

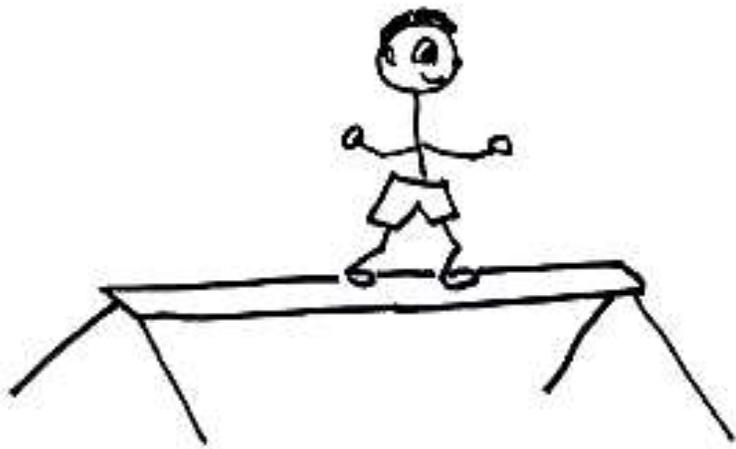
# Focus On the Great Shepherd

Part 2

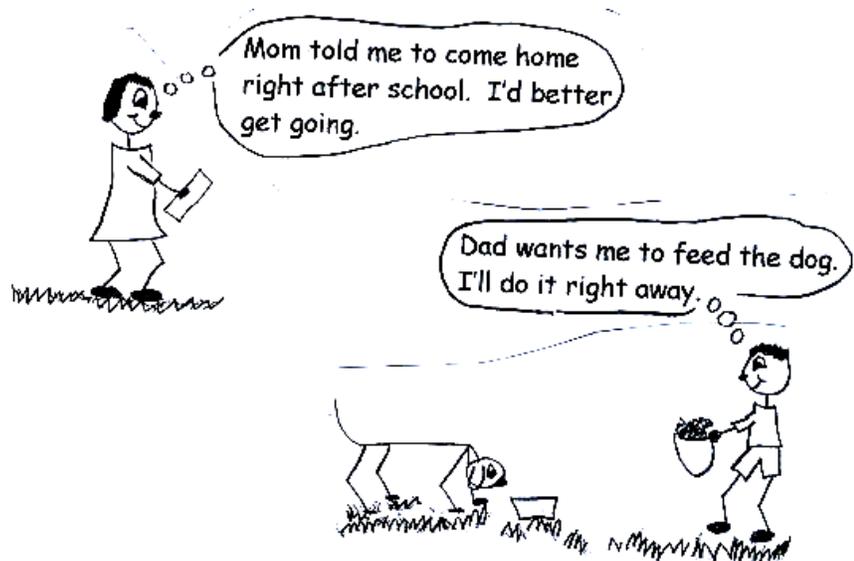
The Rod, Staff and Balance

(Revised: 4/2/2013)

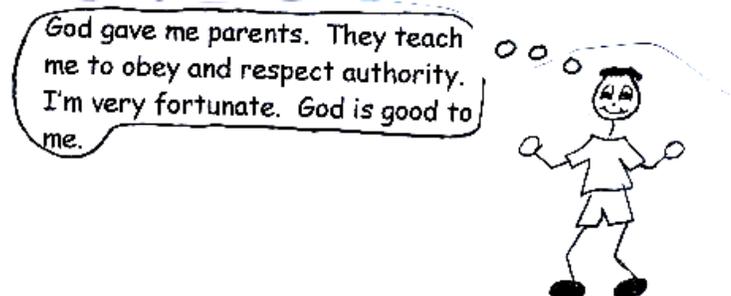
Comfort means balance. Ahh! Discomfort means imbalance. Help! In our physical lives, we have to have the right amount of food, exercise, work, play and sleep. This will keep us physically in balance and comfortable. Ahh! If we don't have the right amount, we will experience discomfort; we will have imbalance. Help! God made our bodies to be in balance.



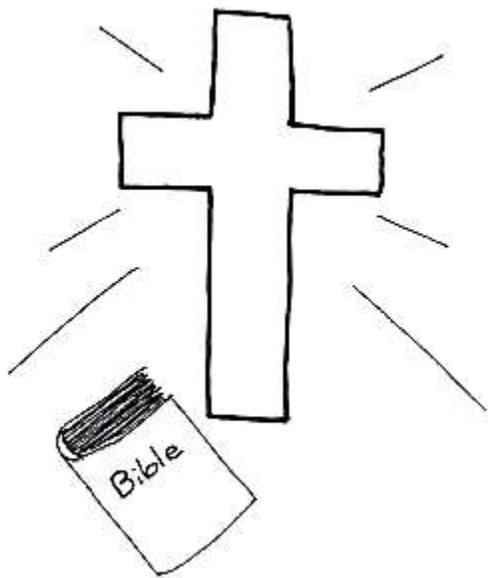
God gave us parents to have authority over us to help us be balanced. They are to train us in the ways of freedom for all mankind. They are to teach us to use our volition to make wise decisions dealing with others and ourselves. Their authority requires balance for it to be comfortable. If our parents are too strict with us, it can cause us to be fearful of them. If they are too easy on us, we can take advantage of them and disrespect them. Both ways cause discomfort because we are out of balance. We could also say that we don't have good boundaries so we get out of bounds! There has to be a balance of firm training and freedom. There must be good boundaries.



Proverbs 22:6 Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.



This is true in our spiritual lives also. Since God the Father is perfect, His plan is perfect, and He sets perfect boundaries. Our Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ, has perfect wisdom and balance in using the rod and the staff, Bible doctrine, to keep us in bounds. The Holy Spirit is the One Who makes the doctrine clear to us. The rod stands for discipline - whacking us with divine thinking when we are out of bounds. The staff stands for mercy and deliverance. Inside the boundaries, our Great Shepherd gently guides us with His divine thinking. This helps us get along with other believers in the flock because we have the same divine thinking! Our Great Shepherd can give us great comfort.

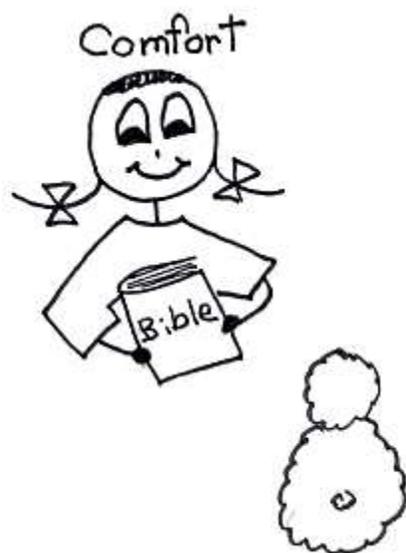
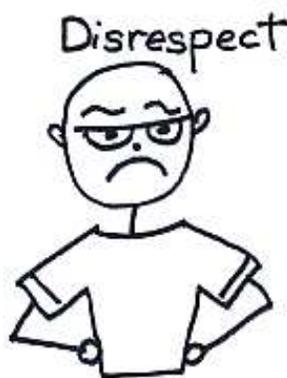


Psalm 23:4 Your rod and You staff, they comfort me.

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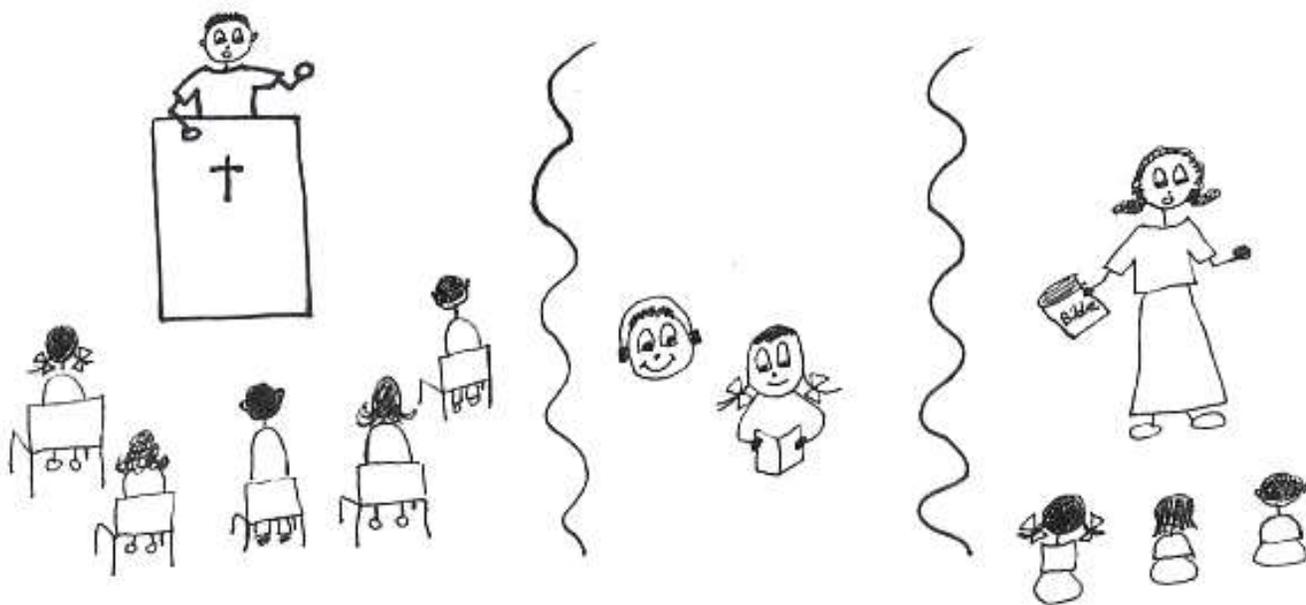


Too much of the rod, Bible doctrine used as discipline without compassion, would cause us, the sheep, to be uncomfortable and fearful. Too much of the staff, or mercy and compassion, without discipline, would cause us sheep to be disrespectful. However, divine authority is perfectly balanced! God, our perfect Father, has provided each of us a perfect plan, a balanced plan for our spiritual lives. Our Father loves us and wants us to keep things in balance. He wants us to have a comfortable relationship with our Great Shepherd. Our Great Shepherd shows us the way to live our Father's plan through the power of God the Holy Spirit.



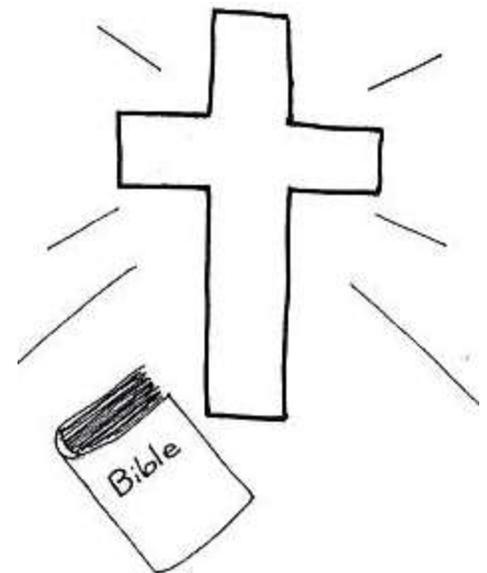
1 Corinthians 14:33a For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

A comfortable, balanced relationship with our Great Shepherd comes from Bible doctrine in our souls. We can't have it without Christ's thinking! The doctrine in our souls makes us good soul mates with the Lord Jesus Christ. What a great grace gift! As we know more about Jesus, we see how great His love is for us; it can't be measured! We learn to appreciate and love Him more. Becoming more comfortable with Him, we trust His word. God's primary desire is for us to come to the truth - the thinking of Jesus Christ, our Great Shepherd.



James 1:4 And let endurance [perseverance, pressing on] have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

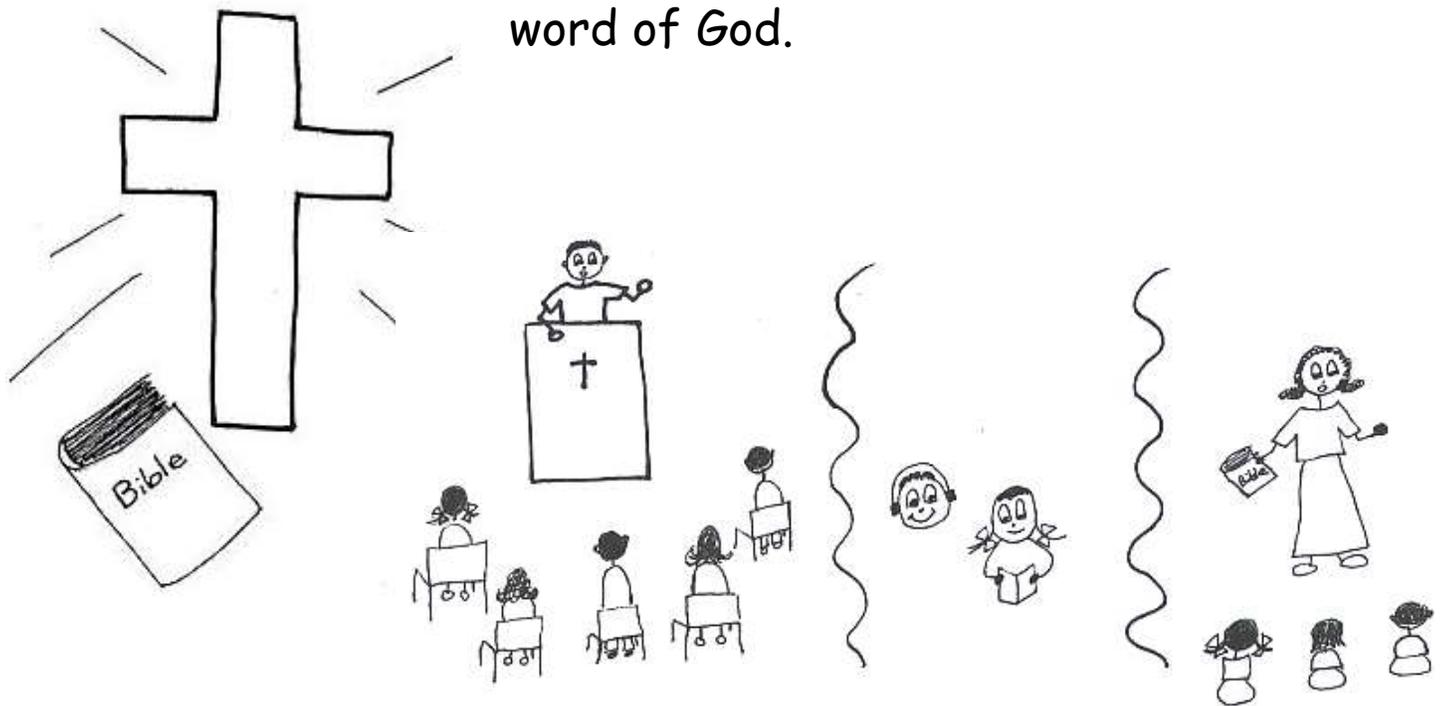
The shepherd's rod and staff represent the balance between:  
1. Authority, power and discipline and 2. Mercy and kindness. A good shepherd is a balanced shepherd. He disciplines his sheep when necessary, and guides and delivers them when necessary. When we have positive volition to doctrine, we desire whatever is necessary for us as one of Jesus' sheep. If we need the rod - good! If we need the staff - good! They both come from God's standard, Bible doctrine. God sets us up for success! Grace is always there for us! God will always give us whatever we need for spiritual growth! Awesome. If we stick with our Great Shepherd we can't lose!



Philippians 4:8 Psalm 89:14  
Righteousness and justice are  
the foundation of Your  
throne; lovingkindness [grace]  
and truth go before You.

Where do we get our balanced diets of divine viewpoint? We receive it from our under-shepherd, our pastor-teacher. We need to stick with his teaching because the Holy Spirit directs him to teach what we are to hear - each one of us! Amazing! The Holy Spirit knows what each one of us needs for our spiritual growth. Through His power and the word of God, He will change our thinking to line up with divine viewpoint. That is fantastic! Focus on the Great Shepherd and His thinking, the

word of God.



Deuteronomy 8:3 He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

Our Great Shepherd will always hold us up if we let Him! His staff is meant to comfort us with mercy and deliverance.



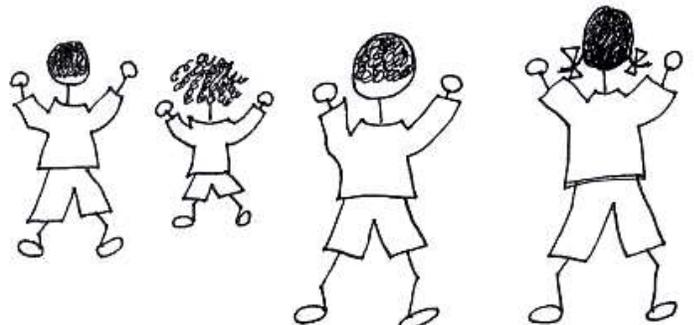
When we are baby believers, He gently lifts us up and guides us with His staff, Bible doctrine. This helps us bond or unite with others in the Royal Family. Members of the Royal Family are designed by God to encourage one another. This is especially true for new born believers. The cosmic system wants to distract them from learning more truth and being confident in their Great Shepherd. God brings in more mature believers to encourage the baby believers. We are **all** to encourage each other with our Great Shepherd's thinking! Ahh! What a comfort!

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and [divine] good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another....

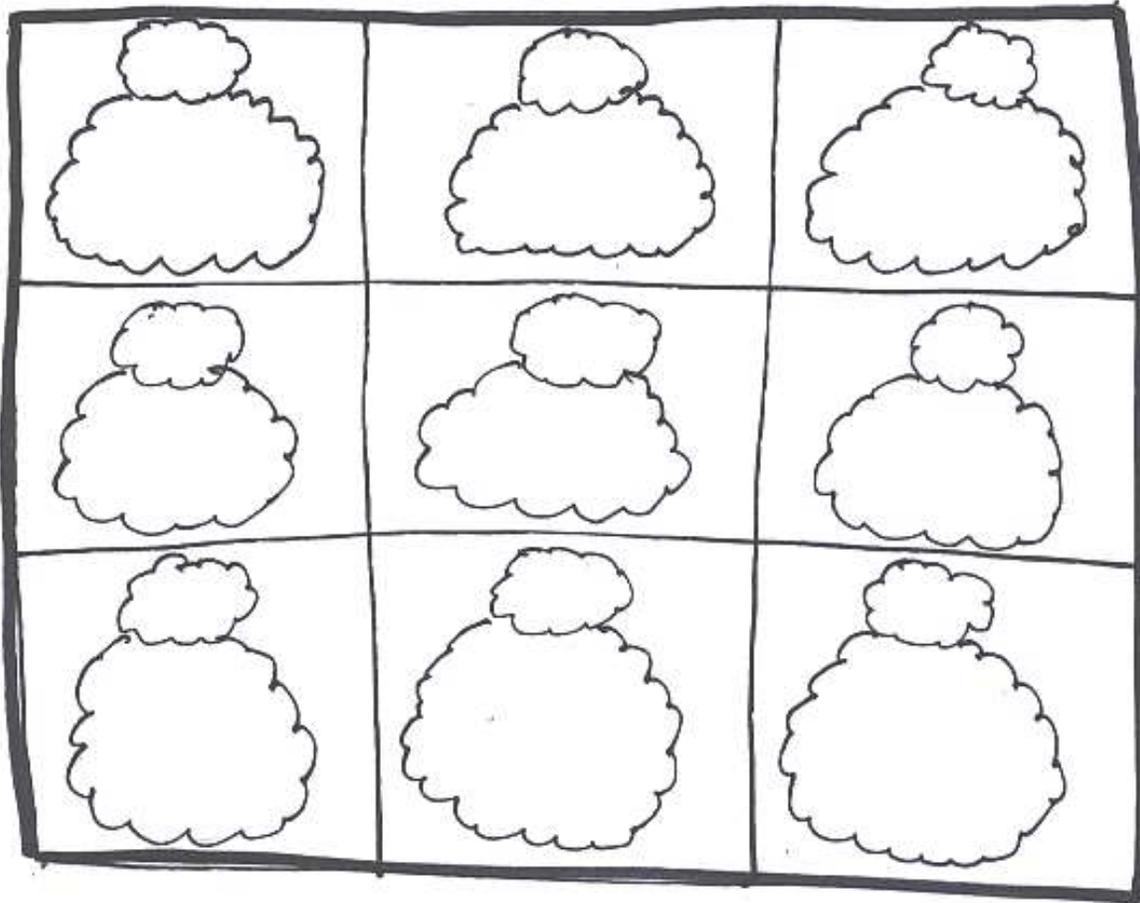
Believers have the greatest Shepherd of all - Jesus Christ. His love and deliverance are eternal - they go on forever! We can choose to wander away from the flock, but we can always choose to come back. Jesus' rod and staff, the word of God, will help us see our need to return to the flock and our Great Shepherd. We can rest on the fact that He never gives up on us - even when we give up on Him! People in the world will give up on us, but we can always turn to our Great Shepherd. He will **always** be there to deliver and comfort us through His love and grace.

### Focus on the Great Shepherd!

Psalm 23:4 You rod and your **staff**, they comfort me.



PUT A WORD FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE IN EACH LAMB AND PLAY BINGO USING BUTTONS OR BEANS. EACH PERSON WILL HAVE A DIFFERENT BINGO SHEET SO YOU CAN TRADE SHEETS AND PLAY MORE GAMES. HAVE FUN!



ROD

SHEPHERD

STAFF

COMFORT

FEAR

DISRESPECT

BALANCE

FLOCK

SHEEP

BIBLE

PARENTS

AUTHORITY

JESUS

GOD

OBEY



## Points To Remember

1. Comfort means balance; discomfort means imbalance.
2. God gave us parents to have authority over us and to help us be balanced.
3. Our Great Shepherd, in His perfect wisdom, has perfect balance in using the rod and staff, the word of God.
4. Too much discipline can cause fear; too much mercy and compassion can cause disrespect.
5. A comfortable, balanced relationship with our Great Shepherd comes from divine viewpoint in our souls.
6. The shepherd's rod and staff represent the balance between: 1. Authority, power and discipline and 2. Mercy and kindness.
7. We receive the divine balance of God's word from our under-shepherd, our pastor-teacher.
8. Our Great Shepherd will always hold us up if we let Him.
9. Believers have the greatest Shepherd of all!



## Questions For Discussion

1. What is the job of parents to children?
2. What happens if parents are too strict? What happens if they are not strict enough?
3. What do the rod and the staff represent?
4. How does our Great Shepherd use the rod and the staff?
5. How do we get a balanced diet of God's word?
6. Why is it important for us to consistently learn divine viewpoint?

