

we know to be right. Our reactions when things don't go our way will trouble us.

In Part III, we read the good news! "And the Lord (God) hath laid on Him (Jesus, the Messiah) the iniquity of us all." I believe the word iniquity can best be defined as wanting to have our own way. Herein lies God's provision for our tendency to want to have our way and the reactions when we don't get our way. The provision is in Christ's atoning death, His resurrection and His coming to live in our lives (when we invite Him in). Practical applications are given so you can benefit from God's provision.

I pray that you will be motivated afresh to follow confidently our Lord, The Shepherd.

PART I

All We Like Sheep . . .

The telephone rang in the dead of night. I began to grope for the receiver. Finding it, I managed a weak and husky hello. The voice on the other end of the line said, "Mary Glynn, are you asleep?" I felt that question did not deserve an answer!

Barbara was crying, "Jeff has run away from home." Jeff was Barbara's 16 year old son. He had decided that life was too short to have to live with his parent's rules. He wanted to make his own decisions.

Mary called at eight a.m. "I have to talk to you. I'll pick you up and we will go for a ride. I do not want anyone in your house to hear what I have to say." Mary's son had decided he wanted to do his own thing. It just so happened that "his thing" was not what his parents had in mind for him to do!

Agnes came in the front door sobbing. Her head was buried in her hands. Her husband Joe had done it again. He had promised he would stop seeing Lois. Agnes caught them together the night before.

Alice came by to tell me that her telephone was out of order. We called the number and the nice voice on the recording said that we had reached a number that had been temporarily disconnected. What did the telephone company mean disconnecting her telephone? Surely her husband had paid the bill! He promised he would pay all bills on time this month.

How do you explain such behavior? How do you help these victims handle their reactions and help them decide what they should do about such treatment?

I have had my share of crises and unexpected problems that intruded into my life and I found an answer. I have been sharing my solution

in seminars and in counseling. That is why these people called me. I have discovered a “manual” written by the Creator of us all, called the Bible.

This manual says of itself in II Timothy chapter 3 verses 16 and 17: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

All scripture is given by God and is profitable, let’s stop here! All people want to live profitable lives. Our Creator has declared to us that which is profitable. In a recent article George Gallop said, “America is truly spiritually illiterate.” In a recent survey 8 out of 10 Americans identified themselves as Christians. Yet only 4 out of 10 knew that Jesus Christ delivered the sermon on the mount! If you want to live a profitable life, then you will need to be knowledgeable of the Bible. You need to understand its doctrines in order to know why you believe it to be truth. Reproof is not a pleasant experience but a necessary one. Through reproof, God shows us what needs to be changed and corrected. We learn how to be righteous and that simply means how to choose the correct behavior. The purpose for this exercise is explained in the verse: “we can be furnished unto all good works.” It feels good to know you have done the right thing.

This manual again describes itself in Hebrews chapter 4 verse 12: “The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

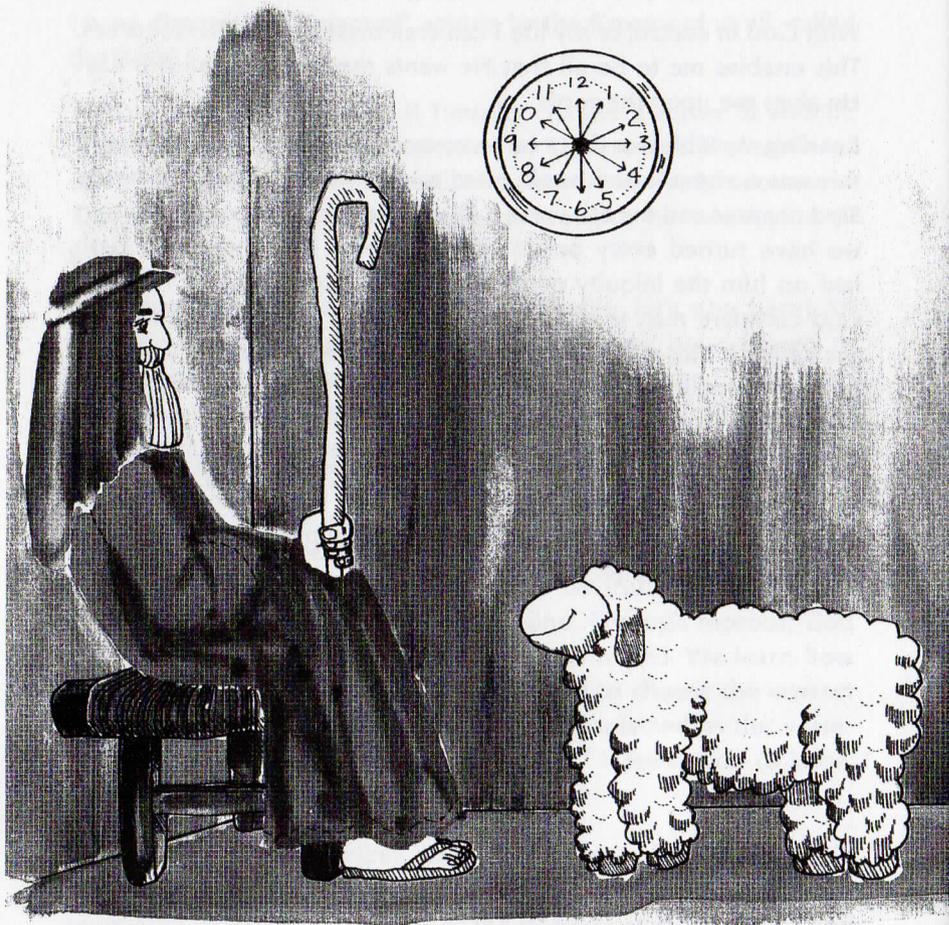
The Word of God works quickly. It is sharp and powerful. It enables us to understand our manner of thinking. Understanding the Word of God doesn’t make us mind readers, it just teaches us about human nature and helps us to understand what is in our hearts.

Sleepless nights and guilt ridden days are not evidence of success. We may possess power, position and wealth but if our hearts are not right, we are unable to enjoy our accomplishments. No amount of worldly success can satisfy a restless spirit.

With God in control of my life I can avail myself of all His resources. This enables me to be all that He wants me to be for all the days He gives me upon the earth.

Reading my Bible one day, I came across the book of Isaiah. I thought this was a complicated book. Hard to understand. I noticed in the 53rd chapter and the 6th verse “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” All we like sheep . . . Why did God compare man to sheep? He had all the animals of the world available to him and yet he chose sheep. There must be a reason for this comparison. I knew nothing about sheep and had never known one person interested in studying them.

Since God declares man to be like sheep, I decided to study sheep to get to know me! This book contains the information I learned about sheep and shepherds and how we as people compare to sheep and relate to a shepherd (GOD).



Sheep Need Full-Time Supervision

Sheep are the only herd animals that require full-time supervision. When a man decides to raise them he must commit his life to them. Other herd animals can be fenced, fed, watered and checked on occasionally and they will probably be fine. Not so with sheep! They must be watched during the day and secured at night. In the Middle Eastern countries, the shepherds bring their sheep into the house at night.

I sat on a wall in the old city of Jerusalem and watched the shepherds lead their sheep into the fields. They walked them out of the city in the early morning and in the late afternoon you would find them walking back into the city.

I rode a bus through the hillside to the Dead Sea and saw the nomadic Bedouins in the fields watching their flock. They spent the entire day walking among the sheep. What a tiring, thankless job that seemed to be.

Since God compares men with sheep, as sheep, men need full-time supervision. Men are not like cows who can be put out to pasture. They are not like fish who swim around unnoticed. Men need to be cared for and supervised.

In the Old Testament days before Jesus was born, God had chosen certain men to be leaders of men. When the children of Israel were in bondage to the people of Egypt, God selected Moses to lead these people to freedom.

Moses was in the field caring for the sheep of his father-in-law when God called him to go and tell the Egyptian pharaoh to let His people go.

Moses was going to have a hard job leading 2 million murmuring people through a desert for 40 years. God never sends His man unprepared. Moses received training as he cared for the sheep. He learned to care patiently and constantly for the sheep. When God gave him orders, Moses switched from sheep to men. Since we are all like sheep, Moses had learned a great deal about human nature while caring for sheep.

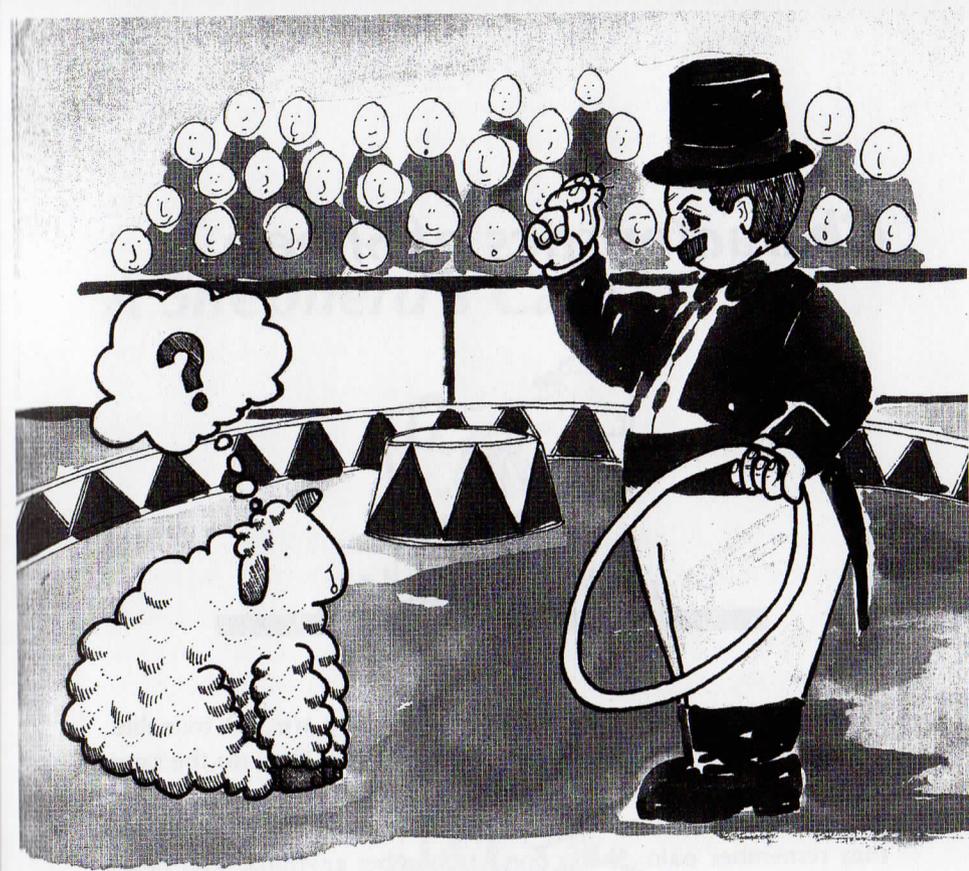
David was a young boy when God picked him to be the King of Israel. He was picked to be the king, but he was sent back into the fields to keep the flock.

David knew from experience that sheep need full-time supervision, and he must have learned that man did too! He wrote in the all-time favorite 23rd Psalm: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...

In John 10:11 Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Jesus became our shepherd. He was willing to give constant supervision to His people who were like sheep. Jesus refers to himself as the door of the sheep fold. He said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." John 10:9

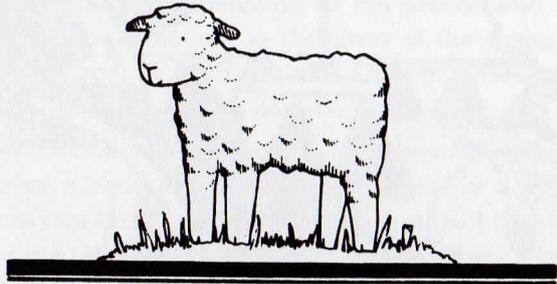
Have you ever wondered why Jesus called Himself the door? A man once observed a Bedouin shepherd at the close of a day, leading his sheep into a rock enclosure. He was impressed with the shepherd's concern for the safety of the sheep. He noticed there was no door for the enclosure.

When asked about the door, the shepherd replied, "I sleep in the doorway. I myself am the door. None of the sheep come out except with my permission and no wolves can enter in unless they pass me first. I am the door." What security this should give to us! Jesus is the door. Nothing can get to us without passing through Him!



Sheep Need Full-Time Supervision Because They Are Not Trainable!

Characteristics of Sheep



Sheep need full-time supervision because they are not trainable. Their problem is they never learn from mistakes. They do the same dumb things over and over, again and again. Trainable animals are those that learn from mistakes. They respond to punishment and they remember pain. Sheep don't remember anything. You never see sheep performing on television or in a circus. They go astray and get in trouble. Despite this, they continue to stray from the shepherd's care.

A Shepherd's Care



Knowledgeable shepherds are aware that sheep are not trainable. A shepherd must commit himself to the constant care of his flock. He must honor this commitment day and night for the life of the sheep since he knows that the sheep don't remember. Pain and punishment have no effect on future behavior.

THIS IS ONE REASON FOR A SHEPHERD'S COMMITMENT TO FULL-TIME SUPERVISION.

Characteristics of People

When a child is labeled not trainable he is said to be custodial. For the protection and safety of the child, he must be placed in the hands of a person capable of giving special care to him.

Man has been greatly gifted by God. We have the ability to build supersonic aircraft, high rise buildings, super highways and mighty bridges. We have developed vaccines to prevent certain diseases from spreading, we have learned to count calories in food and to build computers that store billions of facts.

We can write books and plays and compose music and sing great songs, but we have trouble with our weight! We know that we should not lie but we keep on doing it in spite of all our resolutions made on New Year's Day and throughout the year. We promise ourselves and others that we will stop losing our temper and before we know what has happened, we have lost it again!

Despite all the evidence, we don't like thinking of ourselves as being custodial. That is a bad sounding word. With all our God given gifts and talents, we find it hard to believe that we need to put ourselves in the total care of anyone, God included!



Several years ago I went on a diet. I was successful. I lost 25 pounds and I really looked good. My friends would stop me on the street and ask me how I lost all my weight. I would laugh and say, "I stopped eating." Now that is not exactly true, but I did stop eating too much food. I cut back on my calorie intake and burned more calories than I ate. The ounces began to fall off. Slowly but surely my clothes began to fit better. After 7 months of being hungry, I had lost my 25 pounds.

Now that I was at my desired weight I could forget about dieting and enjoy food. Several months later I popped a button off my new skirt. I quickly sewed it on again. Several days later I slid into the center section of the back seat of my car and that same button popped off for the second time.

I was really annoyed with myself for not being able to sew a simple button on a skirt. I found some quilting thread in my sewing box and decided to use it. Now that button would stay put! To my amazement the knot on the quilting thread pulled through the fabric of my skirt.

I had to face the truth. The trouble with the button was not my sewing. I now had to get the courage to look in the full-length mirror behind my bedroom door. It was even harder to get the courage to step on the bathroom scales. The sad fact was made evident. Ten pounds had returned!

I was so mad at my metabolism that I decided to forget it and move the button to the end of the skirt belt. Forget scales and starving. My metabolism was such that I was just going to be over-weight!

I soon got tired of a thick waist line and went back to being hungry. I lost 10 pounds. I have repeated this cycle more than twice in my fifty years of life. I just don't seem to learn from my mistakes. I find myself doing the same dumb things over and over and over, again and again and again.

For many years, the latest diet book has been found listed in the top ten best selling books in America. Could it be there are others with my same problem? I need full-time supervision to remind me what to eat and how much. I need a special kind of discipline to do what I know I should do!

The truth will set you free!

I have another problem. This one is lying. I am getting better but several months ago my husband and I agreed not to repeat something we had heard. I went right out and repeated it. That night as we were standing before our separate closets hanging up our clothes and getting ready for bed, Sam asked me if I repeated it! I was amazed at how quickly I said, "No"! Sam believed me!

I finished hanging up my clothes and went into the bathroom to brush my teeth. Closing the door I turned and there was my face in the mirror, looking back at me. I suddenly felt hot all over. I realized that Sam would find out what I had done. He would know. It might be tomorrow or next week or next month but he would find out. It might even take six months but he would find out. I was going to dread seeing my husband and even dread his phone calls.

I could picture it. Sam would come home late and tired. He would slowly walk up the sidewalk to our front door, carrying his briefcase. His head would be bowed. I would hear him and look out the front window to be sure it was Sam. When I saw his downtrodden appearance I would know that now he had found out what I did!

If it did not happen that way, he would call me on the telephone and his voice would sound low and tired. The minute I would hear him I would be sure that NOW he has found out.

I buried my head in my hands. I was trapped. I hate having to hide something from Sam. I could not face the next days or weeks or even months because of my lie. I must say that I was not sorry I broke our agreement. I was sorry I was now about to get caught in a lie!

What I had done could not be undone. I had told somebody something we agreed we would not tell. You cannot take back words. Does God offer help for a situation such as mine? Is there a way to correct part of my mistake? How can God help me now?

The Shepherd's Care

My maintenance manual, the Bible, teaches me what to do about telling lies. First, I learned that God calls it "sin". That seems to be a harsh word! I John 1:9 explains what to do about sin. "If we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confess means to admit oneself guilty of what one is accused of. It is a result of inward conviction. I wanted to justify my lie and say I did it so Sam would not lecture me. I wanted to stay out of trouble and lying is one of the easiest ways to accomplish that goal. I had to be willing to admit my guilt and agree with God. He would do the rest! He would forgive and cleanse my heart. I bowed my head and agreed that I had been wrong and I thanked Him for His faithfulness to take this sin from me.

Now I had to clear up this matter with Sam. He was in bed almost asleep. I climbed in the bed and snuggled close to him. I put my head on his shoulder and reached my right arm around his chest and pulled him close to me. He was enjoying this. I said, "Sam, I have something to tell you." Tenderly, He said, "What?" I said, "I lied to you!" He sat up in bed, looked at me with a strange look and asked, "why"! I told him I lied because I did not want a lecture from him! He laughed, laid down and went to sleep. We never mentioned the incident again except when I use it as an illustration in my seminars or in my counseling. I hate lying. I wish I could promise I will not tell another lie. It was so easy for me to do. I lied so quickly. I need that inward convicting work of the Holy Spirit to make me aware of my sin. This comes as a result of having Jesus Christ in control of my life, having Him as my Shepherd leading me. I need to hear that still small voice somewhere inside of me calling my attention to my mistakes. Without this guidance, I keep doing the same dumb things over and over and over, again and again and again.

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.

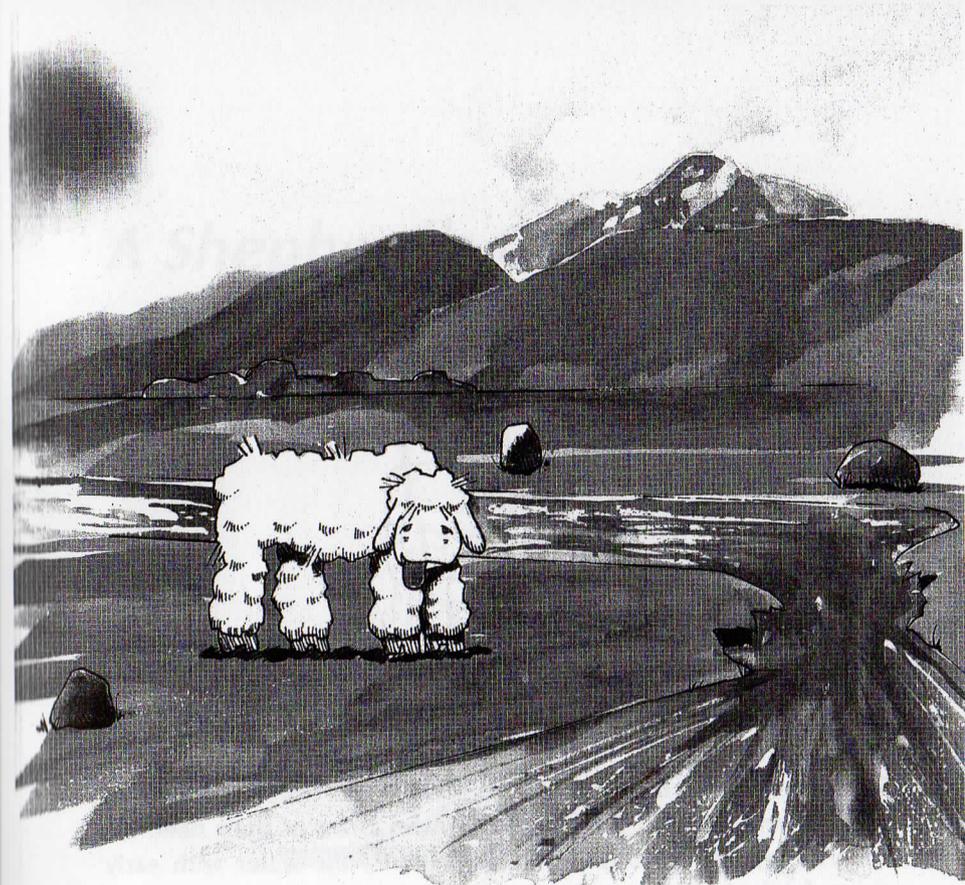
One day while we were sitting in the living room, Duffie popped open the screen door, ran through the house into the kitchen. We sat quietly and waited to see what she was up to!

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!