

## **Steadfast Shepherd**

### **Ready:**

“If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice over it more than over the ninety-nine that didn't wander away!” -- Matthew 18:12-13

### **Set**

From the moment we step on campus and begin competing, we look to our coaches to lead and direct us. For better or worse, they have the potential to draw greatness out of us or keep us from growing as athletes. If we can tell our coach is genuinely invested in our physical wellbeing, as well as our individual wholeness, we're motivated to work harder and give even more to our team because we have that sense of family and connection.

It makes a difference to have someone believe in us. It makes an even bigger impact when we're pursued and given personal attention to draw out our talents.

Jesus has handpicked us for His team, and He always comes to us with complete attention and care.

Through the parable of the lost sheep, we learn a lot about God as Jesus explains the qualities of a Steadfast Shepherd who goes to great lengths to save the sheep that has wandered away.

**God is a seeking God.** He moves towards us to find us where we are, in our hurt and questions and longings. Instead of us having to come to Him, He makes the first move by sending Jesus to live as we did, die the death we deserve and rise back to life to bring us with Him into God's eternal Kingdom.

**God is a rejoicing God.** He doesn't just find us and give us a lecture on how we shouldn't wander off. Instead, there is great joy and celebration, and He runs us back to the fold for everyone to see and rejoice together.

**God is a patient God.** Time after time, we choose to stray and follow our own desires and what we want to do. Time after time, we find ourselves caught in the weeds and between the rocks, unable to get ourselves out. And time after time, our Shepherd comes after us and lifts us out of our entanglement.

**God is a protecting God.** Just like sheep, we are vulnerable. We are susceptible to the world's temptations and the sins that entice us. But our Shepherd diligently watches over us, ready to rescue us in a heartbeat and keep us safely tucked in His embrace.

We are always cared for and seen on Team Jesus, who watches over us diligently with handpicked responsibility from the Father. Rest easy today knowing the One who goes before you has everything taken care of for your best and His glory.

### Go

- What areas in your life do you tend to do things on your own?
- Which shepherd characteristic do you need God to be for you today?
- How can you introduce Jesus as the Steadfast Shepherd to your teammates?

### Workout

Psalms 23:1-3; Isaiah 40:11; John 10:11

### Overtime

"Father, I am prone to wander and make my own way. And it leads to entanglement and getting lost. Thank You that You are a Steadfast Shepherd, always looking after me and seeking me out. Help me to let You lead that I might introduce You to the people in my life who need Your shepherding as well. In Jesus's name, Amen."

### Bible Reference:

Matthew 18:12-13

Psalms 23:1-3

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