



Daily Verse and Comment

[John 21:15-17](#)

(15) So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. (16) He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (17) He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

King James Version

Each time Peter responds, [Jesus](#) commands him in a way that links to Peter's answers. The meaning is that *because* Peter loves Christ, here is what Christ wants him to do. His commands apply mostly to the ministry, yet there are aspects of them that every member can put into practice. This is not to suggest that we try to take on a role that [God](#) has not given to us, but these commands provide guidelines for how each of us can support those God puts in our path.

In verses 15 and 17, Jesus tells Peter to *feed* those under his care. In verse 15, it is with regard to the lambs—that is, Christians who are either young in years or new in the faith—and in verse 17, it refers to more mature sheep. Christ's emphasis is on *providing spiritual food*. In verse 16, Jesus tells Peter to "*tend* [His] sheep." "Tending" encompasses all of what a shepherd does for his sheep, which goes beyond just feeding, indicating total guardianship of the sheep, including tasks like guiding, governing, defending, putting them in a fold, checking for disease, etc.

On occasion, lay-members can contribute similarly. If, in our interactions with our brethren, we are reminded of a sermon or article that may edify them, we can certainly mention it. Perhaps we find ourselves in a position to give helpful advice or to warn other sheep about a wolf. Maybe we can keep someone from going astray by exposing some religious deception.

Yet, before assuming that we know what is good—and loving—it is wise for us to seek God's direction before pursuing our ideas of how someone can be "helped." Peter neglected to seek God's will before plunging into a course of action, and he ended up stumbling badly in trying to show *agape* [love](#). If we act by our own will, even if it is out of the deepest of human regard and affection, it will not bear the same good fruit as if it were God's will. Sometimes, in spite of what initially seems best to us, what is actually best is for God to work it out in a way that does not involve us or in a way in which our part is very different from what we had imagined. There is a time to speak, and a time to remain silent; a time to act, and a time to sit on one's hands. The only way to know the time is to seek the Good Shepherd and wait for His response.

— David C. Grabbe

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