

Are You a Sheep?

(Matthew 25:32, 33) All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.

We all want to be one of those sheep, but what does it mean to be a sheep?

When i think of a sheep, i picture those timid animals that are easily frightened and bunch up and run away at the slightest hint of danger. They are 'helpless and fearful and at the complete mercy of their enemies.' They are blindly obedient to their shepherd and allow themselves to be led to wherever he wishes.

When Christ used the illustration of a sheep, is that what he had in mind? If not, what aspects of literal sheep did he want us to emulate?

At John 10:16 he tells us the characteristic of a sheep that he wants to see in his followers.

(John 10:16) “And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.

(John 10:8) All those who have come in place of me are thieves and plunderers; but the sheep have not listened to them.

Yes, his sheep should listen to his voice, and only his voice. Christ wants us to mimic only one characteristic of a literal sheep, which is who they listen to and follow.

(John 10:27) My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

(John 18:37) So Pilate said to him: “Well, then, are you a king?” Jesus answered: “You yourself are saying that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of the truth listens to my voice.”

A literal sheep is not discerning and will even follow a hired man who does not care for its welfare.

(John 10:12, 13) The hired man, who is not a shepherd and to whom the sheep do not belong, sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and flees—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them—¹³ because he is a hired man and does not care for the sheep.

A literal sheep does not question what it is told in order to "*make sure*" that it is being led properly. But Christ does not want his sheep to be like that.

(Acts 17:11) Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thes-sa-lo-ni'ca, for they accepted the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

(Philippians 1:9, 10) And this is what I continue praying, that your love may abound still more and more with accurate knowledge and full discernment; ¹⁰ that you may make sure of the more important things, so that you may be flawless and not stumbling others up to the day of Christ.

And when we find those who are unacceptable, we do not run and cower like a literal sheep. We take action because we do not tolerate them.

(Revelation 2:2) 'I know your deeds, and your labor and endurance, and that you cannot tolerate bad men, and that you put to the test those who say they are apostles, but they are not, and you found them to be liars.

(Revelation 2:20) "Nevertheless, I do hold this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jez'e-bel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and misleads my slaves to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

What about the apprehensive nature of sheep? Are we to mimic the timid, docile, and fearful personality of sheep as well? No we are not! (Ps 138:3; 144:1; Pr 28:1)

(Ephesians 6:14-17) Stand firm, therefore, with the belt of truth fastened around your waist, wearing the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having your feet shod in readiness to declare the good news of peace. ¹⁶ Besides all of this, take up the large shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the wicked one's burning arrows. ¹⁷ Also, accept the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word.

When you imagine a sheep, do you picture it wearing a war helmet and breastplate, and carrying a shield and a sword? No, of course not. But Christ's sheep are so armored.

We should not be like those that Paul spoke of in 2 Corinthians. (2Co 11:4)

(2 Corinthians 11:19, 20) Since you are so "reasonable," you gladly put up with the unreasonable ones. ²⁰ In fact, you put up with whoever enslaves you, whoever devours your possessions, whoever grabs what you have, whoever exalts himself over you, and whoever strikes you in the face.

And as Christ's sheep, we are also to follow his example.

(1 Peter 2:21) In fact, to this course you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving a model for you to follow his steps closely.

(John 13:15) For I set the pattern for you, that just as I did to you, you should also do.

He was definitely not a timid or docile person.

(John 2:14-16) He found in the temple those selling cattle and sheep and doves, and the money brokers in their seats. ¹⁵ So after making a whip of ropes, he drove all those with the sheep and cattle out of the temple, and he poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

¹⁶ And he said to those selling the doves: "Take these things away from here! Stop making the house of my Father a house of commerce!"

His sheep oppose the things that he opposes. (Eph 6:11)

(John 17:16) They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.

We are also made in God's image and should act accordingly. (See my article "In God's Image")

(Genesis 1:26, 27) Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and the domestic animals and all the earth and every creeping animal that is moving on the earth." ²⁷ And God went on to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them.

(1 Timothy 5:8) Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith.

We are not to listen to those who do not speak the words of Christ.

(Colossians 2:8) Look out that no one takes you captive by means of the philosophy and empty deception according to human tradition, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ;

(Ephesians 5:6) Let no man deceive you with empty words, for because of such things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.

(Hebrews 13:9) Do not be led astray by various and strange teachings, for it is better for the heart to be strengthened by undeserved kindness than by foods, which do not benefit those occupied with them.

Those words of advice are not only for spiritual things, but can also benefit us in our everyday lives if we apply them there.

(Galatians 4:3) Likewise, we too, when we were children, were enslaved by the elementary things of the world.

Yes, we should also question what we are told in the secular environment. (Php 1:10; 1Jo 5:19)

(Matthew 15:9) It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, for they teach commands of men as doctrines."

(Mark 7:7) It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, for they teach commands of men as doctrines.'

(Colossians 2:4) I am saying this so that no one may delude you with persuasive arguments.

(2 Peter 1:16) No, it was not by following artfully contrived false stories that we made known to you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but rather, we were eyewitnesses of his magnificence.

(Ephesians 4:14) So we should no longer be children, tossed about as by waves and carried here and there by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in deceptive schemes.

The mainstream media is a big culprit in this regard. (Pr 26:24-25) They spread lies and propaganda, obeying their masters in what to say instead of telling truths and facts as they should. (Isa 8:12) We should be critical of what they say and not allow their lies and propaganda to control us.

(Romans 12:2) And stop being molded by this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, so that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

(Colossians 2:20-22) If you died together with Christ with respect to the elementary things of the world, why do you live as if still part of the world by further subjecting yourselves to the decrees: ²¹ “Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch,” ²² referring to things that all perish with their use, according to the commands and teachings of men?

(1 John 2:15) Do not love either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him;

(2 Thessalonians 2:2) not to be quickly shaken from your reason nor to be alarmed either by an inspired statement or by a spoken message or by a letter appearing to be from us, to the effect that the day of Jehovah is here.

(1 John 4:1) Beloved ones, do not believe every inspired statement, but test the inspired statements to see whether they originate with God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

We are Christ's sheep because we listen to his voice, not because we are docile, timid, and unquestionably do whatever we are told. (Pr 14:15)

(John 10:8) All those who have come in place of me are thieves and plunderers; but the sheep have not listened to them.

It is not always easy to do. Consider this next verse:

(Matthew 10:41) Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will get a prophet's reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will get a righteous man's reward.

A prophet is a good man, as is a righteous man. Why would anyone deserve a reward for receiving them? You would think that receiving them would be the natural and spontaneous thing

to do. No, but doing the right thing is not always easy to do when you are surrounded by the wicked who oppose your righteous actions. Why do you suppose Jehovah liked young David so much? (1Sa 13:14; 17:32-37) He was courageous, honorable, and took action.

(Colossians 2:16) Therefore, do not let anyone judge you about what you eat and drink or about the observance of a festival or of the new moon or of a sabbath.

Even peer pressure from those who are not wicked can have an effect on you.

(Galatians 2:12, 13) For before certain men from James arrived, he used to eat with people of the nations; but when they arrived, he stopped doing this and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcised class.¹³ The rest of the Jews also joined him in putting on this pretense, so that even Bar'na·bas was led along with them in their pretense.

You have to take your stand. (Re 3:16; 2Ti 1:7)

(Matthew 25:9) The discreet answered, saying: 'Perhaps there may not be enough for both us and you. Go instead to those who sell it, and buy some for yourselves.'

In that parable the discreet virgins did not share their oil with the other virgins. Doing something similar in real life would take courage. Others would condemn you for not sharing and try to persuade you to share your oil with those who chose not to plan ahead.

(John 10:5) They will by no means follow a stranger but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."

No doubt today many who have listened to the voice of the stranger on the news will encourage you to also follow that advice and take the COVID-19 experimental treatment they call a "vaccine".

Many who are familiar with the atrocities that the Nazi government committed against its citizens in World War II have said that if they had lived in that time that they would not have obeyed the government's dictates.

(Matthew 23:30) and you say, 'if we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have shared with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'

Do you obey everything that your government tells you to do today even if you know it is wrong? (See my documents about COVID-19) If you do you are a sheep, just not Christ's sheep.

(Matthew 6:24) "No one can slave for two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot slave for God and for Riches.

(Proverbs 22:3) The shrewd one sees the danger and conceals himself, But the inexperienced keep right on going and suffer the consequences.

We should not be like those whom Paul reprimanded in 2 Corinthians. (2Co 11:4)

(2 Corinthians 11:19, 20) Since you are so “reasonable,” you gladly put up with the unreasonable ones. ²⁰ In fact, you put up with whoever enslaves you, whoever devours your possessions, whoever grabs what you have, whoever exalts himself over you, and whoever strikes you in the face.

How do you suppose Christ views those who are spineless and who allow themselves to be treated that way?

(Revelation 3:15, 16) ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or else hot. ¹⁶ So because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth.

No, Christ does not care for such cowardly ones, and they will not be allowed to live on earth. Look at who he compares them to:

(Revelation 21:8) But as for the cowards and those without faith and those who are disgusting in their filth and murderers and the sexually immoral and those practicing spiritism and idolaters and all the liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This means the second death.

What do *you* think?

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Dave

da.getmyip@gmail.com

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