

No. 5 Word Pictures That Inspire Faith in Jehovah (Symposium) —Shepherd

Note to speaker:

This is the final talk of a four-part symposium. The questions in the main headings follow the same format in all four talks. Explain how picturing Jehovah as a shepherd can help us to feel secure. This talk includes a scripted demonstration

HOW DOES PICTURING JEHOVAH AS A SHEPHERD INSPIRE FAITH IN HIM? (2 min.)

The Bible uses the word picture of a shepherd to illustrate the strong and tender qualities that Jehovah shows in caring for his people [Read Psalm 23:1]

Good shepherds give each sheep personal attention (w09 6/1 29 ¶2; w05 11/1 16-17 ¶5-8)

By describing himself as a shepherd, Jehovah reveals his desire that we feel secure

WHEN IS IT ESPECIALLY HELPFUL TO THINK OF JEHOVAH AS A SHEPHERD? (6 min.)

When we need *guidance* (Jer 10:23; w11 5/1 31 ¶3)

[Read Psalm 23:2, 3] Jehovah guides us by means of his Word and his holy spirit

Walking in “the paths of righteousness” brings us peace, contentment, refreshment, and security

When we are spiritually vulnerable and need *protection* (w05 11/1 19 ¶14-15)

[Read Psalm 23:4] Our Shepherd can give us the strength to endure even in our darkest moments (2Co 4:7)

At times, Jehovah uses his “rod” and “staff” to nudge us to apply Bible-based counsel

When we need *solid spiritual food*

[Read Psalm 23:5] We may be facing a perplexing problem or making a significant decision

We can find just the right spiritual provision to satisfy our need (w05 11/1 20 ¶17-18)

Jehovah provides attentive spiritual undershepherds to offer encouragement and support

In the following demonstration, observe two elders making a shepherding visit on a single mother and her teenage daughter

DEMONSTRATION (3 min.)

****[Note: You may make minor adjustments to the script for naturalness and to fit local circumstances. Rehearse thoroughly so that the demonstration will be conversational, neither comical nor overly dramatic. Do not mention the name of a specific social network. Select participants who are appropriate for their parts in age, manner, and appearance. Participants may use their real names if preferred]****

Brother Thomas: Sandra, I loved the experience you related at the meeting about witnessing to a classmate in school. Do you find that your classmates respect your beliefs?

Sandra Walker: ****[Enthusiastically]**** Thank you, Brother Thomas. I think some do. And I try to tailor my approach, based on what may interest them.

Brother Martin: That’s excellent! How do you do that?

Sandra: You can tell a lot about people by observing them. But I learn even more by friending them online.

Sharon Walker: ****[Surprised]**** What do you mean? Do you even know these kids?

Sandra: ****[Innocently]**** Don’t worry, Mom. I just accept their invitations so they don’t think I’m weird or antisocial. It’s really hard to say no when someone sends you a request.

Sister Walker: Sandra, I’m really worried about this. ****[Pause]**** What do you think, brothers?

Brother Thomas: Like many things, a social network can be a useful tool. But as with any sharp or powerful tool, it must be used with extreme caution and skill—and in harmony with Bible principles—if it is used at all. Sharon, there is helpful guidance in our literature that can assist you as a parent to decide what is best for you and Sandra. Brother Martin, do you have your tablet with you? Do you remember the article about social networking that we were discussing the other day?

Brother Martin: Yes. Sisters, on your device, please bring up the *Research Guide for Jehovah’s Witnesses*. Under Subjects, choose “Recreation and Entertainment.” Find the subpoint “Internet,” and select the February 2012 *Awake!* article entitled “Four Questions You Should Ask About Social Networking.” Sister Walker, would you read the fourth question that is featured, along with the scripture?

Sister Walker: OK. “How Does Social Networking Affect My Friendships?” Proverbs 13:20 says: “The one walking with the wise will become wise, but the one who has dealings with the stupid will fare badly.”

Brother Martin: Sandra, would you read the next portion?

Sandra: “What you should know. Your friendships influence how you think and act. (1Co 15:33) So it only makes sense to be selective about whom you befriend on a social network. Some accept dozens or even hundreds of friend requests from people they hardly know—or do not know at all. Others discover that not all on their list of friends are good associates.” I have to admit, I recently accepted a friend request from a classmate whom I have purposely avoided at school. I just didn’t want to hurt her feelings.

Sister Walker: Sandra, I appreciate your telling us about the pressure you have been facing. I think it would be good for us to discuss this article during our next Family Worship evening. Brothers, we appreciate the help that you provide for our family. ****[Participants exit]****

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HOW CAN WE DEMONSTRATE FAITH THAT JEHOVAH IS A SHEPHERD FOR US? (2 min.)

Contemplate the various ways that Jehovah proves to be a shepherd for you

[Read Psalm 23:6] David felt secure knowing that if he remained close to his heavenly Shepherd, he would experience Jehovah's loving care 'all the days of his life'

Like David, we can speak from a heart filled with gratitude and faith (w05 11/1 20 ¶19-20)

As long as we stay close to our heavenly Shepherd, we will be the object of his loving care

BENEFIT FROM WORD PICTURES THAT INSPIRE FAITH IN JEHOVAH (2 min.)

Can you remember how we benefit when we think of the ways Jehovah is depicted in the Bible?

Review question: What benefits come from meditating on word pictures about Jehovah?

Answer: Psalm 28:7; Luke 11:11-13; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 23:1; word pictures inspire faith by helping us to appreciate the many ways in which God cares for us

Jehovah is a protective *Shield*, strengthening us to resist compromising our faith

Jehovah is a caring *Father*, inviting us to pour out our hearts when anxieties trouble us

Jehovah is an unchanging *Rock*, fulfilling his Word constantly

Jehovah is a capable *Shepherd*, leading, guarding, and feeding his sheep

Continue to meditate on the word pictures preserved for us in the Bible

This will help you to have complete confidence in our magnificent God!

(Speaker does not need to read or comment on every cited text or discuss every subpoint)