

SHEPHERDING LIKE JESUS



**SOUTH CAROLINA
BAPTIST CONVENTION**

The call to pastor is a call to shepherd the flock of God entrusted to you (1 Peter 5:2). It is a worthy calling to be fulfilled with caution and dependence on the One who called you. What does it mean to shepherd God's flock? What does that require of us, as men seeking to fulfill our calling in the local church? What challenges can we anticipate? What practices should we employ? While Scripture doesn't give us all the answers to these and many other questions related to fulfilling the call of pastor/elder, we do have an example in the life and ministry of Jesus that can guide our efforts.

This workbook, based on Andrew Hébert's, *Shepherding Like Jesus: Returning to the Wild Idea that Character Matters in Ministry*, is intended to help you prepare for a pastor cohort or small group. Each lesson that follows is intended to help you prepare for discussion and coaching environments essential to further your learning and preparation to grow as a pastoral leader and shepherd those in your midst.

Pastoral ministry is a marathon of personal development and sacrificial service to God's Church. So, set your pace and let's start the journey together for the glory of God!

May the Lord equip you and strengthen His Church through this resource and the faithfulness of men seeking to serve for God's glory.

Shepherding Like Jesus Workbook

Written by Clint Carter

Edited by James Nugent

SCBaptist Shepherd Team

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SESSION ONE

PASTORAL CHARACTER & THE LONG HAUL

Core Question: What kind of man must I become to be a faithful pastor over the long haul?

Overview

Jesus never shepherded from a place of fame, entitlement, defensiveness, or exhaustion. His ministry was never driven by the need for public approval, self-protection, or pushing Himself beyond healthy limits. Instead, His life reflected steady humility, a pure heart, deep compassion, and an unwavering dependence on His Father.

Because of this, Jesus not only provides the model for every pastor who desires to lead faithfully over the long haul, he also enables us through the presence of the Holy Spirit. From his example, we realize that effectiveness in ministry is not rooted in giftedness, pressure, or performance, but in a life formed by God from the inside out. The way Jesus shepherded exposes the inner motivations that often drive us and invites us into something better.

This leads to a critical truth for pastoral ministry: unhealthy attitudes cannot be fixed by trying harder or managing behavior. The real solution is deeper formation into the character of Christ. When pastors allow Jesus to shape who they are—not just what they do—the pressures of ministry no longer define them, and their ministry becomes an overflow of His life in them.

Learning Path

- Objective 1: Reflect on Biblical examples of those who served others and develop applications for his ministry to the local church.
- Objective 2: Consider common unchecked attitudes of pastoral ministry and how they can shape our character as leaders.
- Objective 3: Make applications from Biblical Truth and insights from assigned readings that will strengthen your role as a shepherd of God's flock.

Session 1 Outcomes This session is designed to help pastors:

1. Pastors will understand how celebrity culture and performance metrics have reshaped ministry.
2. Pastors will see why gifting without character is dangerous.
3. Pastors will rediscover Jesus' definition of success.
4. Pastors will begin forming a picture of Christlike pastoral character.
5. Pastors will commit to letting Jesus shape who they are, not just what they do.

Required Resources:

1. [Shepherding Like Jesus: Returning to the Wild Idea that Character Matters in Ministry](#) by Andrew Hébert's

Reflecting on Truth

- Read Luke 18:9-14
- Answer the following in your notebook for reflection and cohort discussion:

1. How does the Pharisee see himself?
2. How does the tax collector approach God?
3. Why is this a warning specifically for pastors?

Read Matthew 5:3-12 and Luke 10:38-42 and answer the following in your notebook for reflection and cohort discussion:

The Beatitudes are not traits reserved for elite Christians or unusually gifted leaders. They describe the kind of people Jesus is actively forming, especially those He entrusts with others. For pastors, the Beatitudes shape:

- **How we relate to God** – dependence, hunger, trust
 - **How we relate to ourselves** – honesty, humility, repentance
 - **How we relate to people** – mercy, patience, peacemaking
 - **How we endure opposition** – faithfulness over time
-
- What do the Beatitudes emphasize about inner life versus outer success?
 - Which Beatitude speaks most clearly to pastoral life right now?
 - What pastoral tendencies appear in Martha?
 - How do these Scriptures challenge the modern definitions of pastoral success?

Considering Wisdom

- Read Chapters 1 & 2 of *Shepherding Like Jesus*

Pastoral ministry today exists in a very different environment than the previous generation of ministers - visibility is rewarded, growth is celebrated, influence is amplified, and speed is expected. But Scripture calls pastors to something deeper and slower - faithfulness shaped by character. The author states, "Many pastors' gifting has taken them where their character cannot keep them."

Unchecked attitudes don't remain frustrations—they begin forming desires, behaviors, and eventually decisions. Consider the "Five Attitudes That Endanger Pastors" and answer the questions that follow below:

- 1. Fame - Wanting to Be Known More Than Faithful**
- 2. Infidelity - When Private Compromise Grows in the Dark**
- 3. Fighting - Needing to Win Instead of Shepherd**
- 4. Finances - When Money Becomes Pressure or Escape**
- 5. Fatigue - When Exhaustion Shapes Our Spiritual Life**

Jesus' leadership was not fueled by the need to be seen, to protect Himself, or to push beyond human limits. Instead, Jesus shepherded from humility, purity of heart, deep compassion, and constant dependence on the Father. This reveals a critical truth for pastoral ministry: the antidote to unhealthy pastoral attitudes is not stronger willpower or better behavior, but deeper formation into the character of Christ.

- Answer the following questions in your journal for personal reflection and in preparation for cohort discussions:
 1. How can ministry success feed unhealthy attitudes?
 2. Which attitude do you need to be more aware of right now?
 3. What might happen if that attitude goes unaddressed?
 4. Do you ever feel like you are on a ministry treadmill?
 5. Do you ever feel afraid to take a day off or a vacation?

Applying Truth and Wisdom to Your Life

- Take a few minutes to reflect:

1. Where have I confused busyness with faithfulness?
2. Which Beatitude am I resisting most?
3. What might Jesus be inviting me to receive instead of produce?

Your NextStep in preparation for your cohort:

1. Name the Pressure

What version of “success” am I feeling pulled toward?

2. Name the Beatitude

Which one does Jesus want to form in me right now?

3. Take One Step

What is one way I can slow down and let Jesus shape me this month?

SESSION 1 CORE TAKEAWAY

Pastors who last are not formed by pressure, but by Jesus.

SESSION TWO

LEADING FROM DEPENDENCE & BROKENNESS

Core Question: What happens when I try to pastor from strength instead of spiritual dependence and honest brokenness?

Overview

Today, we're going to look at why dependence and brokenness are not setbacks in pastoral leadership—but often the very place where Jesus does His most shaping work. During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus begins by naming spiritual poverty and mourning not as deficiencies—but as doorways into the kingdom.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Matthew 5:3-4 (CSB)

Learning Path

- Objective 1: Reflect on Biblical examples of those who lead others and develop applications for his ministry to the local church.
- Objective 2: Consider common realities of pastoral ministry and how they can negatively impact ministry and character as leaders.
- Objective 3: Make applications from Biblical Truth and insights from assigned readings that will strengthen your role as a shepherd of God's flock.

Session 2 Outcomes This session is designed to help pastors:

1. Pastors will be able to understand why self-sufficiency is spiritually dangerous in ministry.
2. Pastors will be able to embrace spiritual poverty as a pastoral necessity, not a weakness.
3. Pastors will be encouraged to see brokenness as a tool God redeems, not something to hide.
4. Pastors will be equipped to learn how God deepens ministry impact through dependence and honesty.
5. Pastors will identify personal next steps toward humble reliance on God.

Reflecting on Truth

- Read Judges 6:14-16; Judges 7:2-7
- Answer the following questions in your journal for personal reflection and in preparation for cohort discussions:

1. How does Gideon initially see himself? How might God view Gideon at this moment?
2. If God reduced your "army," what would you be most afraid of losing—momentum, reputation, security, or control?
3. Where are you tempted to say, "I know God is with me—but I'd still feel better with more resources"?
4. How does this apply to pastoral leadership today?

- **Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 and answer the following in your notebook for reflection and cohort discussion:**

5. What "thorn" have you been asking God to remove that may actually be shaping you?
6. What would it mean to receive grace instead of relief for your current thorn?
7. Why do pastors often hide their brokenness?

Considering Wisdom

- Read Chapters 3 & 4 of *Shepherding Like Jesus*

Chapters 3 and 4 highlight a quiet danger in ministry - pastors often don't fail spectacularly—they drift slowly into leading without needing God very much.

The author describes two connected realities:

Spiritual impoverishment – functioning without refueling

Unacknowledged brokenness – hiding wounds God intends to heal and use

If you choose to drive your car for miles with the low fuel light illuminated, you will eventually be forced to stop. Too many pastors try to go an extra few miles in ministry while running on fumes or ignoring their own brokenness until they are forced to stop after a physical, mental, or moral breakdown.

Spiritually impoverished pastors are often gifted, experienced, and admired –but quietly running dry.

- Answer the following questions in your journal for personal reflection and in preparation for cohort discussions:

1. What warning light has been on in your life that you've learned to ignore?
2. What are warning signs of spiritual poverty?
3. Who notices when you're spiritually running on fumes—and who doesn't?
4. What spiritual practices have slowly become optional for you?
5. How does spiritual poverty affect the people we lead?
6. But what happens to you personally (physically/emotionally) when you start to wear down under stress?
7. The author suggests that unhealed brokenness reappears in other expressions. Do you find this to be true in your life?

Applying Truth and Wisdom to Your Life

- Take a few minutes to reflect:
1. Where am I relying on my own strength instead of God's?
 2. What broken place have I tried to hide or rush past?
 3. What might God want to redeem rather than remove?

Your NextStep in preparation for your cohort:

"This Next Step is not about improvement—it's about attention."

1. Name the Area of Dependence

Where has prayer become optional instead of essential?

2. Name the Wound

What pain might God want to use, not erase?

3 Take One Step

What is one habit, conversation, or practice this month that leans into dependence or honesty.

SESSION 2 CORE TAKEAWAY

God does His deepest work through pastors who depend on Him and lead honestly from their brokenness.

SESSION THREE

LEADING WITH HUMILITY & HOLY HUNGER

Core Question: What is driving my leadership—and what am I truly hungry for in ministry?

Overview

Dependence and brokenness shape who we are.

Humility and hunger shape why we do what we do.

Today we're asking a deeper heart question: "What is actually driving my leadership—and what am I feeding my soul with?"

Jesus blesses quiet strength and holy desire—not self-promotion, not ambition masked as calling, not hunger for approval.

"Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

Matthew 5:5-6 (CSB)

Learning Path

- Objective 1: Reflect on Biblical examples of those who faced criticism and develop applications for his ministry to the local church.
- Objective 2: Consider the impacts of pride on his pastoral ministry and how humility could strengthen the ministry and character of his leadership.
- Objective 3: Make applications from Biblical Truth and insights from assigned readings that will strengthen your role as a shepherd of God's flock.

Session 3 Outcomes: This session is designed to help pastors:

1. Pastor will understand biblical humility as strength under God's authority.
2. Pastor will confront pride, comparison, and ambition in pastoral leadership.
3. Pastor will rediscover a deep hunger for righteousness, not recognition.
4. Pastor will identify unhealthy motivations that quietly shape ministry decisions.
5. Pastor will take intentional steps toward humility and renewed spiritual desire.

Reflecting on Truth

- Read Numbers 12:1-10 and Psalm 42:1-5

In the face of criticism by other leaders, Moses does not defend himself. Instead, he entrusts his reputation and calling to God. As leaders seeking to shepherd God's people, how we respond to criticism often demonstrates who or what we are trusting in for ministry success.

Humility is not weakness—it is resting in God's defense.

In Psalm 42, the psalmist does not deny discouragement. He names it—and leads his soul back to hope.

Learning how to shepherd your own heart during discouragement is not an easy discipline. But with God's help and the encouragement of other pastors/mentors, pastors can learn to shepherd their own hearts and satisfy their need for the continual presence of the living God in their lives.

- Answer the following questions in your journal for personal reflection and in preparation for cohort discussions:

1. How do the events in these passages parallel those in pastoral leadership?
2. When criticized, what is your instinctive response?
3. What would it look like to let God handle your defense?
4. What does Psalm 42 reveal about our need to be shepherded during times of discouragement?
5. What practices have you found best allow God to work for you when you need encouragement??

Considering Wisdom

- Read Chapters 5 & 6 of *Shepherding Like Jesus*

Humility is not self-denial, but is our God-centered realism. When we can consistently rely in our knowledge of 1) Who God is; 2) Who you are; 3) our need to live comfortably under God's authority.

In contrast, pride, shows up subtly as:

- Comparison disguised as concern
- Control masked as responsibility
- Defensiveness framed as leadership

Like trying to hold on to sand too tightly, your grip forces it out of your grasp, whereas an open hand allows it to remain in place. Pride clenches control, but humility trusts God with outcomes.

- Answer the following in your notebook for reflection and cohort discussion:

1. Where does pride tend to surface quietly in your life and leadership?
2. What situations trigger defensiveness most quickly for you?
3. Why is humility difficult for pastors?
4. Where do pastors most struggle to practice humility?
5. When it comes to ministry, what do you often hunger for that which may not be healthy or satisfying (approval, acceptance, reward, etc.)
6. How do you ensure you are craving what will satisfy your spiritual hunger completely when faced with so many empty options in life and ministry?

Applying Truth and Wisdom to Your Life

- Take a few minutes to reflect:

1. Where have I been driven more by pride than trust?
2. What appetite has been shaping my decisions?
3. What am I most hungry for right now?

Your NextStep in preparation for your cohort:

1. Name the Pride Pressure

Where am I tempted to defend, compare, or control?

2. Name the Hunger

What am I chasing for satisfaction?

3. Take One Step

One habit or practice this month that cultivates humility or righteousness.

SESSION 3 CORE TAKEAWAY

Healthy pastors lead with humility and are sustained by hunger for righteousness, not recognition.

SESSION FOUR

LEADING WITH MERCY & INTEGRITY

Core Question: How does my inner life shape the way I treat people and represent Christ in ministry?

Overview

Distant. Quick-tempered. Unapproachable. These are probably not the words you would want your church members to use to describe their pastor. What causes a pastor's heart to be guarded, unengaged, or even lacking emotions altogether? How does the one who is called to be an example to the flock often become the one who is most emotionally isolated from the flock? And how is a pastor to respond when he realizes his heart has drifted away from the people he has been entrusted to shepherd? The ability to lead others with mercy and integrity can only be found in the One who has first shown us mercy and gave His sinless life so that we could then be merciful and walk with integrity among them. Pastors, while we know this truth, the reality of our ministries often fails to consistently reflect this truth. But we don't have to allow the gap between ideal and reality remain as we apply the truths of Scripture and ask God to cultivate a heart of mercy in us again.

Learning Path

- Objective 1: Reflect on the impact personal sin can have on our ministry and calling to have compassion for others.
- Objective 2: Consider what causes a pastor's heart to grow harder and reduce our ability to love and shepherd others in his congregations.
- Objective 3: Make applications from Biblical Truth and insights from assigned readings that will strengthen your role as a shepherd of God's flock.

Session 4 Outcomes: This session is designed to help pastors:

1. Pastor will understand why sympathy and mercy are essential for shepherding people well.
2. Pastor will recognize how emotional distance and hardness can quietly develop in ministry.
3. Pastor will see purity of heart as integrity and singleness of devotion, not just moral behavior.
4. Pastor will examine how inner compromise affects outer ministry credibility.
5. Pastor will take intentional steps toward merciful presence and clean-hearted leadership.

Reflecting on Truth: Jesus, the Compassionate Shepherd.

- Read Matthew 9:35-38
- Answer the following questions in your journal for personal reflection and in preparation for cohort discussions:
 1. What is Jesus' response when He looks at the crowds?
 2. Why is compassion essential for shepherding?
 3. How could hidden sin change your compassion for others?
 4. If compassion is a lens, what has been smudging yours?
- **Read Psalm 51:1-12 and answer the following in your notebook for reflection and cohort discussion:**
 5. Summarize David's requests before God. What is his motivation for this prayer?
 6. Why is compassion essential for shepherding?
 7. How can impurity affect your ministry even if hidden?

Considering Wisdom

- Read Chapters 7 & 8 of *Shepherding Like Jesus*

Callouses are formed by the repeated friction of an object against skin. These natural defense mechanisms for the body allow it to continue to work but often leave the impacted area with less feeling and tenderness. The same response can happen emotionally, creating calluses on our hearts. Instead of feeling natural emotions like joy and sorrow, we are often left with numbness and insensitivity toward the emotions of others. Or worse, the events can cause us to drift away from our personal pursuit of holiness and lose sight of God's righteousness. In pastoral ministry, our hearts are always vulnerable to drifting and calluses after prolonged exposure to hurt, rejection, or disappointment. We naturally try to protect our own hearts from future hurt, slowly losing our ability to walk obediently before God or show sympathy to those we are called to love and shepherd.

- Answer the following in your notebook for reflection and cohort discussion:

1. Why do people need sympathetic pastors?
2. What typically hardens a pastor's ability to love and shepherd others over time?
3. How does loss of sympathy show up in your ministry?
4. Where have you noticed yourself becoming less patient than you used to be?
5. What do you do when you feel nothing—but know you should?

Applying Truth and Wisdom to Your Life

- Take a few minutes to reflect:

1. Where have you felt compassion fading?
2. Where might your heart be divided?
3. What might Jesus want to clean, soften, or restore in your life?

Your NextStep in preparation for your cohort:

1. Name the People Pressure

Where are you tempted to see people as problems?

2. Name the Heart Issue

Where do you need greater integrity or purity?

3. Take One Step

One practice this month that strengthens your compassion and/or purity so you can be more like Jesus.

SESSION 4 CORE TAKEAWAY

Shepherds reflect Jesus best when their hearts remain compassionate and clean.

SESSION FIVE

LEADING THROUGH CONFLICT & FAITHFUL ENDURANCE

Core Question: How do I shepherd faithfully through conflict, opposition, and hardship—and still finish well?

Overview

Church conflict. Just saying the words can cause some pastors to shrink back into a ball and hearts to race. If you've been a pastor for more than 2 weeks, you've probably already experienced some degree of conflict among members. How should a pastor respond to conflict within the church body? How should he respond to personal conflicts with church members? The answers to these questions aren't easy even though Scripture is crystal clear on how God's people should interact with one another. This session will conclude our study on the Beatitudes and help you strive for unity among all the flock with the encouragement of your peers and the faithfulness of our God.

Learning Path

- Objective 1: Reflect on the Biblical truths surrounding peacemaking and reconciliation within the church.
- Objective 2: Consider the realities of personal conflict and how our temptation to ignore conflict can harm a local congregation.
- Objective 3: Make applications from Biblical Truth and insights from assigned readings that will strengthen your role as a shepherd of God's flock.

Session 5 Outcomes: This session is designed to help pastors:

1. Pastor will understand peacemaking as an active pastoral calling, not conflict avoidance.
2. Pastor will learn how Jesus-centered reconciliation protects both people and churches.
3. Pastor will prepare for opposition, criticism, and suffering without becoming bitter.
4. Pastor will be encouraged to see endurance as faithful presence over time, not stubborn survival.
5. Pastor will have opportunities to commit to practices that help them finish ministry well, not just last.

Reflecting on Truth:

- Read Matthew 5:9-12; 18:15-17
 - Answer the following questions in your journal for personal reflection and in preparation for cohort discussions:
1. Why does Jesus call peacemakers “sons of God”? How is this different from “keeping the peace”?
 2. Why is it difficult for pastors to accept opposition?
 3. What promise does Jesus give those who endure persecution faithfully?
 4. How do these Beatitudes help prepare you for ministry?
 5. What is the goal in following Matthew 18:15-17?
 6. What does the process of reconciliation require from pastors when others have sinned against us? When we have sinned against others?
 7. What makes reconciliation so hard for pastors when they have to confront members in sin?
 8. What happens when conflict is avoided instead of addressed?

Considering Wisdom

- Read Chapters 9 & 10 of *Shepherding Like Jesus*

Pastors usually don't quit because of one big moment. They wear down through unresolved conflict and unprocessed suffering. However, pastors that practice reconciliation don't avoid conflict—they enter it redemptively. Much like ignoring a broken bone in your finger, the pain may go away after time, but its use and strength will weaken or cripple the body for the future. Pastors serving for any length of time will encounter a series of conflicts either personally or within their membership. For pastors to stay faithful until the end of their ministry, reconciliation must be practiced as often as conflict occurs. Faithful pastors keep putting one foot in front of the other, even when progress feels slow and applause fades.

- Answer the following in your notebook for reflection and cohort discussion:

1. What causes pastors to avoid conflict?
2. How does avoidance actually make things worse for the people involved?
3. How can reconciliation strengthen a church long-term?
4. Describe a time when avoidance cost you emotionally or spiritually?
5. What would entering this conflict redemptively require from you?

Applying Truth and Wisdom to Your Life

- Take a few minutes to reflect:

1. What threatens your pastoral endurance today?
2. What helps you to remain faithful when ministry is hard?

Your NextStep in preparation for your cohort:

1. Name the Conflict

Where might God be calling me to pursue reconciliation?

2. Name the Pressure

What opposition or discouragement has weighed me down?

3 Take One Step

One action this month that moves toward peace or strengthens endurance

SESSION 5 CORE TAKEAWAY

Faithful pastors pursue peace, endure hardship, and trust God with the results.

FINAL REMINDER

“JESUS DOESN'T ASK
US TO BE
FAMOUS,
FAST,
OR FLAWLESS—”

CONTACT US



shepherdingteam@scbaptist.org



(803) 227-6051



190 Stoneridge Drive
Columbia, SC, 29210

