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## God's ReSource and Recourse for His People

Meaningful relationships are two way. Those who experience a relationship with another have one or more things in common or of mutual interest. People who relate meaningfully to each other do so by adding some value to the other. Reciprocal relationships include **resource** and **recourse**.

**Resource** is defined as a source of supply, support or aid, especially one that can be readily drawn upon when needed. **Recourse** is defined as access or resort to a person or thing for help or protection.

King Solomon identifies **resource** and **recourse** by saying; "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor [**resource**], for if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion [**recourse**], but woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up [there is no hope because the one who falls has neither **resource** or **recourse**]. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm [**resource**], but how can one be warm alone [**no recourse**]? And if one can overpower him who is alone [**no recourse**], two can resist him [**resource**]" (Eccl. 4:9-12).

The biblical shepherd tending sheep also demonstrates **reSource** and **recourse**. The shepherd exists for the benefit [**reSource**] of his sheep. His shepherding care includes leading, feeding, pasturing, protecting from predators, preventive and medical attention. His sheep look to him as their **recourse** since they

are dependent, defenseless, directionless and self-absorbed. Both shepherd and sheep benefit from this **reSource/recourse** relationship. Seeing how well his sheep are flourishing under his selfless care pleases the good shepherd. The sheep in turn enjoy health, peace, rest and protection.

God called His people in the book of Ezekiel, "As for you, My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God," declares the Lord GOD" (34: 31). In this same chapter He charges the leaders of Israel as careless and unfaithful shepherds who care for themselves at the expense of the sheep, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock. Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered. My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill; My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth, and there was no one to search or seek for them'" (34: 2-6).

These unfaithful shepherds misused, ignored and were not the **reSource** for the sheep that God had intended. The sheep were abandoned, neglected, lost and helpless with no

**recourse**. They were harassed and devoured by predators and overcome by environmental circumstances.

God promised **recourse** for His sheep by providing His Shepherd to be His sheeps' **reSource**, "I will deliver My flock... then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I the LORD have spoken" (34:23-24).

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Jesus Christ is God's Own shepherd (**reSource**) for His people. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father" (Jn. 10: 14-18). Jesus declared our dependence upon Him and need for **recourse** when He

declared, “*apart from Me you can do nothing*” (Jn. 15:5). He invites us to let Him lead and carry the burdens of life, “*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light*” (Matt. 11:28-30).

Jesus reminded them of their **reSource**, “*Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*” (Matt. 6:31-33).

Jesus passed on the **reSource/recourse** relationship by appointing Peter to shepherd His sheep before His ascension into heaven (Jn. 21: 15-17). Peter later instructed the elders to follow him and, “*shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock*” (1 Pet. 5:2-3).

Throughout history God has initiated redemptive ways [**reSource**] for rebellious mankind to be restored to a dependent relationship with Him. It has always been a reciprocal two-way relationship initiated by God’s grace [**reSource**] and responded to by faith [**recourse**] in Him. “*For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned [**recourse**] to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls [**reSource**]*” (1 Pet. 2:25).

The two-way relationship between Jesus and God the Father also demonstrates **reSource** and **recourse**. Jesus identified God the Father as His **reSource**. “*Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself. . . for whatever the Father does [**reSource**], these things the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows*

*Him all things that He Himself is doing...*” (Jn 5:19-20). God the Father was also Jesus’ **recourse**. “*I can do nothing on my own initiative, as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just; because I do not seek My own will but the will [**recourse**] of Him who sent Me*” (Jn. 5:30).

The Lord Jesus Christ establishes meaningful relationships with His Own that are two way where He is both our **reSource** and our **recourse**! Jesus prayed for us, “*I come to You (Father)... so that they may have My joy made full in themselves [**reSource**]. I have given them Your word [**reSource**]; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth [**recourse**]*” (Jn. 17:13-19).

Biblical marriage is another example of the **reSource/recourse** relationship. A man and a woman not only fall in love, but also desire to marry in order to pursue life goals together -- a reciprocal relationship. Each partner adds **reSource** to his or her personhood, talents and energy to the marriage and also draws [**recourse**] support, protection and significance from the other.



The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5 teaches that the husband is his wife’s **reSource** as her shepherding head and protector (v. 23). He is to love her as “*Christ loved the church*” (v. 24), keep her in an exclusive relationship with himself, sanctify her (v. 26, 31) and cherish her as his own body (v. 28-29). His wife looks to him as her **recourse** for leadership, protection,

love and significance (v. 22, 24, 33).

The Apostle Peter also speaks of the husband being his wife’s **reSource**, “*You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered*” (1 Pet. 3:7).

This understanding is consistent with God’s original design for the marital relationship of Adam and Eve as well for all other marriages.

God’s original design is also supported by Charles Thomson in The Septuagint Bible,\* (an English translation of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament). He translates *desire* as **recourse** in Genesis 3:16, “*...Yet your desire (**recourse**) will be for your husband...*” The use of **recourse** here suggests that Eve desires and looks to Adam as her **recourse** for his protective care. God’s provision for Eve is for Adam to protect, provide and care for her as a shepherding husband [**reSource**].

God has not changed His original design!

\*The Septuagint Bible: The Oldest Version of the Old Testament was translated by Charles Thomson. Secretary of the Continental Congress from 1774-1789. C. A. Muses editor. Published by Falcon’s Wing Press, Indian Hills, CO, in 1954.

### Shepherding Grace -- a Model for Individuals, Leaders and Marriage

We led a **Shepherding Grace Leadership Seminar** at Windborn Church, Rio Vista, California, August 10-12, 2007. The attendees were very attentive and appreciative.

The following are a few comments from the participants:

“*Most enjoyable. Wonderful shepherding course. We are in the present day and know better how and why to shepherd. Thank you and blessings to you!*”

“*I found this 2-day program totally exhilarating and very worthwhile in helping me grow in and live my faith as God intends!*”

“*Every person is a leader. I need to be a shepherd for others (in and out of the church). We as a body need to follow the Great Shepherd.*”