

The Shepherd's Care

I don't mean to imply that a quiet time is the only contact you have with The Shepherd. If you have committed yourself to Him for full-time supervision, He is with you continuously.

PART II

All We Like Sheep Have Gone Astray, We Have Turned Everyone To His Own Way . . .

Having studied the first part of Isaiah 53:6, let's look at the second part: "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."

It is our nature to want our own way. This is a natural tendency for all of us. We get involved in obtaining what we want and it is possible for us to forget everything else except reaching our goal.

When sheep find pasture, their only interest is eating. Their main concern is the next blade of grass. It is easy to stray as they nibble away with their eye on the grass instead of the shepherd.

Since the sheep don't watch the shepherd, the shepherd must watch the sheep. He walks among them as they eat and makes sure they stay near him. If just one little lamb strays from the fold, the shepherd goes to bring him back. We, like sheep have a strong tendency to become preoccupied with satisfying our own desires and we easily wonder away from The Shepherd. This strong tendency was first manifested in the garden of Eden.

When God formed the universe, He put the stars in place, the sun began to shine and the trees stood tall. The green grass grew and

the birds flew in the air and the fish swam in the sea. When the cattle roamed over the earth and creeping things crept around, God created Adam and Eve.

The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden. In this garden there were only trees pleasant to the sight. All the food was good to eat. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was planted there.

God brought Adam to this garden and said, "Enjoy the garden. You may freely eat of it all except the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Do not eat from this tree. If you do you will surely die!"

God decided man should not live alone so He put Adam to sleep and from his side made Eve. They were in the garden with everything good and desirable. God told them specifically what not to do. There was a serpent in this garden and he was a subtle creature. He approached Eve and questioned the Word of God. Did God say you could eat the fruit of the trees of the garden?

I love Eve's answer. She said, "God said we can eat all the fruit from all the trees except the one in the midst of the garden. God said we can not eat this fruit neither can we touch it or we will die."

I can't find where God said anything about touching the fruit. Eve added to the story. I find myself doing this. I love to add to the story to make it more effective!

The serpent said to Eve, "You won't die. God knows that if you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will be as a god!"

Eve listened to the wrong voice. She knew full well that God said she was not to eat from this tree. She looked at the fruit as she listened to the voice of the serpent. It was pleasant to the eye. It was desirable.

Eve, looked at and desired that which God had told her she could not have. Listening to the voice of the serpent and believing him, she reached out and took the forbidden fruit. Eve had walked with God and heard the Word of God — personally. When the test came she chose to have her own way. This powerful tendency overruled her knowledge of God and His Word.

Eve ate the fruit and then took it to Adam. What a human thing to do. Misery loves company! Eve knew the Word of God but she simply did what she wanted to. Like a sheep Eve went her own way. This was the entrance of sin into the human race. We are all born with this natural tendency. We don't have to learn this type behavior. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5). The word iniquity is used to describe our tendency to want our own way.

I have had the opportunity to raise three children. Now I am observing my three grandsons. It is more fun to watch grandchildren. They go home at night! (This is why they are called grand!)

Having observed two generations of children, adds to my confidence that we are born wanting to have our own way!

Playpen drama

Sam was 18 months old when Dawn was born. Soon she was old enough to play in his playpen with him. We looked forward to the day they would play together.

That big day arrived. Daddy Sam got the camera. I dressed the children for the picture. We placed the toys in the pen and put Sam in first. When he realized Dawn was about to join him, he started gathering all the toys and placing them in the corner. With both arms outstretched, feet apart, he made a bold stand to defend his toys.

We sat Dawn in the opposite corner. She spotted a toy and went for it! Sam started to scream. Then he hit Dawn's arm as she reached for the toy. She joined him in screaming.

In shock, we looked at each other. What had we raised? How did Sam get to be selfish? Then we realized that even an 18-month-old is like a sheep.

Lamb learns early

Mark is the oldest grandchild. When he was three months old, Dawn and Curry asked us to keep him. They wanted to go to dinner and a movie. Sam and I were eating dinner and Mark was sitting on the floor in his little seat. I heard him make a strange noise. It sounded as if he was choking. Naturally, I jumped up to check on him.

Here was this three-month-old baby faking a cry. He would struggle and strain to cry and then look at me to see if I would take him out of his seat.

I said to Sam, "Look at this baby. He has already learned that when he cries his grandma comes running. He is already working me. What a smart grandchild I have."

I taught Dawn all the stories about sheep and I told her that each wants his own way. She loved the stories and told me that she believed them. When her little Mark was two years old, I received a telephone call from a desperate daughter. She was crying because little Mark was throwing his first temper tantrum. I could hear him screaming in the background. I thought he must have been seriously injured. Dawn said he wanted to spread the peanut butter on his bread. She spread it for him.

Mark fell to the floor screaming as if he were in excruciating pain! He kicked and cried and beat his head on the floor. All this because he could not spread the peanut butter on the bread!

Dawn was hysterical. She said, "Mother, what am I going to do. I have never seen him act this way before. Do you think something is terribly wrong with him?"

I told Dawn to quietly and calmly pick him up and tell him that this behavior was not acceptable. (I did not think she would do it, but she did.)

She called me several hours later. She was laughing as she told me that she had picked Mark up as he kicked and screamed. She quietly told him to "stop screaming." She said, "Mom, he did what I told him to do. He stopped screaming and he ate his sandwich.

Mark doesn't fall on the floor and kick any more. He learned at an early age that kicking and screaming did not get him what he wanted. He tries other tricks and will continue to do so but at least he is quieter.

God has given each of us different personalities and different ways of expressing ourselves. Even with these differences we find we have one thing in common. We, like sheep, want our own way!

Contrasts

Sam, my husband, is a quiet, consistent, stubborn, bullheaded man who wants his way. As of this writing, I have been married to Sam for 32 years. I remember only one time seeing him really lose his temper.

I am loud, expressive, quick to change my mind, stubborn, bullheaded and want my own way. I used to pride myself on the fact that Sam always knew where he stood with me. I told him!

Sam prided himself on the fact that when he got upset with me, I never knew it. He thought he was being loving, kind and tactful as he covered up his feelings. For years I thought he was good and I was bad.

For years I wished Sam would speak up and he wished I would shut up. We had no communication, I thought! The problem was that we did not talk about what I wanted to talk about. Sam hates to have a confrontation. He doesn't like for us to have a problem. When we do, his philosophy is to ignore it and hope it will go away.

When problems arise I like to discuss them at least 16 times! I want to resolve them over days of discussion.

Sam and I had to learn that we are like sheep wanting to have our own way. We discovered that we will want our way as long as we live. This is not intended to be demeaning or pessimistic but is to motivate us to see the need for full-time supervision.

We had to learn to cooperate. When Sam and I have a difference of opinion, we must find a common meeting ground. There are times one must yield totally to the other. At other times we compromise. You can't yield or compromise when you enter a meeting demanding to have your way.

We both had to change. Sam had to learn that there were times when unpleasant subjects needed to be discussed. I had to learn to say something one time and know that Sam heard me. We learn how to enter into a conversation from a study of Philippians chapter 2, verse 3: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

This is the Word of God on how to work together. Ignore what God says and you will suffer. Listen, take heed and you will prosper.

God tells us there is a time to do nothing. I find this to be the hardest thing I have to do. When I want something, I hate to do nothing about getting it. He says when there is strife (contention, fighting, quarreling) don't do anything. When there is vainglory or self seeking, (when things had better turn out your way) don't do anything. Wait.

We are told to wait until we can think more highly of the other person than we do of ourselves.

Because we continue to be like sheep as long as we live, we will always want to have our way. We should not feel badly about ourselves when we find that we always want it to go our way. We need to pay careful attention to our reaction when we don't get it. Anger is man's most common reaction. Both secular and Christian counselors agree that it is one of the most harmful reactions we experience. That being so, I have always been puzzled as to why man is so defensive about giving up anger.

Several years ago, the puzzle was solved. After spending many years in counseling, I understand that anger is man's best tool for getting his way. You get mad enough and yell loud enough or pout for several days and people usually give in and let you have what you want. What a threat to give up our most effective tool!

If you display your anger people will either give you your way or get out of your way leaving you alone.

Years ago, Dr. Brandt warned me, "When a person has to always have his way, people will get out of the way. When people get out of your way, you are left alone. So if you are a person who always has to have your way, you are preparing yourself for a life of loneliness!"

Israel's King David

When kings went forth into battle, David was home sacked out! He got out of bed in the late afternoon. To shake off his drowsiness, he went to the rooftop for some fresh air. David saw a woman taking her bath. She was beautiful to behold and he desired to have her. As the king, David had sentenced adulterers to death by stoning.

This was the most painful means of execution. David knew full well what would happen if he committed adultery with Bathsheba. He did it anyway! Sending for her, David slept with her. She conceived and when David found out, he knew he was in trouble!

Bathsheba's husband Uriah was at war. David had to find a way out of his dilemma. He sent for Uriah to come spend a few nights with his wife.

Uriah came but he could not bear to think of his comrades in arms suffering on the battlefield while he was comfortable in the arms of his wife. He slept outside the door of David's house. Despite David's repeated efforts, Uriah refused to sleep with Bathsheba!

David's plan was foiled. He sent orders to Uriah's captain to place him on the front line of battle.

Uriah was killed. David married Bathsheba and she had the child. The prophet Nathan informed David the child would die because of David's adultery and murder.

David was selected by God to be king over Israel. He was familiar with the laws of God. His strong desire to have his way caused Him to put aside his sense of right and wrong. His strong natural tendency to have his way overruled:

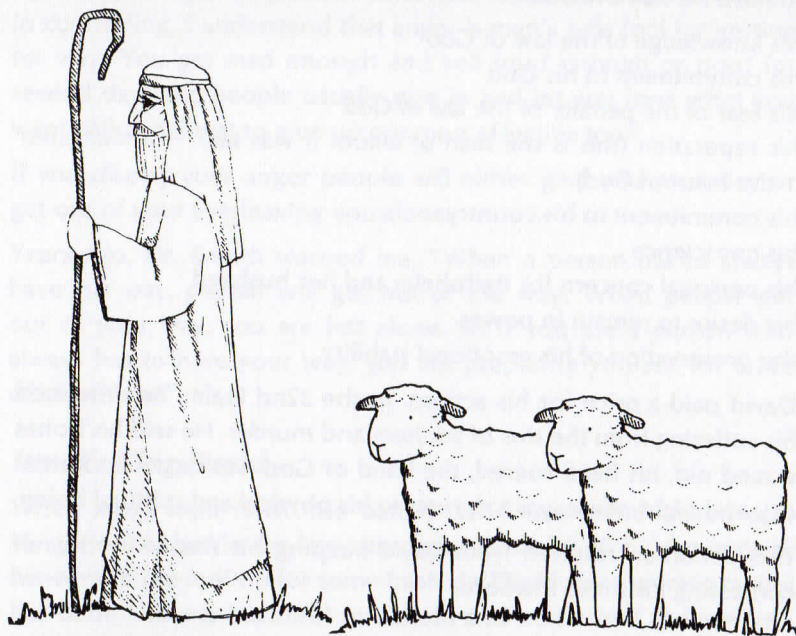
- his knowledge of the law of God
- his commitment to his God
- his fear of the penalty of the law of God
- his reputation (this is the man of whom it was said — a man after the heart of God)
- his commitment to his country
- his conscience
- his personal concern for Bathsheba and her husband
- his desire to remain in power
- the preservation of his emotional stability.

David paid a price for his actions. In the 32nd Psalm, he described his suffering from the sins of adultery and murder. He said his bones waxed old, his head roared, the hand of God was heavy upon him day and night, there was a dryness to his physical and spiritual being. This condition resulted from David keeping his silence — his not confessing his sin to the Lord.

In verse 5 David gives us a clear and thorough example to follow:
He said:

1. he acknowledged his sin against God
2. he confessed his transgression against the law of God
3. he did not hide his iniquity — the root cause of both his sin and his transgression. The proof of which was born in David's words, "Thou forgave the iniquity of my sin."

David says there was something behind his sin and it is called iniquity. We, like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way. We like sheep need a shepherd to guide us and direct our paths in the way of righteousness for the Lord's sake.



PART III

All We Like Sheep Have Gone Astray; Each Has Turned To His Own Way; And The Lord Has Laid On Him The Iniquity Of Us All.

We have seen how we are like sheep. We understand the strong tendency to want our way. Now we need to see the provisions God has made on our behalf.

The word LORD in this verse refers to God. The word Him refers to Jesus Christ. This is a prophetic verse. When Isaiah wrote, the Messiah had not come.

Jesus Christ, the Messiah, came into the world so that the Father could lay on Him one thing common to us all. This one thing is selfishness. Not all men are adulterers. Not all men are murderers. Some people go through life and never steal but all are selfish and want to have their own way.

When we are born, we inherit the nature of Adam. We have seen how he and Eve acted selfishly, went against the word of God and

ate the forbidden fruit. After all, this did not seem to be such a terrible thing to do. There was no one around so no one seemed to be hurt. They simply listened to the wrong voice and went their own way. The serpent tempted them to do what they wanted to do rather than what God told them to do!

Upon eating the fruit, Adam and Eve immediately felt guilty. They were in this wonderful spot, the garden spot of the universe. They had been naked all their lives and were comfortable. Now they were ashamed. They sewed fig leaves together and made an apron for a covering. In the cool of the day, God walked in the garden. He called for Adam and found him hiding, afraid of the loving God. God asked Adam if he had eaten the forbidden fruit. Adam quickly told God that he ate it because of the woman He had given to be with him. Turning to Eve, God asked her about what had happened. She quickly told God it was because of the serpent. Adam and Eve did not want to accept the responsibility for their behavior.

God cursed the serpent, multiplied the sorrow of Eve in childbirth and told Adam that in the sweat of his brow he would provide for his family. In other words, the serpent would pay for what he had done by crawling on his belly, the woman would suffer in childbirth and the man would work hard to provide for his family. In Galatians 6:7 Paul writes, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We pay for what we do!

Now comes the Good News! After informing Adam and Eve of the consequences of their behavior, He, The LORD GOD, made coats of skins and clothed them! The fig leaves that Adam and Eve had hoped would hid their sin, failed to do so. This covering represents the work of Adam and Eve. This was their means of covering their guilt. Fig leaves symbolize man's works as he attempts to cover his guilt and satisfy God. Man's works would not satisfy God so He killed an animal, took the skins and covered His children. This is a picture of the substitutionary atoning death of Jesus Christ which would provide for man's sin and guilt. The shedding of blood represents the giving of life. This was God's way of showing that he would provide the life to cover the sin of man.

God provided the life through the person of Jesus Christ. He was the GOD Man.

He rode a donkey into Jerusalem and gave himself to be crucified. Man did not come after Jesus to arrest Him. God presented Himself to man just as He had in the garden of Eden. When He was nailed to the cross he cried out to God, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" It was at this moment in time that God poured on Jesus "the iniquity" of us all.

God turned away from His only begotten Son because He is holy and cannot look upon sin. The Bible doesn't record that man killed Jesus. He voluntarily gave His life for us. It tells us in Matthew chapter 27 verse 50 that Jesus cried again with a loud voice and gave up the ghost.

Jesus gave his life for His sheep! No man had the power to take life from the Living God. God teaches us that the wages of sin is death. (Roman 6:23) When we sin, we get paid! Our payment is death.

The gospel is called The Good News. There is no better news than the news that God died in our place. It is hard to believe that God, The Creator and Sustainer of the universe would become a man and take our place in death so that we might be free of sin and have eternal life!

The covering of Adam and Eve is a picture of what God will do for mankind. Jesus' sacrifice is the only sacrifice for sin acceptable to God.

Man's responsibility is to reach out and accept it. Adam and Eve could have refused to accept God's provision.

One of the most difficult things for man to do is accept a gift. He is afraid he will be obligated to the giver or that the giver will require something undesirable of him.

Red jacket — red faces

We were in California with some wealthy friends. While Sam stayed home with Dave, Nan asked me to go shopping with her. She was busy making a purchase and I tried to stay out of her way. I saw a red jacket that was very expensive. Just for fun, I tried it on. Just as I put on the jacket Nan came to tell me she had finished shopping. She commented that she liked the jacket.

We left the store and went to meet Sam and Dave for coffee. Nan asked us to order her coffee while she ran to buy some shoes. She returned and we finished our coffee. She suggested we show Sam the jacket. On the way to the shop I told Sam how much it cost and he should not get excited over it even if he liked it. He assured me he would not!

When we entered the store Nan asked me to show Sam the jacket. She had something to show Dave!

The jacket was gone. It had been sold. Just 30 minutes ago it hung there but now it was gone! The sales lady came from the back room with a package. She said, "Are you Mrs. Peeples?" I said, "Yes, I am." She said, "I have a jacket for you and the ticket is marked paid."

Sam started lecturing me. He said, "Why did you tell Nan you liked the jacket?" I said, "I did not tell her I liked the jacket, she told *me* she liked the jacket!" Sam said, "You did tell her or she would not have bought you something you didn't like!" I said, "I did not tell her!" He said, "I am embarrassed, I can not let you accept this gift. It is too much money for them to spend!" I said, "Well, what do you suggest I do about it!"

As you can imagine, with each sentence our voices grew louder and our striving became evident. When I realized how loud we were speaking, I looked to see if Nan and Dave could hear us.

Dave is about 6 feet 4 inches tall. It was not hard to find them in a crowded department store! I saw them over in the corner smiling as they watched me receive the gift they had so graciously offered!

I could tell by their expressions that they were excited over being able to give me this jacket. They, the smiling givers, stood in the corner getting great pleasure in doing this, while we, the receivers quarreled in the opposite corner.

Turning to Sam I said, "Look at the gleam in their eyes and the smile on their faces." They want to do this for us. We must let them. We must take this gift!

He agreed. We walked over to Nan and Dave and simply said, "Thank you!" It was hard to put away our pride but it was the correct thing to do.

I still enjoy my red jacket because of its beauty but each time I wear it, I appreciate more what I learned through receiving it. I had to put away my pride in order to accept the jacket. In the same way, I must put away my pride to accept God's gift of salvation. The blood of Jesus Christ was shed on the cross to take away my sin. This is the only provision ever made to take away sin. By faith I accept His great gift of love and thank Him for it.

When I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life, I became a child of God. He became my Shepherd. I can trust Him to provide for me, to comfort me, to give me an abundant life on earth plus life with Him in heaven when I die.

Many people struggle over the need for a Savior. They don't see themselves as sinners. Comparing themselves with others, they see themselves as good. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." (II Corinthians 10:12) We are sinners because of our selfish iniquitous nature.

Have you ever made the decision to accept God's provision for your sin? If not, you could do so right now. This is done through a simple act of faith. Pray and ask Christ to come into your life as your personal Savior and Lord. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins and to take control of your life.

Assurance

When you invite Christ into your life, you can rest assured that He will come in. He said in Revelations 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Once Christ comes into your life, he never leaves you. In Hebrews 13:5b He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." In Romans 8:38-39, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

You can relax, be comfortable and know that now you have a Shepherd who desires to care for and lead you and has all the necessary resources for doing the job and doing it well!

It is critical that we know that wanting our own way, iniquity, is the source of our sins. An understanding of the word iniquity teaches us that we must deal with the source.

The word "iniquity" appears as a singular noun in Isaiah 53:6 and most other places where it is used. When lists of sins are found in the Bible, the plural use of the word sin is used.

Conclusion: Sins, plural, have as their singular source, iniquity.

The word iniquity is defined in Isaiah 53:6. "All we like sheep have gone astray, each has turned to his own way and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Iniquity means turning to or having to have your own way.

God took upon Him the iniquity (source) and the sins (result) of the world. You will find these two words mentioned together in many places in the Psalms. The fact that they are mentioned together but separate demonstrates that they are not the same.

Remember King David?

In the time of year when kings went forth to battle, David tarried in Jerusalem. He slept during the day and when he awoke in the afternoon, he went to the roof and saw Bathsheba bathing. He sent his servants for her. His iniquity was wanting to have his way with her and his sin was adultery.

Bathsheba got pregnant. David was in trouble. He ordered Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, home from battle. David wanted them to sleep together. This would provide a cover for his sin. He told Uriah that he should come home for rest. Now David's sin was deceit.

Uriah refused to sleep with his wife. David's cover had failed. He had to devise another method for covering his sin. He did this by ordering Uriah into the front lines of battle. A few days later Uriah was killed. Now David's sin was murder.

In Psalm 32 David writes about the breakdown of his spiritual, emotional, mental and physical condition. As you read through this Psalm you find the reasons for these breakdowns:

Verse 3: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." David's silence refers to the fact that he did not confess his sins. Because of this he experienced many physical symptoms. David felt old and his bones ached. I have always

wondered if he developed arthritis! His head roared and he could not stop the sound of the roaring. Could this be a migraine headache?

In verse 4: "For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drouth of summer. Selah." David experienced this heaviness because of his continued delay in confessing his sin. Now more symptoms are developing. David felt a dryness in his soul. Next the word selah is used. Selah means to pause and think on this. The word is always used to emphasize the previous statement.

Verse 5: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD: and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." David stopped hiding from God. David agreed with God concerning his sins. He did not hide from God the fact that he did what he did because he wanted to. Notice the word selah appears again. He confessed to God that he had broken God's laws. Confess means to agree with God. It literally means to say the same thing God says. David was no longer making excuses for his behavior. He was saying, "God, I did it and I agree with you that it was wrong." You said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, nor murder and thou shalt not deceive." "I broke your law."

David provides an example of how we should come before God and thoroughly deal with our sin. He had sinned against God. He had transgressed the law of God. He also dealt with his iniquity which was the reason for both his sin and transgression.

Verse 6, "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him." Due to David's long period of suffering, he is advising us to confess our sins as quickly as possible. The presence of unconfessed sin causes a person to lose confidence in God. If unconfessed sins are allowed to accumulate it is like waters rising in a flood. The rising waters seem to distance us from God.

Verse 7, "Thou art my hiding place; Thou dost preserve me from trouble; Thou dost surround me with songs of deliverance." This sounds like a different person. Now David says that God is his hiding place. He states that God will preserve him from trouble and compass

him about with songs of deliverance. God is again leading David as his Shepherd. God will lead David in the paths of righteousness for His namesake. God will lead David beside the still waters where his thirst will be satisfied. God will lead David to the green pastures.

Verse 8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eyes." David has been speaking. Now God speaks and promises instruction and guidance. It is important to take note of the steps David took to get instruction and guidance from God!

Verse 9, "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." David warns us not to be stubborn as a mule. We should not let pride keep us from accepting God's gift of love and his provision for forgiveness. The picture here is of a mule having to be driven. We have said earlier that we are like sheep. Sheep are meant to be led, not driven.

Verse 10, "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about." David speaks from experience because of the sorrow he experienced from his wickedness. When he turned back to the Lord, he experienced His mercy. Mercy means God's grace in action.

Verse 11, "Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." David is able to rejoice and shout for joy. He has chosen to do what is right and now has a clean heart! He feels good!

A surprised father

Iniquity means I want to have my own way. We see what happened to David because of it. We can look at children and see it manifest. They learn at an early age to cry and get what they want. Their crying turns into temper tantrums. These tantrums work even better.

An evangelist friend in India told us of his concern for his daughter's temper tantrums. He often went on evangelistic trips for weeks at the time. When he returned to his city, he went home to speak to his family and leave his luggage. Then he went to the office to take care of his mail. His intentions were to hurry to the office, complete his work and return to his family.

Paul said each time he arrived home Stephanie cried and had a temper tantrum when he started for the office. He tried to explain that he would return soon and spend time with her. This did not help Stephanie. After several years of this behavior, Paul was uncertain what to do.

On these occasions Stephanie tightly grasped her father's leg. Paul said when he screamed loudly, she turned him loose. He was convicted about his screaming but realized this was the only way to escape Stephanie's grasp.

We laughed at Paul as we told him that he was a good teacher. Stephanie observed that when you scream, you get your way!

He was shocked when we told him where Stephanie had learned this means of getting her way.

I have seen the president of a bank have a temper tantrum. I have seen a respected surgeon have a temper tantrum. I have seen beautiful, well educated mothers have temper tantrums. These people had tantrums in my presence because something in their life had not gone their way.

Some of the things they wanted to happen were good things. When what you want is good and you don't get your way, look out! This is a dangerous place to be. You will justify your anger because your desire is good. Your desire might not only be good, it could also be God's desire.

It is a Godly thing for a man to want his child to live a moral life. When the child strays, the father believes he is justified in losing his temper. He hopes the child will change when he sees how his behavior has affected his father. What a shame to communicate to this child that his father's emotional stability is dependent on his behavior!

When an unmarried girl gets pregnant and her weeping mother goes to bed with depression, she is of little value to her daughter. The mother justifies her behavior. She hopes the daughter will realize the seriousness of the situation by the effect it has on her mother.

When a man has an affair, the wife thinks she must show her displeasure by becoming bitter and miserable. How would her husband know how this has affected her unless she provides a constant reminder!

It is difficult for us to realize that a child who has gone astray needs a kind, tender-hearted, patient mom or dad to gently but firmly lead him back to the right path. Angry parents cause children to dread coming home.

When a young unmarried girl gets pregnant, she needs a comfortable, calm loving mom and dad to help her make good decisions concerning her problem. A depressed mom makes it difficult for her to go home.

A man who is having an affair needs a comfortable loving wife who can calmly communicate to him that his behavior is not acceptable. A screaming, pouting, angry woman makes it hard for a man to come home at the end of the day.

Vengeance belongs to the Lord. Your anger and resentment don't help anybody. They usually make things worse. If you have a loved one who has gone astray you should have a desire to lead that one to The Shepherd. In order to lead them to The Shepherd, you will need to be in good spiritual condition. Benjamin Franklin once said, "He who cannot obey cannot command."

When we talk about being in good spiritual condition, we are making reference to walking in the Spirit. Many people have a variety of ideas about what it means to walk in the Spirit. God's only means of controlling our selfish nature (iniquity) is through the control of the Holy Spirit. Many Christians have tried other things but have found them powerless.

I believe the following five steps are necessary to enter into the Spirit controlled life.

1) Submit

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Roman 12:1

If you do not start with total submission to the Lord, you don't get started.

2) Identify sin

"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment:

John 16:8

One of the major benefits of submitting your life to the Lord is the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. He will accurately identify your sins. Man needs this because his heart is deceitful.

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

Jeremiah 17:9 & 10

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

Proverbs 28:13

3) Confess

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1:9

Identification of sin is for a purpose — confession.

Confession means "agreeing with God" or "calling it the same thing." Notice the two benefits, forgiveness and cleansing.

4) Be controlled

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

Ephesians 5:18

Being controlled by the Holy Spirit is not an option, it is a command!

5) Be consistent

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Galatians 5:16

This verse doesn't say the desire will cease, it says, you don't have to fulfill it! This promise of consistency in this verse fulfills the need in the Christian's life. When we walk in the Spirit, we know that God is leading us where He wants us to go.

In order to maintain your walk in the Spirit, it will be necessary to identify your sin, confess it and replace it with the fruit of the Spirit. As God reveals areas of your life He wants to control, be quick to yield to Him.

As I come to the end of my story, I encourage you to accept the truth that we are all like sheep. It is natural and normal for us to desire to have our own way. I have not come to a place in life where I stop wanting my way and going astray. Because of this I need a shepherd. Through my Shepherd's teaching I have learned to pay attention to my responses when things don't go my way. Especially when my way is right!

I have learned to agree with God as quickly as possible when I sin. He has been faithful to forgive and cleanse me. As I continue to follow Him, my life gets more exciting. The older I get, the better I feel. My bones don't ache and I don't feel the heaviness from depression that I have felt before. I must never forget that as long as I live I will need a shepherd. I must remember to commit each day to The Shepherd and trust Him to lead me where He would have me to go. I encourage you to commit your days to Him. Let Him take the burden from your back, provide for you and guide you to His provisions.

God bless you and keep you in His wonderful and loving care!

THE END



Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth
my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of
righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though
I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with
me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence
of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with
oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness
and mercy shall follow me all the days of
my life: and I will dwell in the house of
the Lord for ever.

At a time in the life of my story, I encourage you to accept the truth that we are all like sheep, it is natural and normal for us to desire to have our own way. I have not come to a place in the where I am stopping my way and going away. Because of this I need a shepherd. Through my husband's teaching I have learned to pay attention to my shepherd when things don't go my way. I have learned to agree with God as quickly as possible when I am in a place that my husband is making the call. I get the power I need from his presence. I have learned that as long as I am in a place that my husband is making the call, I have no need to go. I encourage you to extend your love to those who are in a place that they need a shepherd. I will be praying for you in the future.

Mary Glynn



About the Author

Mary Glynn Peeples, the wife of Dr. Sam Peeples, was born in Andalusia, Alabama. She holds a B.A. degree in education from Auburn University. Since 1965 Mary Glynn has been teaching Bible studies for women. She is a member of the Birmingham Women's Committee of 100 and received it's 1978 Outstanding Woman of the Year Award.

Mary Glynn conducts Family Enrichment and Successful Stress Management Conferences both in the U.S. and abroad. She serves often as a key speaker for many women's retreats in churches and conference centers.

Mary Glynn is vitally interested in helping parents successfully raise their children. Much of her time is spent counseling and speaking to parents and children.

The Sheep Shoppe
Publishers
Birmingham, Alabama