

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.

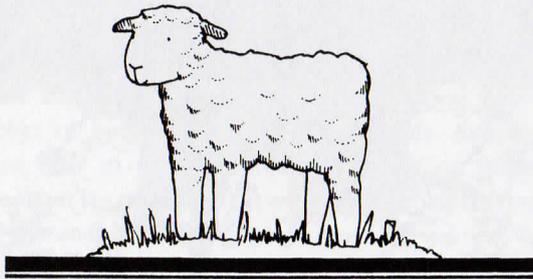
During those quiet undisturbing days of our lives, we have a tendency to believe things will stay that way. Life is full of surprises! Some good and some bad. With the shepherd at the helm there is no fear or confusion.

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!

## Characteristics of Sheep



When sheep fall and roll over onto their spine, they do not have the ability to get up. All their kicking and bleating doesn't help. While on their back they can't follow the shepherd, even though they hear his voice. They become isolated from the flock and they are easy prey for their enemies. They suffer from being in this position. Sheep can't help each other back on their feet. Only the shepherd can help. (Notice the wise sheep suggesting he get the shepherd!)

## A Shepherd's Care



The shepherd must keep an eye on the sheep to make sure they stay on their feet. A knowledgeable shepherd is aware of the need to keep the sheep in the fold and of their absolute dependence on him to stay on their feet. He must be in hearing range to hear their cries and respond. In order for the shepherd to effectively lead, the sheep must be in position to follow.

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

# *Characteristics of People*

Many people fall down and can't get up. In 1976 the American Medical Society declared that 82% of the people in hospitals were suffering from psychosomatic illnesses.

These people were really sick. There was no physical reason for the basic cause of their illness. They are down and can't get up.

Emotional disturbances can cause bodily harm. We can become ill because of the problems of the day. We won't be faking it. We will be sick. When the doctor finds no reason for the basic cause of the illness, counseling is recommended.

Life is filled with unexpected events. I have decided it is full of disappointments. We think we are organized and things fall apart. We look forward to middle age when the children are grown and gone and we can settle back and enjoy the evening newspaper.

Middle age finds us looking after our elderly parents and we find that our children don't grow up and leave home. They multiply and come back! Sam and I have three generations of people looking to us for assistance and counsel!

Life is going to cause us to encounter severe blows. There will be times when these blows can knock us down. The issue is not being knocked down but how long before we recover. The shepherd keeps going and the sheep can't follow while on its back. We need to understand why we fall and how to get up. We fall in response to the blows of life: the sudden death of a loved one, an unexpected financial reversal, divorce, disappointment in a child's behavior, an affair, etc.

When tragedy strikes and disappointments come our way we need to know how to turn to the shepherd so that he can get us on our feet and back into the mainstream of life as quickly as possible.

We need to learn how to get help before we need it. Usually in the midst of trouble, we panic and our thinking is not clear.

## ***An unexpected shock***

In August of 1986, Dr. Henry Brandt and his wife Marcy came to visit us. Dr. Brandt is a Christian counselor, author and popular conference speaker. He has been our friend for more than 20 years but I had not met Marcy. Henry and Marcy had been married 4 years. She and I had a wonderful time together. I loved Marcy. We developed a great friendship from the start.

Henry was speaking at a Men's retreat and Marcy and I went shopping. Henry would be home that night. I wanted my friend Jane to meet her so we went by Jane's house.

We had tea and cookies and I asked Marcy to tell Jane and her husband, Jim how she met Henry. As Marcy was telling her story, she suddenly grabbed her head with both hands. She looked at me and said, "Something has happened to me!" It was obvious that she was in a great deal of pain. She asked Sam to help her. We laid her on the floor and called the paramedics. As these men worked with Marcy we watched as she slowly became unconscious and her vital signs became erratic. Sam told me that we were losing her. We prayed for God to give us wisdom and guide the doctors as they treated her.

Sam rode in the ambulance to the hospital. Jane and I went to find Henry. My heart was beating so fast I thought I would faint. I trembled as I walked into the hotel to tell him what had happened.

I remember seeing him come through the door into the lobby and suddenly my heart slowed down. I was calm as could be. Henry had been my teacher. He taught me to trust the Lord in the good times so when the bad times come, I will keep on trusting Him.

I told him Marcy was seriously ill and Sam had taken her to the hospital. Henry got in the back seat of Jane's car. Jane was driving and I was sitting beside her. We were silent. Henry's voice suddenly broke the silence, "Lord, you have promised in your word that you would comfort us in our tribulation and give us peace in times of trouble. We have trouble and tribulation so Lord we are asking you to comfort us and give us your peace. Amen."

No one spoke. We arrived at the hospital and the doctor told Henry that Marcy was gone. She had suffered a massive cerebral

hemorrhage. The doctor explained that Marcy had a weak area in one of the blood vessels in her head. She could have had this all her life. It could not be detected and there is nothing that could have been done to correct the weakness. Henry cried and then turned to us and said, "I don't know what I am going to do without Marcy. I committed my life to the Lord 40 years ago. He has been faithful to me and I know He will not fail me now. Marcy has been a faithful companion to me. I will miss her." Henry had been in the habit of allowing God to pick him up when the events of life knocked him down. Henry Brandt went on doing what he had become accustomed to doing.

I am glad that I had the privilege of being with Henry those few hard days. I watched a man who had been leading me, follow his own advice.

None of us knows what the day will bring. We need to practice turning to God in the small disappointments of life so when big disappointments come our way, we will keep on doing what we are in the habit of doing.

I had a friend who had cancer. She was not a Christian and many people had prayed for her for years. Many said, "Now she will turn to the Lord. God is going to answer our prayers."

I watched as this lady did what she was in the habit of doing. She was very wealthy and could purchase anything she wanted or go any place she chose.

When the doctor told her that she had cancer her reply was, "No problem, I have plenty of money and I can go anywhere in the world for treatment. I will spend every penny I have to find a cure!"

My friend died trying to find a cure for this dreaded disease. I never once heard that she turned to the Lord. When she was flat on her back, she had no shepherd to call upon. Not only did she not have a shepherd, she never seemed interested in finding Him!

I know many people who have had an untimely death in their family and they have never recovered from the shock nor have they gotten over the grief and bitterness.

What a sad thing that we spend our time preparing financially for the future and caring for our body by going to exercise classes three times each week. We take our vitamins and count calories and forget about our spiritual life.

We don't think being spiritually prepared for the events of the day is important. When a blow comes and we find ourselves on our back, if we have not been following the Shepherd, it is unlikely that we will turn to him for help. Often our guilt makes us feel ashamed to ask for help.

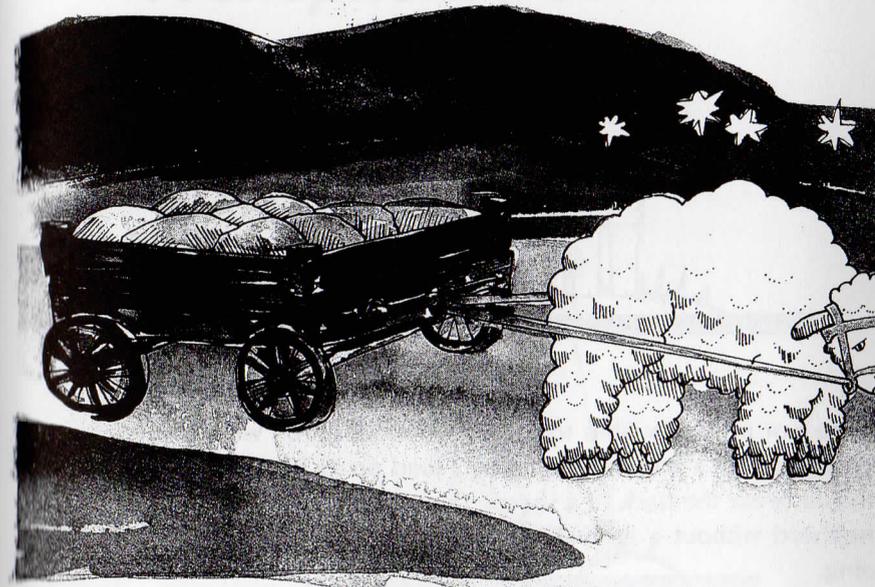
Sheep Need Full-  
Time Supervision  
Because They Are  
Not Burden  
Bearing Animals!

## The Shepherd's Care

In II Corinthians chapter 4 verse 7 The Living Bible says: "But this precious treasure—this light and power that now shines within us—is held in a perishable container, that is, in our weak bodies. Everyone can see that the glorious power within must be from God and is not our own." In verses 9 and 10: "We are hunted down, but God never abandons us. We get knocked down, but we get up again and keep going. These bodies of ours are constantly facing death just as Jesus did; so it is clear to all that it is only the living Christ within (who keeps us safe)."

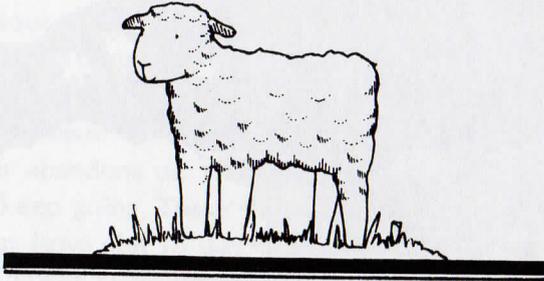
We need a strong confidence in the shepherd while we are on our feet. Should we find ourselves on our backs, that strong confidence will motivate us to call to Him to put us back on our feet and keep us moving as He leads us throughout life.

When on our backs, we, like sheep, need a Shepherd!



**Sheep Need Full-Time Supervision Because They Are Not Burden Bearing Animals!**

## *Characteristics of Sheep*



Sheep are not physically able to carry heavy loads. You will never see one hitched to a wagon or carrying a load on its back. A heavy load would break the back of a sheep. They seem to follow behind the shepherd without a care. They don't even know where they are going.

## *A Shepherd's Care*



The shepherd bears the burden of finding pasture and fresh water for the sheep. He leads them to safety day and night. A caring shepherd has made preparation for the day. He knows where to find pasture and water before he starts leading his sheep. When the sheep have no concern for their needs they seem to follow the shepherd more closely and stay in the flock.

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

## *Characteristics of People*

God compares men with sheep. This being so, men were not designed to bear burdens. In the Living Bible I Peter chapter 5 verse7: "Let Him have all your worries and cares, for He is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you." Notice the three words used in this verse that could only be stated by an all powerful omniscient God:

- 1) He doesn't want some of your worries, but **all** of them,
- 2) He is not sometimes thinking about you but **always**,
- 3) He is not watching some of the things that concern you, but **everything**.

Does this excite you? It should!

Worry causes fatigue. To worry is to become disturbed, tense and troubled. The use of the word "cares" in I Peter means to be anxious and to endure emotional pain from the apprehension of evil.

When we worry our muscles become tense. We jump at the simple sound of a telephone ringing. Our body does not function properly. Headaches, stomach aches and a spastic colon are common. Things go from bad to worse. It is hard to concentrate when you are in pain or bodily discomfort.

God has offered to take our cares and worries. He made us, knows all about us and desires the best for us. Psalms 34:10

### *Emotional strain-physical change*

My daughter, Dawn had a convulsion when she was ten months old. I had never seen a person in this condition and I thought she had died in my arms. Her beautiful brown eyes were fixed in a stare, her little mouth was open and her precious body was rigid. When I saw my baby in this condition I became hysterical. I was not able to help care for her. God was gracious and had Sam home

with me when this happened. I started screaming. Sam took the baby to the kitchen and began to work with her. He was screaming for me to help him and I was just standing in the living room with my head in my hands, screaming as loud as I could. Some neighbors heard me and ran to help.

I was paralyzed with fear. My child needed me and I could not function. My neighbor called the doctor and my husband cared for the baby. I was useless. For years I lived with the memory of this day. I was ashamed of my behavior and surprised at my weakness. I wondered what mental condition I would have been in had she died. I was tormented by these memories.

Months later I ended up in the doctor's office with a spastic colon. My doctor explained to me that the pain was caused by tension so he gave me tranquilizers to relieve my pain. I was glad for that little pill. When I felt the pain begin in my abdomen, I took the pill. It worked. The pain would always subside. I never knew when I would experience an attack so I never left home without the pills.

When I became a Christian I realized that God loved me enough to die for me. I also realized that He loved my children in the same way. He even loves them more than I do. That seemed impossible but I knew it was true. This being the case, I found it easy to trust Him with their lives. I have been given the privilege of caring for them while they are young but He bears the responsibility for them. Although I can't always go with them, He does, although I can't see them 24 hours each day, He does.

My children are Christians, God is their heavenly Father. He is their Shepherd. Should they die before me, I know they will go to be with Him and one day we will be together. Words are not adequate to express the freedom I felt when this began to make sense to me. I truly felt that a heavy weight had been taken from my shoulders. I seemed to be able to breathe easier!

I pray daily for the safety of my family. I ask God to keep them from harm. I want them to live long healthy lives but now I know if God takes them before He takes me, I can trust Him. I no longer live with the torment of fear.

Now I was free to enjoy my children. I no longer felt panic over what would happen to them. The pain in my abdomen went away.

If you have ever had a spastic colon, you know it completely debilitates you. I know now that my suffering was totally unnecessary except for what it taught me. I learned that worry and the tension resulting from it can cause pain and bodily harm.

To cast your cares on the Lord does not mean you are not interested. It doesn't mean you are not involved in finding solutions to problems. It simply means you are not anxious during your involvement. You have the choice of being anxiously involved or peacefully involved.

### ***A down in the mouth sheep***

It is not easy to break habits. It is hard to commit burdens to the Lord when you have been bearing them for years. My husband, Sam is a dentist. He worked hard to pay his way through dental school. In order to save money, we lived on a tight budget during our three years in the U.S. Air Force. Sam would have little income as he established his private practice.

Sam opened his office and it was "slow-go" for several years. The office was closed Thursday and Saturday afternoons and all day Sunday. On two or three occasions, we took a vacation. We left at noon on Thursday and returned Sunday afternoon. This three day vacation meant that Sam was out of his office for only one and one-half working days.

We only took two or three of these three day vacations because after Friday morning, I was ready to go home. Sam was a mental wreck! He knew that one and one-half days out of the office could mean starvation for the family. I felt sorry for him. Just imagine, one wife and three small children looking to your two hands to produce enough money to house, feed, clothe and educate them. What a responsibility!

Sam was with us in body but we knew his mind was back on the appointment book. He seldom heard what we were saying, did not smile much and was short tempered with the children.

Monday was a glorious day, Sam went back to the office! I don't mean by that statement that we did not love Sam. It was just miserable having a dad around physically who was not around mentally.

Sam invited Jesus Christ to come into his life on the same day I did. We began to study the Bible and pray together. This was a new experience for us. Sam began to tell me about the burden

he felt to provide for us and how he could not get rid of it. Becoming a Christian had not helped.

One afternoon on the front page of our newspaper there appeared a picture of the earth. It was the first time the earth had been photographed from outer space. The picture was in color and you could see the water masses but you could not identify the continents.

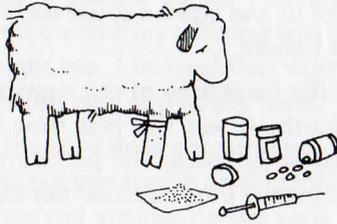
Sam walked up the driveway looking at that picture. As he came into the kitchen to show me, he realized that there was our planet suspended in space. Two-thirds of its surface was water and not one drop was spilling! God had created this universe and was in complete control of it.

Sam kept looking at the picture and realized that North America was a very small area. The United States was hard to identify. Just think how large the U.S. is and yet it could hardly be identified. Alabama could not be distinguished from the other states. Then he realized that his office was not visible. He started to laugh. "Just think," Sam said, "God can sustain the universe with every drop of water in place. My office is so small you can't see it and I have trouble believing He can handle it!"

That was the day Sam cast the burden of his practice on the Lord, knowing He cares for him. Some people say, the Lord has more important things to do than take care of a dental office. Yet the Bible teaches us that God delights in caring for His flock. He delights in leading His flock to green pastures and beside the still waters.

Sam began to commit each day to the Lord. This commitment included his appointment book as well as the collections at the end of each month. Sam's mental attitude began to change. Slowly the worry and anxiety went away. He was no less interested in his patients and his practice. He was free to enjoy his profession. The worry would return on many occasions and he would just remember that picture from outer space. Sam needed to commit each day to the Lord and trust Him to supply our needs. You can't commit a week or even tomorrow. This is something you need to do daily.

Many people turn to drugs to help relieve their burden and worry. This will give a temporary sense of peace. However, I don't recommend the use of drugs for this purpose.



Because we worry about tomorrow, we can not enjoy today! I have heard Sam say, "Don't tell me worrying doesn't help. Most of the things I worry about never happen!"

Sometimes it helps us to remember that today is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday.

## *The Shepherd's Care*

When you cast your burden on the Lord, you trust Him to help you find answers to your problems. There is a wonderful promise in the book of James, chapter 1 verses 5-8: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Wisdom is knowledge experienced. Knowledge is knowing the facts. Wisdom comes from putting these facts into practice. Notice the conditions for getting wisdom: faith, no wavering, single mindedness and stability.

Ask God to give you wisdom to live each day according to His Word and to show you how to practice the things you learn from Him.

Dr. Henry Brandt once told me, "As you prayerfully commit your days to the Lord, there are no problems, only challenges." I have read the statement, "Prayer changes things". However, I believe prayer changes people and people change things! God uses us to solve difficult situations. He gives us the knowledge we need and then by the work of His Holy Spirit, He shows us how to put this knowledge into practice. It is exciting to watch Him work.

This is what it means to rest in the Lord. No mental anguish! Peace of mind and heart. This is what God has promised us in John chapter 16 verse 33: "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome this world".

Like sheep, we are not designed to bear burdens. As the Lord becomes our burden bearer, we are free to enjoy Him and be used by Him.