



The Dynamic Gospel Study Guide – Book of John

Chapter 10

1 “How do I get this across to you? If you find someone sneaking over the wall into the livestock pens, he's not there to tend his own livestock. It doesn't take a detective to figure out he's a thief or a rustler.

2 “The one who holds the keys to the gate owns the sheep.

3 “The hired help hear a familiar jangle of locks and open the door for the owner. And the livestock themselves know the sound of the owner's voice. They'll follow Him right out the gate into the light of day.

4 “When it's time to move the animals to fresh pasture, all the shepherd has to do is lead - the sheep follow. The animals are perceptive enough to follow the familiar sounds of the shepherd's footsteps as he walks the path.

5 “The sheep don't follow a stranger. Unfamiliar voices and sounds scare them right off. The stranger can cajole, plead or holler. It makes no difference. He'll just scatter the sheep instead.”

6 This simple little parable was meant to explain Jesus' relationship to his students and followers. Perhaps it was too early in the morning to focus, but the underlying message was lost on the crowd.

7 So Jesus said, “OK, let Me put this another way, and pay attention this time: For the sheep, the difference between a crowded pen and the open pasture is the gate. I am that gate.

8 “The sheep are fairly safe in the pen, but there's no real freedom. Others come saying they know the way out, but they're all liars and thieves, stealing a sheep or two at a time. But the owner's sheep would never willingly follow a strange voice.

9 “The pen may be secure but there's no safety in starving - the sheep have to eat sometime. I am the safe way out of the crowded darkness to the fresh grass and blue sky. I can lead them back and forth, to and fro, safely. You want to find the best feed? Follow Me.

10 “No matter what he says, the rustler has no good plans for the sheep. He's hungry or greedy. He takes what is not rightly his. As for the stolen sheep? There's never a good end to the story. I came to do just the opposite - leading the sheep to solid nourishment; to make them happy and fruitful. Even sheep can understand the simple enjoyment of a full stomach and the warm sunshine.

11 “I am the 'shepherd's shepherd.' You need a good model of caring for the sheep? Just look right here. My very soul is invested in caring for them. It's My high calling.

12 “The hired help act like shepherds when things are easy. Throw a little danger in the mix, and they'll run like the wind. Every howling coyote sends them right back to the 'safety' of their

campfire. If there's any real danger to the sheep, they'll just have to find out about it in the morning. "If the sheep are scattered or mauled, so be it. I'm off the clock," they'll say.

13 "If the hired help don't give a flying flip about the animals, they're not going to risk anything to save them.

14 "But I am the 'shepherd's shepherd.' I'm here for the sheep. You can see how they follow Me. And they know they can trust Me to lead them away from danger.

15 "It's natural, after all, that they should do so, for I follow **My** own 'Shepherd' faithfully. I've learned My Father's voice and follow Him everywhere He wants Me to go. I know His heart and He knows mine. How could I **not** lay down My life for My sheep?

16 "And there are many more sheep yet to be found. It's going to take some work to expand the pens and gather them all up. It is imperative that I do so, for they all need a safe place, too. Then I'll call them in and there will be one universal safe flock under My care. The sheep that hear My voice and follow it are the true flock. They have one Shepherd and one Shepherd only.

17 "This is how I make My Father proud: I'm willing to risk My life so that real Life can come to the sheep. What I lay down for a while I will eventually pick up and never lose again.

18 "No one will ever strip anything out of My hands, whether My sheep or My life. It's for Me to choose how I will serve and sacrifice for them. If I choose to lay down My life, it's My prerogative and in My chosen time. If I choose to set aside death and take up a glorious life, that's Mine as well. I got this sober instruction directly from My Father, and it's binding."

19 The religious leaders and theologians erupted in argument again over what Jesus was saying.

20 "We're telling you, the man is possessed!" some asserted. "Only a madman would claim these things. What gall!"

21 Others were still shocked by the recent miracles. "He's no madman. He speaks plainly and convincingly. He's not a drooling freak. And how can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

22 The next winter Jesus wandered about the Sanctuary in Jerusalem during the Feast of Dedications.

23 He was fond of strolling the columnade known as Solomon's Porch.

24 It was a place of thinkers and theologians, and the Jewish leaders ambushed Jesus there. "How long are You going to keep us in suspense?" they demanded. "Are You such a coward You can't openly reveal who You really are? Come on, man! Christ or not Christ - it's time to stop beating around the bush."

25 Jesus cocked his head and sighed. "Been there; done that. You weren't listening the last hundred times so why should I bother now? I'm through with idle chatter. My actions speak for themselves. Everything I've done is precisely how the Father wants it done.

26 "But, of course, you follow neither My words nor My actions. Why would you? You're not My sheep. Have I not made that clear enough?

27 "Here's what My sheep do: They listen; they follow. I know exactly who they are.

28 "They'll never go hungry or thirsty. Everything they need for real Life I gladly provide them. They are happy and unfazed. They're already **in** Heaven and it will never be taken away from them, by you or anyone else.

29 "And they have the Father to thank. He's given them to Me to lead. You think anyone has the guts or ability to go head-to-head with God Himself and steal these sheep? I dare you to try.

30 "Don't even try splitting hairs or pitting us against each other - My Father and I are absolutely together on this."

31 The Jewish leaders were again incensed and started picking up those ominous stones.

32 "Ah, stoning again," Jesus replied. "Let's see, I've been doing nothing but God's good work around here. For which of these crimes of kindness must I die?"

33 "That has nothing to do with it!" they screamed back. "We don't care what good You've done. You're as good as dead for claiming to be God. How arrogant can You possibly get?"

34 "Excuse me?" Jesus responded with a laugh. "Who are the 'gods' around here? Doesn't your own Law say "You are gods?" You seem to take that seriously.

35 "Is the Law God's Word or not? It's still binding, isn't it? Even *He*'s flexible with the word.

36 "And then God sends someone who actually lives like it, and you see exactly the opposite, simply because My words and deeds both say I'm the 'Son of God?'

37 "You're more than a little conflicted, here. If My actions don't live up to God's Word, or My words don't match up with God's work, then you've caught Me."

38 "But *if they do* - even if your ears can't bear to hear it - then use your eyes to perceive what's going on around you. Maybe you'll see in Me exactly what you expected from the Father all along."

39 Not surprisingly, the religious leaders tried to drag Him away, again. And, again, Jesus slipped out of their grasp.

40 Jesus made the trip down to the Jordan River and beyond, to the solitude of the place where John had originally performed his baptisms.

41 Word got around the whole country and people continued to follow Jesus right down to the desert. "John was no miracle-worker," they said, "but he sure knew how to preach it. And everything he said about this Jesus was spot-on."

42 With Jesus standing and preaching in John's place, many more came to believe and joined the rapidly growing movement.

Explain the Context:

From your reading provide a short answer to the following:

What is the theme of this chapter?	What is the BIG Idea?
What is something that surprised you?	What is this chapter <i>not</i> saying?

Take a moment to consider these questions:

- 1) What are the 2 “I Am” statements in Chapter 10?

- 2) How important is it for the sheep to know the true Shepherd’s voice?

- 3) What does Jesus mean when he says “I Am the Door?”

- 4) What does Jesus mean when He calls Himself the ‘Good Shepherd’?

- 5) In verse 22 we read that Jesus spent time in Jerusalem celebrating the ‘Festival of Dedications’, an annual event that is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Does it surprise you to learn Jesus observed holy days not described in Scripture earlier?

- 6) Why do you think the Jewish Leaders were so angered by Jesus’ statement “I and My Father are One”?

Apply the Scripture

Write the verse that stood out to you while reading [in this translation or your favorite].

How does this verse challenge you? Does it reveal an attribute of God's character?

For further study:

- Psalm 23:1
- Matthew 7:15
- Exodus 3:14
- Isaiah 4:11
- Ezekiel 34:12