

# MEN OF THE SHEPHERD

A man with a beard is kneeling in prayer, his head bowed. Behind him, a woman with long brown hair stands with her hands on his shoulders, looking down. To the right, a young girl is partially visible, also looking down. The background is a soft, golden sunset over a field.

100 Days of Shepherding

Your Family

Your First Church

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**FREE EXCERPT**

**The Intentional Shepherd**

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# The Intentional Shepherd

## Excerpt

These pages are part of a larger journey from *Men of the Shepherd*, but this particular section became personal to me in ways I did not expect.

The idea of the Intentional Shepherd grew out of years of reflection about what it means to lead well as a husband, father, and follower of Christ. Not perfectly, but intentionally. To stop reacting to life and begin shepherding the people God has placed in front of us with purpose, love, and presence.

Over these next few days, the reflections move through different aspects of that calling, love, friendship, renewal, leadership, and legacy. But the final reflection may be the most important one to me personally.

Because after all the responsibility, leadership, and effort, I have realized something simple: the best place to be is near Him.

That final page is there for a reason.

I hope these reflections encourage you to lead your family well, love deeply, and stay close to the Good Shepherd who first loved us.

I pray these reflections encourage you to lead, love, and shepherd your family well as you walk closely with Christ.

Thank you for taking this journey with me.

Chris

MenOfTheShepherd.com

## Day 17

### The Intentional Shepherd: Leading with Pro-Active Love

*Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)*

*“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her,”*

As men committed to Faith and Family First, the weight of leading a home can feel heavy. There are constant pressures, responsibilities pulling in different directions, expectations to lead well, and the quiet awareness that your family depends on your presence and direction. It is easy to drift into reacting instead of leading, responding only when something demands your attention instead of guiding with purpose.

This is where the concept of the Intentional Shepherd must be understood. It is not just an idea, but a calling that has been shaped over years of reflection, growth, and time in God's Word. Shepherding is rooted in Scripture, but this clarifies what it looks like for men today, to lead with purpose, strength, and conviction instead of passivity. An intentional shepherd does not wait for life to happen; he steps into his role and leads with foresight and direction.

At the center of this calling is pro-active love. This is not a reactive love that waits to be asked. It is a response to Christ Himself. Because He loved first, you choose to love first. That means stepping into the needs of your wife and children without hesitation, showing grace in the routine, strength in the challenges, and consistency in the unseen moments. This kind of love is not occasional, it is daily, deliberate, and sacrificial.

To lead this way, you must be equipped. The Word of God is not optional, it is your sword. It is what cuts through distraction, exposes truth, and protects your home from what seeks to divide it. Without it, you react. With it, you lead. This is not about force or control, but about discernment, protection, and direction rooted in Christ.

An intentional shepherd stands firm, grounded in the love of Christ and equipped with His Word. He leads with clarity, not confusion. If you are going to lead your family well, you must step into this calling, love first, and carry the responsibility God has placed in your hands with intention

# Shepherding Value

Pro-Active Love — A shepherd leads by choosing to love first, reflecting Christ's love through deliberate action.

## Reflect

1. Christ loved first—are you intentionally choosing to love your family before being prompted?
2. Intentional shepherding requires purpose—where are you drifting instead of leading with direction?
3. Your home needs active leadership—how are you stepping in to guide your family with love and clarity?

## Live It Today

Take one unprompted action today to serve your wife or children in love.

## Personal Prayer

Lord, teach me to lead as an intentional shepherd, loving first and guiding my family in You.

## Reflective Verse

*1 John 4:19 (ESV)*  
*"We love because he first loved us."*

## Day 18

### The Intentional Shepherd: Leading with Purpose, Love, and Strength

*Ephesians 6:17 (ESV)*

*“Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,”*

The Intentional Shepherd is a man who has committed his life to following God’s Word and leading his family with purpose, love, and strength. This is not passive leadership. It is rooted in a deep, personal relationship with Christ, where God comes first and everything else flows from that foundation. As a husband, father, and leader, he does not react to life, he steps into it with responsibility, guiding his family with clarity and conviction.

This calling is not optional. Every man is called to shepherd his home, to lead his wife and children with grace, humility, and unwavering love. Just as a shepherd carries a staff to guide and protect, the intentional shepherd carries the sword of the Spirit. The Word of God is not symbolic, it is active, shaping decisions, correcting direction, and guarding against spiritual danger within the home.

This path requires structure and focus. It is built on five essential expressions of leadership that define how a man lives this out daily: loving with **agape**, serving as a **friend**, building **relational** strength, pursuing **renewal**, and leading **transformation**. These are not abstract ideas. They are daily responsibilities that shape the culture of a home and the future of a family.

Over the next five days, this journey will move into each of these words, one at a time. Each day will focus on a single aspect of what it means to live as an intentional shepherd, bringing clarity to how you lead with purpose, love, and strength in your home. This is not theory. It is a daily application that builds a man who leads well.

The tension is that many men want to lead but lack direction. They want strength but avoid the discipline required to sustain it. Without intentionality, leadership becomes reactive, inconsistent, and weak. The intentional shepherd rejects that pattern. He chooses to lead with purpose, anchored in truth, and guided by the Word that equips him for every challenge he will face.

# Shepherding Value

Intentional Leadership — A shepherd leads with purpose, anchored in God's Word and committed to guiding his family with clarity and strength.

## Reflect

1. Leading begins with Christ first—are you rooted in your relationship with Him before leading your family?
2. Passive leadership creates instability—where are you reacting instead of leading with intention?
3. Your family depends on direction—how are you actively guiding them with purpose, love, and strength?

## Live It Today

Identify one area in your home where you will lead intentionally and take action today.

## Personal Prayer

Lord, anchor me in Your Word and strengthen me to lead my family with purpose and conviction.

## Reflective Verse

*Romans 12:2 (ESV)*

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

## Day 19

### Man in Action – Agape: Loving as Christ First Loved Us

1 John 4:19 (ESV)

*“We love because he first loved us.”*

#### Day 1 of Intentional Shepherd - Agape

Unconditional, sacrificial love that moves first. Want to win your family? You practice. Not in grand gestures alone, but in the quiet, unseen moments where love is tested and proven. I remember early in my marriage thinking love was flowers, date nights, and notes. Those matter, but they do not sustain a home. Real love is built when you are tired and still listening. When frustration rises and you choose patience, when you serve even when you feel empty.

Agape is not driven by feeling; it is a decision. It is choosing to love like Christ, sacrificially, unconditionally, without expecting anything in return. Jesus modeled this in every step. He washed the feet of men who would fail Him. He served without recognition. He gave Himself fully, not because we earned it, but because He chose to love first. That is the standard placed in your hands as a husband and father.

The tension shows up when leadership is tested. It is easy to love when things are smooth, but Agape shows itself when life is messy. Rehoboam ruled harshly and divided what he was meant to protect because love was absent from his leadership. Christ leads differently. He serves, sacrifices, and strengthens those under His care. That is the difference between reactive leadership and intentional shepherding.

I have learned that Agape means being first to forgive when I feel justified. It means showing up when no one notices. It means loving my family not based on how they respond, but because Christ has already filled me with His love. This love does not wait. It moves. It leads. It carries responsibility without needing recognition.

If you are going to lead your family well, this is where it begins. Not with control, not with authority, but with love that goes first. Agape is the foundation. Practice it daily, and you will build a home marked by strength, trust, and the presence of Christ.

## Shepherding Value

Sacrificial Love — A shepherd leads by loving first, reflecting Christ through consistent, selfless action.

### Reflect

1. Christ loved first—are you choosing to love your family sacrificially before being prompted?
2. Loving when it is difficult reveals your heart—where are you holding back instead of serving?
3. Your leadership shapes your home—how are you actively building trust and strength through Agape love?

### Live It Today

Do one intentional act of service for your family without expecting recognition.

### Personal Prayer

Lord, teach me to love first and lead my family with sacrificial, Christ-centered love.

### Reflective Verse

*Mark 10:45 (ESV)*

*“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

## Day 20

### A Friend Like Jesus: Love That Stands the Test

*John 15:13 (ESV)*

*“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”*

#### Day 2 of Intentional Shepherd — Friend

Love that sacrifices and remains when tested. Friendship is one of the greatest gifts a man can experience. A true friend walks with you through highs and lows, stands beside you in struggle, and celebrates with you in victory. But not every friendship is built to last. Some fade when pressure comes. Others break under the weight of betrayal.

I learned this over time through relationships I believed were strong. For years, I walked closely with two men, men I trusted, prayed with, and worked alongside. One was a minister working for me, the other a businessman I believed was grounded in faith. I brought them into my business, shared trust with them, and believed we were aligned not just professionally, but spiritually.

Then everything changed. A single phone call exposed what had been happening behind the scenes. These men had conspired to take my clients and undermine what I had built. In one moment, trust collapsed. The loss was real, but the deeper wound was betrayal. It forces a man to step back and ask a hard question: what is a true friend?

Jesus answers that question clearly. A true friend is not defined by convenience or benefit, but by sacrifice. “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” This is not surface-level loyalty. It is a commitment that costs something. Jesus did not just speak this, He lived it. He knew betrayal was coming, yet He chose to love, serve, and ultimately lay down His life.

The tension is that men often measure friendship by what they receive. Christ flips that. A true friend is measured by how he loves, not what he gains. As an intentional shepherd, this is the standard you bring into your home. You do not withdraw when it gets hard. You do not love conditionally. You stand, serve, and remain steady for your wife and children.

If you are going to lead your family well, you must become this kind of friend. Not one shaped by past hurt, but one anchored in Christ. Jesus is the friend who never fails. Lead your family with that same loyalty, and you will build something that endures.

## Shepherding Value

Loyalty — A shepherd leads with steadfast commitment, remaining faithful in love through every trial.

### Reflect

1. Christ's friendship is sacrificial—are you choosing to love your family even when it costs you something?
2. Betrayal tests your heart—where are you allowing past hurt to affect how you love others?
3. Your family needs consistency—how are you demonstrating loyalty and presence in their lives daily?

### Live It Today

Choose one way today to show consistent, sacrificial support to your wife or children.

### Personal Prayer

Lord, make me a faithful and loyal man who loves and stands firm like You.

### Reflective Verse

*Proverbs 18:24 (ESV)*

*“A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”*

## Day 21

### Listening with Love: The Heart of Relational Fathering

*Matthew 22:37–39 (ESV)*

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

#### Day 3 of Intentional Shepherd — Relational

Love that listens, knows, and stays present. I have never been one to give gifts just to check a box. If I give something, I want it to mean something. I want it to last. That is how relationships are built, through real connection, intentional thought, and being fully present in the lives of those God has entrusted to me.

One day, my daughter Angelina and I were looking at Bibles together. As we flipped through the pages, she casually mentioned how much she loved taking notes, but the margins were too small. It was a small comment, easy to overlook, but I did not forget it. Months later, when she opened her gift, it was a Bible with wide margins. Her reaction was not about the gift itself, it was about what it represented. I had listened. I had seen her. I had remembered something that mattered to her.

That moment revealed something deeper. Shepherding is not about checking boxes or fulfilling obligations. It is about knowing your people. As men, it is easy to fall into providing, protecting, and moving on. But leadership that stops there is incomplete. Jesus did not lead that way. He knew His disciples. He understood their fears, their strengths, and their struggles. He invested in them personally.

The tension is that routine can replace relationships. You can meet needs without knowing hearts. You can provide without being present. But an intentional shepherd refuses that pattern. He listens. He pays attention. He engages. He leads from relationship, not distance.

If you are going to lead your family well, you must be present enough to know them. Your wife needs to be seen. Your children need to be heard. Real leadership is built on connection. When you listen, remember, and act, you build something that lasts far beyond the moment.

## Shepherding Value

Intentional Presence — A shepherd leads by knowing his people, listening carefully, and engaging with purpose.

### Reflect

1. Loving your family requires knowing them—are you truly listening and paying attention to their needs?
2. Routine can replace relationships—where are you going through motions instead of being fully present?
3. Your leadership shapes connection—how are you intentionally building deeper relationships in your home?

### Live It Today

Ask one meaningful question today and listen without distraction to your wife or child.

### Personal Prayer

Lord, help me to listen well and lead my family through intentional presence and care.

### Reflective Verse

*John 10:14 (ESV)*

*“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,”*

## Day 22

### Renewing the Mind: Sharpening Your Sword

*Romans 12:2 (ESV)*

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

#### Day 4 of Intentional Shepherd — Renewing

Transformation through daily surrender and alignment with God. There was a time when I believed I was ready to step into deeper leadership, even pastoral ministry. The desire was there, the intention was right, but something inside me resisted. I carried a quiet weight of unworthiness, measuring myself by my past instead of seeing myself through God’s grace. That tension stayed with me longer than I wanted to admit.

Over time, I pursued opportunities, expecting doors to open, but they did not. The process exposed more than it affirmed. What felt like opportunity often felt like pressure, and I walked away from those moments thanking God for closing doors I thought I needed. Still, I prayed for renewal, not just in my thinking, but in my heart and direction.

Then came a moment I did not expect. I believed I had found clarity in pursuing missionary work, but something was unsettled. That became clear when my daughter spoke honestly and said she was feeling bitterness toward me. That moment cut deep. It exposed something I had missed, my desire to serve had moved ahead of my responsibility to shepherd my family. That realization forced a decision. I stepped back.

That decision was not loss, it was renewal. God used that moment to realign my thinking, my priorities, and my leadership. I saw clearly that I had been chasing what I thought was right instead of listening fully to Him. Renewal is not comfortable. It exposes, corrects, and redirects. But it brings clarity that cannot be gained any other way.

Renewing the mind is not a one-time event. It is a daily process of surrender, sharpening, and realignment. A man who refuses renewal will eventually lead from his own thinking instead of God’s truth. But a man who submits to it will be shaped, refined, and prepared to lead well. Sharpen your mind with His Word. Let Him correct you. That is how you lead with clarity and purpose.

## Shepherding Value

Renewal — A shepherd leads with clarity by allowing God to continually reshape his mind and direction.

### Reflect

1. God renews your mind through truth—are you allowing Him to correct and redirect your thinking daily?
2. Resistance can block growth—where are you holding onto your own plans instead of submitting to God’s direction?
3. Your family depends on aligned leadership—how are you modeling daily renewal and obedience in your home?

### Live It Today

Spend intentional time in Scripture today and ask God to reveal one area that needs correction.

### Personal Prayer

Lord, renew my mind and align my heart with Your will so I can lead my family rightly.

### Reflective Verse

*2 Corinthians 4:16 (ESV)*

*“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.”*

## Day 23

### Shepherding: The Legacy of Transforming Love

1 John 3:14 (ESV)

*“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers.”*

#### Day 5 of Intentional Shepherd — Transformative

Love that changes lives and builds generational legacy. If you have been following these past few days, the pattern is clear, who you are, whose you are, and how you serve. As a man, husband, and father, you are called to protect and lead your family with the Word of God. That will look different for each man. Some lead through teaching, others through action, but all are responsible for shepherding their first church, the home.

That responsibility is not static. It is a house under constant construction. One moment you are grounded in truth, the next something breaks and demands your attention. Life does not pause for leadership. It tests it. That is where transformative love is revealed, not in controlled moments, but in the ongoing, imperfect reality of leading a home that requires steady care and attention.

The tension is that intentionality does not come naturally. Left unchecked, self-interest creeps in. I have seen that in myself more than I would like to admit. But when I choose to lead intentionally, I begin to see something bigger. The way I love, lead, and respond is not limited to today. It is shaping what comes next, my children, and the generations after them.

That is where the shift happens. Growth has not come from my own effort alone, but through what God has done in me, often through my family. Their presence, their words, and their needs have exposed areas that required change. That process is not easy, but it is necessary. It is how God transforms a man so he can lead with purpose instead of reaction.

Transformative love does not stop with you. When you submit to God, obey, and lead with intention, that impact moves forward. It becomes a legacy. Not built on perfection, but on consistent obedience and real change. If you are going to lead your family well, then lead in a way that outlives you.

# Shepherding Value

Transformative Love — A shepherd leads in a way that changes lives and shapes future generations through Christ.

## Reflect

1. Transformative love reflects Christ—are you allowing Him to shape how you lead and love your family?
2. Intentional leadership builds legacy—where are you choosing self-interest instead of generational impact?
3. Your influence extends beyond today—how are you leading your family in a way that will shape future generations?

## Live It Today

Take one intentional step today that reflects long-term impact in your family, not just immediate results.

## Personal Prayer

Lord, use my life to shape my family for generations through Your transforming love.

## Reflective Verse

*Colossians 3:10 (ESV)*

*“And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”*

## Day 24

### **The Intentional Shepherd's Heart: Serving, Leading, and Loving Well**

*1 John 3:14 (ESV)*

*"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death."*

I sat in my chair one evening, looking around at unfinished projects I had said I would take care of but had let slide. The kids were moving through the house, my wife was finishing up the dishes, and something did not sit right. It was not that I had rejected responsibility, it was that I had drifted into reacting instead of leading. I stepped in when things became urgent, but not before.

The idea of the Intentional Shepherd has been growing in my heart for years. It was not something formed overnight, but shaped through reflection, failure, and time in God's Word. Over the past several days, that growth has been unfolding more clearly, what it means to lead with purpose, love, and strength, and how easily that calling can slip into the background when I stop being intentional. That night exposed it. I was not neglecting my role, I was delaying it.

That moment forced a question. How often do I lead my family by reaction instead of intention? It is easy to believe I will step in when it matters, but the truth is that every moment matters. Shepherding is not about waiting for the storm, it is about preparing before it comes. It is about presence before pressure.

Jesus did not wait for the need to be obvious before He acted. He loved first. He served first. He stepped in before anything was asked of Him. That is the model. Not passive leadership, but proactive love that moves ahead of the moment. That means choosing patience before frustration, speaking encouragement before criticism, and stepping into the needs of my family before they have to ask.

The tension is that the world defines leadership through control and authority, but Christ defines it through service. He washed feet. He carried burdens. He led by giving, not demanding. That shift requires a decision. It requires small, daily steps, consistent action instead of waiting for the perfect moment.

Leadership in the home is not built on intention alone. It is built on action. If I am going to lead my family well, then I must move first, to love, to serve, and to lead before the moment demands it.

## Shepherding Value

Pro-Active Love — A shepherd leads by taking initiative, loving and serving before being prompted.

### Reflect

1. Christ loved first—are you stepping into leadership before your family has to ask?
2. Intentional shepherding requires awareness—where are you delaying action instead of leading with purpose?
3. Your family needs daily leadership—how are you consistently showing up to guide and serve them?

### Live It Today

Take one intentional step today to serve your family before being asked.

### Personal Prayer

Lord, help me lead with intention and love first, reflecting Your heart in my home.

### Reflective Verse

*John 13:14 (ESV)*

*“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”*

## Day 25

### The Only Place I Want to Be

*Psalm 73:28 (ESV)*

*“But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.”*

I can still remember when my son was little and all he wanted was to be with me. No big plans, no toys, no distractions, just being near his dad was enough. Even now, as a grown man, he still makes time to be with me, and I value that deeply. But those early years stand out. You could see it in his face, joy, contentment, peace, simply because he was with me. Nothing else mattered.

One memory has stayed with me all these years. We were sitting in the back of our old minivan, the door open, waiting for a parade. Nothing special was happening. No music, no excitement. Just the two of us sitting there. But it was enough. He did not want to be anywhere else. And to me, that moment became one of the richest memories I have as a father, not because of what we were doing, but because of what it meant.

As I reflect on that, I realize that is exactly where I want to be with Jesus. No agenda. No performance. Just being with Him. The more I spend time in His Word and sit in His presence, the more I see it clearly, this is where my heart belongs. Not chasing outcomes, not trying to prove anything, but simply drawing near to Him.

That is where shepherding begins. It does not start with effort or performance. It flows from being close to Him. When I try to lead from my own strength, I drift. I start focusing on my own plans, my own reputation, my own thinking. I tune into what I want instead of what God desires. And when that happens, leadership becomes heavy, forced, and disconnected.

But when I stay near Him, everything changes. Love flows naturally. Direction becomes clear. Leadership is no longer about trying harder, it becomes an overflow of being with Him. If I am going to lead my family well, then I must stay close to my Shepherd. That is the only place I want to be.

# Shepherding Value

Abiding Presence — A shepherd leads best when he draws near to God and leads from that overflow.

## Reflect

1. Being near God shapes your leadership—are you leading from His presence or from your own effort?
2. Distraction pulls you away—where are you focusing on your own plans instead of drawing near to Him?
3. Your family sees what you pursue—how are you modeling a life that values being with God above all else?

## Live It Today

Set aside quiet time today to sit with God without agenda or distraction.

## Personal Prayer

Lord, draw me close to You so I can lead my family from Your presence.

## Reflective Verse

*John 15:4 (ESV)*

*“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”*



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