

STUDENT STUDY GUIDE

SESSION 5 – I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

JOHN 10:11–18

SESSION FOCUS

In this session, Jesus describes Himself as **“the good shepherd.”** This image reveals the heart of His care and leadership. Unlike leaders who act out of self-interest or abandon responsibility when things become difficult, Jesus presents Himself as the shepherd who **knows His sheep, stays with them, and lays down His life for them.**

This study invites you to reflect on **who you trust to lead your life**, how you understand God’s care, and what it means to be personally known by Christ.

OPENING REFLECTION

Before reading the passage, pause and reflect honestly.

- Who or what do you usually rely on for guidance or direction?
- When life feels uncertain, where do you look for reassurance or security?
- How do you typically respond to being led rather than being in control?

(You may want to write a few notes before continuing.)

SCRIPTURE READING

Read **John 10:11–18** slowly and attentively.

As you read, pay attention to: • How Jesus describes Himself

- The contrast between the shepherd and the hired hand
- What Jesus says about knowing and being known

Read more than once if possible. Notice words or phrases that stand out.

KEY IDEA

Jesus is not a distant ruler or temporary guide—He is the Good Shepherd who knows, protects, and gives His life for His sheep.

PART 1: THE IMAGE OF THE SHEPHERD

Shepherding was a familiar image in the ancient world. Shepherds lived with their sheep, guided them, protected them, and took responsibility for their safety.



Jesus uses this image to describe His relationship with those who follow Him.

Reflection Questions

- What qualities do you associate with a good shepherd?
- Why do you think Jesus chooses such a relational image?
- How does this image shape your understanding of God's care?

Personal Notes:

PART 2: "I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD"

When Jesus calls Himself the *good* shepherd, He is not merely claiming skill or competence. He is describing a shepherd whose goodness is shown through **commitment and sacrifice**.

Reflection Questions

- What makes this shepherd "good" according to Jesus?
- How does Jesus redefine leadership in this passage?
- Why might this kind of leadership feel different from what we often see?

Personal Notes:

PART 3: THE HIRED HAND

Jesus contrasts Himself with the hired hand—someone who works for pay but lacks deep commitment. When danger appears, the hired hand runs.

This contrast reveals the difference between **self-preservation and self-giving love**.

Reflection Questions

- What motivates the hired hand?
- Where do you see leadership driven by self-interest today?
- How does Jesus' example challenge common ideas of success or power?

Personal Notes:

PART 4: KNOWN BY THE SHEPHERD

Jesus says that He knows His sheep, and they know Him. This knowing is not abstract—it is personal and relational.

Being known can feel comforting, but it can also feel unsettling.

Reflection Questions

- What does it mean to be fully known by God?



- Why can being known feel both safe and uncomfortable?
- How does trust grow out of relationship rather than control?

Personal Notes:

PART 5: LAYING DOWN HIS LIFE

At the heart of this passage is Jesus' statement that He **lays down His life for the sheep**. This points beyond metaphor to sacrifice.

Jesus' care is not theoretical—it is costly.

Reflection Questions

- Why is sacrifice central to Jesus' leadership?
- How does this statement point toward the cross?
- How does this shape your understanding of God's love?

Personal Notes:

PART 6: ONE FLOCK, ONE SHEPHERD

Jesus speaks of other sheep beyond the current fold, revealing that God's care extends further than expected.

Belonging is rooted not in background or status, but in relationship with the Shepherd.

Reflection Questions

- What boundaries does Jesus challenge here?
- What unites the flock according to Jesus?
- How does this expand your understanding of belonging?

Personal Notes:

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Take a few quiet moments.

- Who or what has been shaping your decisions and direction?
- Where do you struggle to trust God's care?
- What might it look like to follow the Good Shepherd more closely right now?

Personal Response:



CLOSING PRAYER

In your own words, or silently, pray for:

- **Trust in Christ's care**
 - **Rest instead of striving**
 - **Willingness to follow where He leads**
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OPTIONAL TAKE-HOME PRACTICE

This week: • Re-read **John 10:11–15** each day

- Notice moments when you resist or trust God's guidance
 - Ask yourself: **What does it mean to live as someone known by the Shepherd?**
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FINAL THOUGHT

The Good Shepherd does not lead from a distance.

He knows His sheep.

He stays when danger comes.

He lays down His life.

And He invites us to follow—not out of fear, but out of trust.

