

1. When it comes to finding the real answers, beware of yourself.

- ✓ Don't lean on your own understanding, because you don't have any!, **Proverbs 3:5-6**. The first and most important step in finding answers is to be convinced that we don't know them but that the Shepherd does. The greatest danger to a sheep is never the wolf, it is always the sheep himself. A sheep's life is the easiest life there is; they make no decisions; as it is, the Shepherd makes all of the decisions for them. The worst situation for a sheep is when they think they have an idea! The sheep is not in danger of the wolf as long as it does what the Shepherd says. So, the simple answer to our question is the same one we learned in first grade Sunday School, do what Jesus says! But we will often have to wait for His voice: **Psalms 23:1**, "I shall not want." This is a warning for the sheep of God everywhere. The problem is that His voice is not the first voice we often hear. The first voice we hear is our own, "I've got an idea!" The next will be the voice of the wolf.
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2. When He (God) speaks, it will be in His timing almost never ours.

- ✓ He leads, guides, and makes me lie down, but when? When He decides to and not before then, **Psalms 23:1-3**. One of the wolf's main ploys is to tell you you've got to make a quick decision. There are thousands of ways to lose, but only one way we can win. Sheep have to wait on the Shepherd; sheep that don't wait become wolf food.
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3. When He speaks, it will first be through His leadership.

- ✓ We are big on the priesthood, the believer, and the fact that we don't go through anyone to get to God. That is an incredibly important doctrine on how to run our individual lives. Go straight to the Shepherd for your answers. But, that can be taken too far when it comes to how to run our congregational life. Who we are individually is governed by the priesthood of each believer, but who we are collectively is governed by God's chain of command that He has established in our churches. God is big on the chain of command, and if you want this to go badly, disregard God's leadership within the church and do your own thing and watch what happens. I've seen it many times, and it hasn't ended well even once: "God speaks to me and tells me what He wants our church to do." I've seen church members do that, I've seen a deacon or two do that, I've seen preachers do that, and it never ends well. "The Pastor is the single major decision maker in the church." Note, you will not find that model supported in the New Testament. The New Testament holds out a model of leadership that is otherwise called elders. Elders are always male; they are always plural, and the Bible is very specific as to how we treat them, in a word, "obey,"

In Hebrews 13:7, there are tough words to follow. Notice, though, that they don't have any qualifiers like "if you like them" or "if you agree with them." The hard thing about leadership is that all leaders are sheep, just like everybody else. There is no such thing as a smart sheep, therefore, leaders aren't smarter because of their positions, but they are connected to God differently than the average sheep when it comes to God leading a congregation. God will always lead through His leadership.
