



# SHADOW MOUNTAIN LEADER *Packet*

## **THE I AM STATEMENTS OF JESUS: "I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD"** John 10:11,14

### Getting Started

1. Describe any experience you have had with sheep - on a farm, at a petting zoo, during the living nativity at church. How would you describe them? What is your impression of them?
  
2. What about shepherds? If you've met a shepherd, what did you learn about this occupation? What makes it rewarding? Difficult?

## Digging Deeper

1. Read the below verses and discuss the needed character traits of being a shepherd. How are these similar to the person of the Good Shepherd, Jesus?

Exodus 3:1 Moses spent forty years in the Midian desert as a shepherd. During this period, he gained the skills and wisdom needed to lead and care for God's people. His experience as a shepherd, dealing with stubborn sheep, prepared him for his future role in leading a stubborn and often rebellious people.

1 Samuel 16:1, 17:34-36 Perhaps the most famous shepherd in the Bible is David. Before he was anointed king, David was a shepherd boy tending his father's sheep. His courage and faith in God while protecting his flock from predators like lions and bears eventually led to his triumphant victory over Goliath. As king, David's shepherd's heart was evident in his leadership. He ruled with compassion, humility, and a strong sense of justice.

2. Read Psalm 23:1-6 and John 10:11-13. What is the difference between a true shepherd (owner) and a hired hand (employee) who watches the sheep? In John 10, the devoted care of a true shepherd for his sheep is contrasted with that of a hired hand. The one who does not own the sheep and is merely hired to watch over them will abandon them at the first sign of danger. But the true shepherd, because of his deep love for his sheep, takes great care of them. This sentiment is evident in the details of the great Shepherd Psalm—Psalm 23. This Psalm speaks about the Lord's provision for His sheep. As their shepherd, He meets every need they have as they follow Him.

3. Read John 10:3-4. How is plotting our own course in life (i.e., being our own shepherd) different from following Jesus (the Good Shepherd)? What makes either one of these options attractive? Unattractive? **When we function as our own shepherds, we might find some short-term freedom. Over time, though, we feel lost and directionless, wishing for some guidance to show us the way and tell us what to do. As sheep, we're prone to wander through life as if we did not know there was a shepherd who had pledged Himself to guide us. If we desire to be led by Jesus, we must stay close enough to Him in our relationship with Him to follow where He goes. BONUS: think back to your answer to Getting Started #1 - how capable of leading themselves or flourishing on their own do sheep seem to you?**

4. Read Jeremiah 50:6. Describe some characteristics of a "bad" shepherd (e.g., bad boss, friend, leader, teacher, coach, etc.). How does a bad shepherd work to convince others that he/she is a good shepherd? Describe a season in life when you put your confidence in the wrong kind of shepherd. **Many people are drawn to the strength and confidence of authoritarian leaders. Their arrogance and egocentricity are easy to confuse with good character and strength, and many followers are lulled into apathy, handing over the reins of control and power too easily. It is too common for us to place these dynamic personalities on a pedestal and then follow on autopilot.**

5. Read the following verses and discuss how Jesus—the Good Shepherd—sets Himself apart from any other “shepherd” (e.g., people, fame, fortune, idols, opportunities, security, etc.) that we might follow.

Romans 5:6-8 We were not good. We alienated ourselves from God and could not keep the law. We fell short of the glory of God. We, by nature, hate God and our neighbor. We have plunged ourselves into the deepest misery of sin and we are incapable of doing any good. We are not the good man Paul speaks of. We are not even remotely righteous. Yet, in all of this, while we were powerless, while we were ungodly, Christ died for us. In this, we see the amazing grace of God. Christ’s death is for you as a sinner. God did not come seeking a righteous person. He did not come seeking a good person. He came seeking the lost.

John 10:17-18 Jesus Christ, the Son of God, voluntarily, willingly, of His own volition, because He wanted to, out of the love of His heart for the sheep, lay down His life so we could have eternal and abundant life. It was a willing sacrifice on His behalf. And it is this truth more than any other that defines the Good Shepherd.

### Applying the Message

1. How closely are you following the Good Shepherd? What area of your life feels very close to Jesus? What area feels further away?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. We heard, “The Holy Spirit will only guide us if we are willing to open our hearts and minds without any reservations or attempts to control the outcome.” In what way can you more willingly open your heart to Him? What reservations need to be laid aside in order to more fully give yourself over to Jesus? **To truly follow Christ means to make Him the Lord of our lives. This is accomplished as we allow the Holy Spirit to have complete control of every area of our lives.**