

The image of a Shepard carrying a little lamb across his shoulders is a familiar piece of art. Have you stopped to think why the Shepard has this precious cargo on his shoulders? The job of a shepherd is to tend to his sheep. He leads them to green pastures. He is the protector of his flock. When the darkness falls, he lays down his life for his flock. He places his tired body in front of the opening of a makeshift pin. With his rod and staff in hand, he sleeps with one wary eye open waiting to guard against an enemy attack. In the light of day, he allows his sheep to grow and play nearby, and when he calls them each by name they respond because they know their master's voice. When one wanders off, he leaves the ninety-nine safely behind hurdled together to seek the one lost sheep. What about the one who ignores the command to stay near? He loves this lost sheep enough to chase after every time he wanders away. He may use his staff to pull him from the prickly thorns, that once again he has managed to get stuck in. If this wanderer continues to put himself in harm's way, the loving Shepard may be forced to discipline this lamb that he loves as a child. Broken-hearted at the danger his precious one is in, he may choose to injure (discipline) him, using the same rod he uses to defend him. He injures him just enough that his wandering is done. Devastated by the injured state of his child, he puts him on his shoulders, and then he carries him until he is strong again. The sheep eventually learns to listen to his master's voice and fully trust him for all his needs. When that little sheep is strong, the Shepard places him back down with the rest of his flock, knowing he will never stray again. And, if he begins to run away, he is reminded by his healed up wounds about the lesson his father has taught him.

Proverbs 13:24 (NLT): 24 Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children.

Those who love their children care enough to discipline them.

