



Keep the Sheep?

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After watching our **"Be Ye Set Apart"** video, describing our different primary focus, here is what one leader had to say.

"I love your emphasis on maturity in community. I have seen this to be the key issue standing in the way of nation-building and I am delighted that your group has been working on exactly that issue for years! I think that video points toward the missing link that could make it possible for the remnant to function as a nation as we are called to do. How important is that?!"

*If you didn't exist Yah would have to invent you, because we can't get where we are going without development along the lines of these very issues you have been pioneering. I'm not keen on reinventing the wheel when there is already a perfectly fine wheel available. What I wonder about is: **how do you get the people who need the most what you've got, to sit still long enough to make progress with the concepts you've been developing?"***

As they used to say, that would be the sixty four dollar question! (Apparently, the younger you are, you would say sixty four **hundred** dollar or sixty four **million** dollar question per www.wordreference.com) In any case, the point here is that this question is the BIG DEAL in being able to apply information and encouragement toward maturity.

The short answer is: **we can't**. Only Yeshua can direct the full process. When He was here He didn't try to directly argue or persuade anyone to follow Him. Neither can we.

We understand that it is primarily in YHWH's Hands as to who becomes an integrated part of such a commitment to develop maturity as it must initially be their relationship with Him and His Spirit operating in them to direct them whether to stay or go. As elders and shepherds, it is our part to remain committed to our Shepherd, walking in the double sided need for authority and accountability for ourselves first before we can speak into other people's lives.

The long answer is addressed throughout many of the articles in our website.

An individual has to be teachable -- Teachable to understand that they NEED – they need help, they need accountability, they need healing, they need maturing, they need vulnerability, they need humility, they need community, they need Yeshua. Until I reach these points (the list probably needs to be expanded), everything you say is fine and good – as long as it applies to someone else, not me. In truth, if someone does not genuinely want these things, would you really want them to continue in a community that is serious about honoring Messiah in all things?

They need to be willing **to learn from** those who teach; and in the case of our fellowships, the elders and shepherds who need to teach both in word and by personal example. It really isn't possible to teach very much against the will of the person involved nor would we want to as the potential for abuse becomes great. Nor is it possible to teach very much if the commitment to the relationships and the community is too weak to tolerate discomfort. Here indeed is the difficulty when even wise counsel can sound harsh to one who carries many emotional wounds, and there are many people among us who carry deep wounds.

This topic is addressed in the introduction to the ***What Shepherds Need to Know*** series and also involves the level of commitment and maturity in the overall community as well as the individual. This is true because the first thing a wounded person who thinks they have been treated unfairly will often do is try to round up others who will agree and support them, usually making accusations against the shepherd/elder. When the community is aware of such patterns and is able to empathetically respond appropriately to such challenges without getting drawn into a Drama Triangle over it there is a more solid opportunity for the individual to grow through the experience.

For the elders and shepherds involved, it also means that our own emotional vulnerabilities will be cast into the light and we, too, must be able to deal with such challenges while remaining in the right place to be able to offer support and training through it. I speak from personal experience here that such rejection in THIS setting and role seems much harder for me than it did while in the professional, more detached therapist role. I have long said that wounded baby birds bite, even when one is trying to help and it is not different when a person's woundedness or immaturity gets triggered!

Over time, we have seen people grow in their ability to tolerate discomfort at least long enough to be able to settle into prayer and seeking YHWH's direction and His view of what they may have experienced. We have seen that those people who are able to do so ARE able to move past their previous limitations and mature, accepting the counsel of elders as appropriate. They are even able to appropriately challenge elders as they grow in maturity, on their way to becoming wise and understanding elders themselves. Then we all benefit as the overall maturity level in the community grows and stabilizes the relationships. This in turn, allows us to keep our focus ever more solidly on Yeshua, rather than on continually having to deal with one or another misunderstanding.

There is an attribute that is ideally developed in early childhood that is a crucial component, in this case, to tolerate being uncomfortable about something long enough to learn from it. In the Life Model terminology, it is called the ability to do hard things. This is not a culturally acceptable teaching at this point in our American society and perhaps in some other societies as well. Moving from the "I" centeredness of a child to the "other" awareness of an adult involves many transitions and every transition can feel like a death. The ability to let go of what we had learned in order to grasp a new level of understanding is rarely easy!

And a sad post note: the very leader who wrote the words that began this article has floundered in the same waters. Despite the complimentary recognition of the need for maturity and accountability if we are to learn to walk together in Torah as we return to the Land, when it came down to accountability in a personal matter in which transparency and humility were needed, it became very clear that these are seen as important for OTHER people but not for this individual.

How true it is we see again that it is YHWH alone Who will bring those He wants to be here, an answer to our prayer of many years that is also double sided: bring those You want here and keep away those You do not want here, sending them on to the place You know is best for them.

Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it;

Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.

Psalm 127:1 NKVJ