

The Good Shepherd

Thoughts are like sheep in the pastures of the mind. They wander here and there, sometimes finding something good to feed upon, sometimes finding scrub and plants that are harmful to eat. One thought can often lead other thoughts, toward some unknown destination, to good pastures or bad; and without a shepherd to guide them, there is no telling where they'll end up.

They need direction.

We may think that we are the masters of our own thoughts, but it's important to realize that *thoughts* and *thinking* are very different "animals." *Thoughts* are random, loosely connected ideas, while *thinking* implies the application of some sort of logic.

Face it...*thoughts*, in and of themselves, aren't very smart...they simply...ARE!
Like sheep.

A shepherd can lead these thoughts to green pastures...to places where these thoughts can grow by feeding on...or, taking into themselves...something that is good and nourishing. (That's why the Bible tells us to

“Fill [our] minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure,...” [Philippians 4:8])

We are told to think on these things, to be the shepherds of our thoughts. To shepherd our flocks. If we can take one thought in a particular direction, the others will follow. Well, most of them, anyhow...

Sound easy? It isn't, because we, too, are like sheep. We can wander with the best of them...bumbling along without direction and becoming separated from the rest of the flock.

But we are fortunate, because we have learned that there is One Who will go in search of even a single lost sheep...no matter if that sheep's one of the white, wooly kind...a stray (and wooly) thought...or a person who's wandered a bit off the path. The “sheep” know the sound of the Good Shepherd's Voice...and, if they choose to listen to the sound of it, will follow Him home.

(November 17, 2004)