

## Ag-GROW-culture: Sheep and Goats LifeGroup Study

We covered many of the differences in Sheep and Goats this morning in the service, but because we don't really want to produce more goats we will focus on sheep. We visited the farm of John and Donna Vest who have about 800 sheep roaming the pasture on their farm in rural Laclede County. With over 20 years of raising sheep under their belt, they have a unique understanding of the creature God's people are most often compared to.

Donna described raising sheep as being more family friendly than hog farming, which has turned more megafarm and commercial. What about following Christ has benefitted your family?

Donna said sheep need shepherds that provide daily care to protect them from parasites and predators. In Psalm 23 David writes "The Lord is my Shepherd..." how do you see God working in your life daily to provide watch care over you?

The two big problems with sheep are predators and parasites. Predators attack from the outside, parasites attack from within. What are the external predators that tend to attack our spiritual lives? How do you identify them? Do you HAVE to get chewed on or eaten a bit first?

What is the best way to deal with the spiritual coyotes?

READ:

**Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.**

**1 Corinthians 6:18**

**Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.**

**1 Corinthians 10:14**

**10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.**

**11 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things.**

**1 Timothy 6:10-11**

**So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.**

**2 Timothy 2:22**

What are the parasites that tend to eat us up on the inside?

**13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.**

**-James 1:13-15**

**19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

**-Galatians 5:19-21**

Which of these “acts of the flesh” begin as purely outward attacks?

**8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me— practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.**

**-Phillippians 4:8-9**

How does negative thinking impact our spiritual walk?

So much of the time we are experts at identifying other people’s problems, how well do you know your parasites? How do you guard against them? How do you check yourself?

What are the top 3 things we can do to keep a special watch over our children? For those who have kids where is your greatest challenge?

Donna said shepherds have to be willing to put in a lot of work. What are the areas that require the most diligence in your life and in the life of your family?

Donna talked about two different products they harvest from the sheep, meat and wool. What kind of harvest do you expect from your life in the present?

READ:

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.**

**-Galatians 5:22-26**

On a scale of 1-10 how are you experiencing this?

Donna described lambing season as a very important, very hectic time that is crucial to the success and vitality of the farm. It requires diligence, planning, and requires them to be present 24 hours a day until it is finished. How does God use busy and hectic times in our lives to draw us closer to Him?

How do you prepare for those seasons?

Donna described the special care that is required for abandoned lambs. We have spiritually abandoned lambs all around us. How can we care for/reach out to those lambs who have no spiritual family? (Please include a shameless plug for the great opportunity and need we have for KidsLife workers in the Church)

Donna shared that the biggest similar trait of sheep and people is that we are both followers. Who in your life leads you into sheep-like living and who leads you into goat-like living? Who is ultimately responsible for the decision to follow?

How is this group a strong support to your spiritual lives? How can you expand your influence?

What are some ideas that you would like to do for a summer service project as a group?

Take time to close in prayer.