one thing Sam can't stand up to emotionally. "Just be happy" is his motto.

He did not want me to cry. It was a bad scene. Sam was "fed up" with Mark's laziness. Now Sam was mad at me for crying and at Mark for sleeping late.

I love Sam and appreciate his good qualities. I looked at him and realized that I wanted Mark to follow his dad. I did not know of another man I would recommend Mark follow. I want Mark to follow the Lord and I felt he needed a role model!

In those few tense minutes, I began to think about the people that influence my life. I knew without having to give it much thought

that they are the people who love me. They are the people who love me unconditionally and accept me just as I am!

Sam and I discussed how we must accept Mark just as he is, with all his bad habits and attitudes. We need to be an example before him and lead by loving him. Mark had wandered from the fold and needed to be led back. As parents, we needed to follow our Shepherd and let Him lead us as we lead our son.

Sam and I prayed and asked God to forgive us for the resentment we felt for our son. We asked God to fill our hearts with love and acceptance for Mark. Sam telephoned Mark at work. He said he was sorry for the way he had talked to him.

Mark quickly accepted his dad's apology and apologized for his behavior. Mark knew he was wrong. He knew his dad should get him out of bed and send him to work. Mark also knew his dad was wrong in the way he did it.

That was the day Sam began to lead Mark. It took five years for us to see a change in Mark. We had told him that we did not approve of his life style. We did not need to keep telling him over and over and over and over. He is a smart guy and he heard and understood the first time we said it.

We never backed down on our stand or compromised our standards but we loved Mark and let him know we were here when he needed us. We wanted Mark's home to be a place of peace where he could come and find acceptance. He need never be afraid or ashamed to come home.

### *A splitting headache*

One of my greatest experiences as a mother came in a most unusual way. The night before Mark graduated from high school, he got in a fight. The only one I knew about. He went to a graduation party that we gave him permission to go to. One of the guys hosting the party got drunk and started to fight one of Mark's friends. Mark is 6 feet tall. His friend was 5 feet 9 inches and the host was 6 feet 2 inches. Mark stepped in to help his friend and the host's friend came down on the top of Mark's head with a bottle.

Mark's head split open. Mark tried to defend himself when three boys threw him to the ground and started kicking him. Mark managed

to break away from the guys and ran through the woods for more than a mile. Blood covered his head and his body. He ran to a house and the lady inside allowed him to use her telephone. Mark called home!

The telephone rang at 11:30 p.m. Mark said, "Mom, I have been hurt, will you come get me?" I told Sam what Mark had said. Sam jumped out of bed, threw on his clothes and went for him.

We had to take him to the hospital emergency room to have stitches in his head. When the word got out among his group, one of his friends said, "I can't believe you called your mom. She would have been the last person in the world I would have called."

## *The Shepherd's Care*

I thank God that Mark wanted to call home. No one loves our children as Sam and I. Nobody is going to take the time or go to the expense to do for them as we do. Mark was returning to the fold.

God is looking for leaders today who will feed His sheep. Leaders who will lead the sheep to Him so that He can provide for them. John 13:35 "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

It is much more exciting to go outside our homes to be a leader. We get little if any praise or appreciation for the labor of love done with the small flock gathered around the dinner table.

Sam and I decided that we wanted our children to know that God is love and that He desires that our love increase and abound for each other. God causes this to happen. The best way to teach them is by example. They need to see us turn to God for love and see us expect Him to cause our love for them to increase. To know that our love is not dependent on their behavior or their appreciation of us.

We want our children to believe that God is faithful to provide our needs when we follow Him.

When we follow Jesus Christ, our Shepherd, we can recommend our life style to others. Paul writes in Philippians 4:9, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and see in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

Paul was actually suggesting that people listen to his words and watch what he did and do the same. Can you say that? Sheep are led, not driven. God doesn't drive us. He leads us. The 23rd Psalm, 3rd verse says, "He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

Some people think they are fine without a shepherd. Undisturbed,

these people do well. When disturbance occurs and they must deal with upheaval in their lives, fear often sets in. With no leadership man becomes frustrated and unsure of himself.

During those quiet undisturbing days of our lives, we have a tendency to believe things will stay that way. Life is full of surprises! Some good and some bad. With the shepherd at the helm there is no fear or confusion.

When we follow the leadership of the Lord, He is pleased with our leadership of men. His name is glorified. This is not to say that when we follow the Lord, we never do anything wrong again. It is to say, He teaches us how to correct our mistakes. As others watch us, they learn how to correct their mistakes. God never expects us to be perfect but He does ask that we perfectly obey his commands. We follow Him and let Him forgive us when we sin, lead us to the water of His Word where our souls are satisfied, and He will make us leaders of men.



# Sheep Need Full-Time Supervision Because When They Are On Their Backs They Cannot Right Themselves!