

## **Elder Shepherd – Part 3**

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Introduction:

A. The body of Christ learns from each other.

B. Prayer.

*Father, it's good to be with friends. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. You have changed us into a loving body. We want to dispense grace to each other, encouraging each other. Help us to help others that are in despair. Perhaps we are on the verge of a title wave of blessing. You do great things through little people. We who have learned of your grace through suffering may be ready to share grace with others. Teach us that as we age our value increases in your sight. My grandmother went blind and realized she could pray more effectively because of fewer distractions. Help us to enjoy ageing as we move on in life and finish well. Open our hearts to understand your word. Help us to let go of hindrances that stop us from knowing you.*

I. What does it mean to be a spiritual parent? There are three characteristics. (The speaker really gives four characteristics.)

A. One who is walking ahead on a path which the one behind respects.

1. Who do you look to whose path you like?

- a. My wife's dad died a few months ago.
- b. We shared the memory of her dad and she was encouraged.
- c. I hope my children will enjoy the memory of me when I pass.
- d. I remember my dad kissing my mom when he was 50 and I liked it.

2. An elder shepherd occasionally turns around to look at those following.

- a. This communicates that the shepherd cares about others.
- b. They communicate that walking with God can be done in spite of difficulties in life.
- c. They communicate that the younger person is not alone.
- d. My youngest son married first and I remember my marriage at 21.
- e. I shared about my fears when marrying and that encouraged him.

3. An elder shepherd believes in the ones following them.

a. The movie Bambi illustrates this because his mother was killed by hunters and Bambi was left alone.

1. Bambi's father appeared and called him to get up and walked away.

2. Bambi got up and followed his dad in spite of great fear.

b. Parents need to commit their kids to God and walk away.

c. Jesus came to seek and save the lost because he knew the Father and could make him known. (John 17:25)

d. The deepest passion of our hearts should be to know the Father.

e. The purposes of a man's heart are like deep waters; we can't understand our own desires, but God gives this understanding. (Proverbs 20:5)

f. When we are striving to get someone to understand our view our deepest passion is self, not Christ.

g. Paul wanted his disciples to have Christ formed in them, a passion for Jesus. (Galatians 4:19)

h. Our central ache needs to be to yield life to Christ and to see others yield to Christ.

1. First enter the battle for another's soul.

2. Second, develop a vision for them.

i. Paul wanted Timothy to be bold for Christ, not timid.

ii. Paul was not vague in his desire for Timothy.

3. Third, labor in Christ to release God's energy in them. (Colossians 1:28)

i. We need to enter the battle for the soul of others. (Colossians 2:1)

1. Pray for them.

2. Fast for them.

B. Enter the battle for another's soul.

1. A while ago I woke up in pain.

2. They took me to the hospital in an ambulance.

3. The doctors needed to know what battle to fight so they diagnosed me.

4. Spiritual elders need to know what battle to fight.
5. There are four metaphors for struggle.
  - a. City building; Cain was judged to be a reckless wanderer but Cain built a city. (Genesis 4:17)
    1. Nimrod build five cities, Babylon was one of them.
    2. Israel was not to build cities but to inhabit those in the land. (Deut 6)
    3. Jesus promises to build us a city. (John 14)
    4. God builds a city for us. (Heb 11)
    5. We are not to try the make our lives work by ourselves but to trust God.
      - i. I failed at basketball and defined it as death.
      - ii. I spent the rest of my life doing only what I'm good at.
      - iii. I keep myself at a distance from my family to defend my weaknesses. This is like building my own city.
  - b. Fire building: this is attempts to be unconfused. (Isaiah 60)
    1. If my deepest passion is to figure things out my passion is not Christ.
    2. We need to learn to live with life's confusions while trusting Christ.
  - c. White washing: this is my attempt to cover up my weaknesses.
    1. My passion for Christ must be pure.
  - d. Well digger: this is looking for satisfaction in places other than in Christ. (Jeremiah 2:13)
    1. Pornography.
    2. Vying for leadership.
6. What does God do with a city builder?
  - a. He often takes them to the desert. (Hosea 2).
  - b. In the desert our efforts don't work.
  - c. Talk to people in the desert about God's love for them and his care for them.

7. What does God do with a fire lighter?

- a. God allows them to fall into darkness.
- b. There is a longing inside us to trust in Christ.

8. What does God do with a wall whitewasher?

- a. He often allows them to experience difficulty they cannot cover up.
- b. He wants us realize we cannot arrange our own circumstances.
- c. Aslan of Narnia is not safe but he is good.

9. What does God do to a well digger?

- a. He lets them see that their selfishness affects others.
- b. The business man watching pornography on trips can't relate to his wife when he returns home.
- c. He can't kiss her passionately and that affects her.

10. Entering the battle for another soul is to be concerned with kingdom building.

C. Develop a vision for what another can become.

1. Don't insist on what I want because I like it but because God desires it.

- a. My fifth grade teacher noticed that I like words and encouraged me to write and this energized me.
- b. A baseball coach told me I might be a ball player and this didn't do a thing for me.
- c. We need to prayerfully tap into what God is after in us.
- d. Preaching in a small church a man told me my ideas should be written in a book.

2. My wife and I have written vision statements for each other as we battle for each other's souls.

- a. Mrs. Crabb prays for Larry to be peacefully settled into what Christ has for him. I followed you because you seek Christ. I have a firm awareness of God's hand on you. She reads from Proverbs 31 and Galatians 4:19. She respects and loves him like no other man.
- c. Mr. Crabb says he met his wife when she was in the middle of her sexual abuse. He thought she was pretty and still thinks so, but now realizes her inner beauty is what attracted him to her. My failure in loving you completely breaks

my heart. God delights in you and sees in you something terrific. My vision for you is that you become more beautiful as you age. I want to honor you and treasure your opinions. You're the most alive woman I've ever met.

D. Release the energy of God into another.

1. The deepest reality in us is the life of Christ.

a. I am most alive when the energy of Christ is pouring through me.

b. Are you most alive when you are discipling others?

c. Shepherding is not following a technique but being guided by Christ.

d. A man in ministry had four children, one a rebel.

1. He lived in a bad section of town.

2. A call came that the boy got arrested but he was not at the police station.

3. The dad drove to the boy's home finding him sleeping after a wild party. The dad kissed him and left.

4. A few months later the boy called to have lunch with the dad and told him he became a Christian.

5. The Lord used the dad's kiss at this low moment in the boy's life to communicate love.

2. The deepest reality in our hearts is to know Christ so that we can release in others the transforming grace of God.