



## **INCONGRUOUS**

(Inconsistent, incompatible)

### **FOUR INCOMPATIBLE THINGS**

#### **Beauty and Indiscretion**

*As a ring of gold in a swine's snout,  
so is a beautiful woman  
who lacks discretion.*

Proverbs 11:22

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#### **Ruler and Wickedness**

*Like a roaring lion and a rushing  
bear is a wicked ruler over a  
poor people.*

Proverbs 28:15

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#### **Fool and Honor**

*Like one who binds a stone in a sling,  
so is he who gives honor to a fool.*

Proverbs 26:8

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#### **Faithful and Talebearer**

*He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets,  
but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.*

Proverbs 11:13

## 'Shepherd My Sheep'

A shepherd was put in charge of some of his master's sheep. He was given one hundred to watch over. His master warned him to be sure to watch out for the wolves. So day and night he vigilantly watched for any wolf that might try to sneak into the flock. Yes, he was determined not to lose one sheep to the wolves. And he was proud and boasted to other shepherds of his perfect record—not one lost!

Some time later his master came to check on the flock, and the shepherd reported, "not one lost." But his master was perplexed because there were only fifty sheep in the flock. What happened to the other fifty?

"Well," the shepherd said, "there were a few problems."

"What problems?" the master queried.

"Let me explain," said the shepherd. "There were a few times I thought I spotted a wolf in sheep's clothing among the flock (it surely didn't look like the others) so I killed it. Well, it wasn't a wolf after all. You see, when one of the sheep got dirt on it, it didn't look like the others who were clean and white, and I mistook it for a wolf in sheep's clothing. But I can confidently say 'not one sheep was lost to wolves.'"

His master asked, "Surely, you didn't mistakenly kill fifty sheep."

"Oh, no," replied the shepherd.

"Well, what happened to the others that are missing?" inquired the master.

The shepherd replied, "Some of the sheep complained about the lack of good food and went off looking for greener pastures. I was sorry to see them go, but it's much quieter without them. Also, when some of the sheep that were 'high

maintenance' wandered off, I didn't go after them because I had to protect the flock against the wolves who might devour some of the flock while I was away. Anyway, the workload is much lighter without them."

"So you just let them wander off and didn't go after them?" the incredulous master asked.

"The Lord had a number of followers who turned away, so I guess it's the same today—nothing new under the sun," replied the shepherd matter-of-factly.

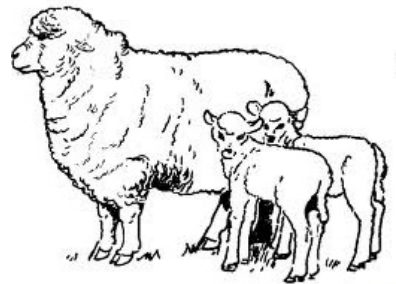
"Let me look at the sheep that remain in the flock," demanded the master.

"Okay, but let me warn you, there is another problem, and I am at a loss to explain," warned the shepherd.

The master gasped! "They look terrible, and many of them are near death! Look! Some are actually dead. What happened? You said it definitely wasn't wolves. Then what could it be? Some kind of disease? Maybe something they ate?"

On closer examination it became apparent that the problem was the sheep were suffering from improper care and malnutrition.

The master turned to the shepherd and asked, "What have you been doing?"



“Listen, I didn’t have time to properly feed and care for them. I was too busy keeping the wolves away. Yes master, I can confidently say ‘not one sheep was lost to wolves.’”

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“Shepherd (tend) my sheep” – is the responsibility of all those who have been given charge over some of the Lord’s sheep.

And, those members who are well cared for and well-fed need to appreciate the work of the shepherds.

[EDITOR’S NOTE: I wrote this article years ago while I was serving as an elder. It was written at a time when erroneous teachings were circulating in the area. I wrote it to help me remember that keeping false doctrine out of the church was important, but not to the exclusion of other duties. My responsibilities included making sure His sheep were well-fed and cared for as well as being protected from wolves.]

## Judging by Appearance

And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land. So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go

to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left.” Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere–this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah–like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. Genesis 13:7-11

The land Lot chose was fertile and a good place to take his herds. However, it was populated by men who were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the Lord. Later, his choice caused him much grief and the loss of his wife.

## LESSONS

**Be careful in choosing a mate by outward appearance only. Character matters most.**

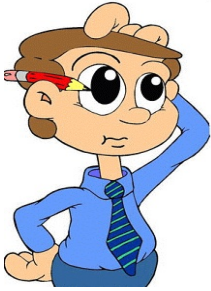
*As a ring of gold in a swine’s snout so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.* Proverbs 11:22

**Be careful in choosing friends. Avoid those whose motives and acts are alien to God, be they fellow workers, neighbors, or relatives who are worldly-minded.**

*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.* James 4:4

**Be careful of judging others by their appearance only. A person’s piety may be only skin deep.**

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”* Matthew 23:27-28



# Ponder This

## Facing Difficult Circumstances

*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

James 1:2-4

One's faith is put to the test when trials come.  
May our faith not waiver by –

### **GIVING IN**

Acquiesce or compromise.

### **GIVING UP**

Quit trying.

### **GIVING OVER**

Join the opposition.

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We need to have sufficient faith to

### **GIVE IT OUR ALL**

to persevere no matter what.

*Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"*

Acts 21:13-14

## Thank God

Thank God that we have ready access to the Holy Scriptures. We are able to compare any and all teachings with the Scriptures. We are able to know the truth as it was originally presented.

In times past that was not the case:

*"Religious truth is captive in a small number of little manuscripts which guard the common treasures, instead of expanding them. Let us break the seal which binds these holy things; let us give wings to truth that it may fly with the Word, no longer prepared at vast expense, but multitudes everlastingly by a machine which never wearies to every soul which enters life." — Johann Gutenberg (founder of moveable type and the one who produced the first printed Bible.)*

We can "search the scriptures daily" – but "can" and "do" are two different things. It is imperative that we "know" what is written.

May it not be said of Christians today, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Hosea 4:6.

## ***I heard and ...***

I heard a good story and  
shared it with a friend.

I heard a good song and  
shared it with a few.

I heard a good joke and  
shared it with many.

I heard the Good News and  
shared it with ...???

*"How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? ..."*

Romans 10:14

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