

#7: RIPPLES START WITH SHEPHERDS

1 Peter 5:1–11 | 4/19/26 | Dave Geldart | Tru Community Church

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Welcome. Connect Cards. Giving. Prayer for the Fentons & the sermon.

1. [1] INTRO: THE POND THAT DOESN'T STAY STILL

- a. If you've been with us for much of this current sermon series, you'll be familiar with our repeated image of ripples in a pond.
- b. **Close your eyes—you can picture it:**
 - i. **Calm water, reflecting the trees and sky.**
 - ii. Drop a pebble near the center, and the ripples spread outward in perfect circles.
 1. Clean. Predictable. Beautiful. And everyone knows what happens next.
- c. **But what happens when those ripples reach the edge of the pond?**
 - i. They don't stop.
 - ii. They don't disappear.
 - iii. They bounce back.
 - iv. Especially if they hit something hard like a rock or the side of a dock.
 - v. And now something unexpected happens—the outgoing waves and the returning waves begin to interact, collide, and interfere with one another.
 - vi. The result is not chaos, exactly.
 - vii. It's something stranger and more beautiful: complex overlapping patterns of movement that no one could have calculated just by watching that first small pebble break the surface.
- d. **Physicists call it wave interference. I call it a picture of the church.**
- e. We've been in this series for seven weeks now, tracing the letter Peter wrote to real churches under real pressure.
 - i. From the beginning, we've been watching ripples —
 1. of living hope, costly witness, and suffering faithfully endured —
 2. We're actually wrapping up this series next Sunday!
 3. **We'll have an open opportunity for you to share** something God's shown or done through this series. Be thinking now about what you could share.
 4. Last week Peter showed us that suffering roots us deeper into God, like the tree in Jeremiah 17, until fruit comes.
- f. **This week, we get to see some of that fruit—**
 - i. what happens when God uses suffering to root people deeply in him?

1. they start to relate differently to one another, their leaders, and their fears.
- g. Peter is drawing toward the close of this letter, and he doesn't close with doctrine.
 - i. **He closes with relationship.**
 - ii. Specifically: how leaders and the people they lead are to relate to one another in the church—and both together, to God.
- h. [2] Today: Ripples starts with shepherds.**
 - i. But they don't stay there.
 - ii. They move outward—and then come back.
 - iii. And what happens when outgoing and returning waves meet each other?
 1. Complex patterns of interaction only God could plan
 - iv. That's the church at its best. That's what Peter is calling us toward.

2. [3] SHEPHERDS SET THE TONE (1 Peter 5:1–4)

- a. *To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. (1 Peter 5:1–4)*
- b. Peter opens by addressing the elders—
 - i. the shepherd-leaders of these scattered, pressured congregations.
- c. He offers three contrasts that define healthy leadership versus corrupted leadership:
 - i. **Not under compulsion—but willingly.**
 - ii. **Not for dishonest gain—but eager to serve.**
 - iii. **Not lording it over those entrusted to your care—but being Godly examples.**
- d. Let me spend a moment on the second, because it is painfully relevant.
 - i. In the ancient world as today, leaders of communities often received financial support from those communities.
 1. And fleecing the flock is an ancient temptation
 - ii. **But dishonest gain is not limited to embezzlement.**
 - iii. It shows up whenever a leader uses the people under their care to satisfy their own unmet needs—for control, admiration, the feeling of being needed, validation.
 - iv. That is a form of taking from the flock, even when no money changes hands.
 - v. And people in churches often feel it long before they can name it.

- e. The healthy shepherd
 - i. is willing, not reluctant;
 - ii. eager, not calculating;
 - iii. an example, not a warden.
- f. He doesn't drive the sheep.
 - i. He knows them.
 - ii. He walks ahead of them.
 - iii. He lays down his life for them.
- g. Peter then grounds all of this in one stabilizing truth: there is a Chief Shepherd – Jesus**
 - i. Every human leader in the church is an under-shepherd
 - ii. That's Humbling—**
 - 1. because every pastor, elder, small group leader, anyone exercising leadership—is accountable to the one who actually owns the flock.
 - iii. And also Liberating—**
 - 1. because you are not the source.
 - 2. You are responsible to be faithful to the one who is.
 - iv. Let me speak to all of you right now:
 - 1. Contrary to what you may have believed:
 - 2. Leadership is not primarily a position, it's an action.**
 - 3. That means anyone can lead, anytime, anywhere!
 - 4. Whether you have an official leadership role or not.
 - v. If you're discipling someone,
 - 1. you're leading.
 - vi. In a small group,
 - 1. you're leading through the way you interact, the example you set.
 - vii. If you're a parent, coach, or friend who speaks hard truth in love—you're leading.
 - viii. And Peter's words apply to all of it.
- h. So, the question is not whether you lead. The question is how.**
- i. One of the most concrete ways you can lead is through personal discipleship.**
 - i. When one person intentionally walks alongside another —
 - 1. Spending time opening their life,
 - 2. asking deep questions,
 - 3. pointing consistently toward Jesus —
 - 4. through joys and sorrows
 - ii. that is under-shepherd leadership at its most personal and most powerful.
 - iii. It doesn't require a title. It doesn't require a platform. Or a degree.

1. It requires willingness, presence, and time.

j. This is one of our main goals as a church this year:

- i. We want to grow from 15 people in intentional discipling relationships to ≥ 30 .
- ii. That growth is the difference between a church that talks about obeying Jesus' call to make disciples and one that actually does it.
- iii. And the passage before us today is a picture of exactly what that looks like:
 1. humble leaders and followers, both submitted to the Chief Shepherd.

k. If you are not yet in a discipling relationship —

- i. whether being disciplined or discipling someone else —
- ii. that is the most direct response you can make to this passage today.**

l. If you already know who you might ask to meet with you, maybe someone you're already in relationship with, then go for it.

- i. **Give them the gift of initiating**
- ii. We've got a free book out on the Welcome Table called The Gospel Centered Life along with an instructions sheet for how to use it for a 9-meeting discipleship format
 1. If at the end of that time, you want to be done, there's an easy offramp
 2. If you want to keep going, even better!

m. If you don't know who you would ask to disciple or disciple you,

- i. let me know and I'll help you get connected

n. Pro tip: one of the most natural ways to form relationships that can move into personal discipleship is getting in a small group like our LIFE Groups.

3. [4] HUMBLE FOLLOWERSHIP (v. 5)

- a. *In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.'* **(1 Peter 5:5)**
- b. And then Peter turns from leaders to followers with one word: *likewise*.
- c. **The ripples of hope and sacrificial love go out from leaders—and then they come back.**
 - i. Because healthy church culture is not something leaders produce and hand to passive recipients.
 - ii. It is built by the mutual response of the whole body.
- d. **Peter's call to submit—to yield to those who lead you—is not a call to abandon your judgment or silence your conscience.**

- i. In Peter’s theology, submission is always voluntary, always anchored in love, and always directed ultimately upward toward God rather than sideways toward a human being.
 - ii. This is not blind compliance.
 - iii. It is the posture of someone who trusts that God orders community and chooses to live into that order rather than constantly fighting for position.
- e. **But then Peter immediately broadens this call**
 - i. He says: *all of you—clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.*
- f. That’s the pond reflecting back.
- g. **Paul puts the same vision this way in**
 - i. **[5] Romans 12:10 -- outdo one another in showing honor.**
 - 1. Not in your spiritual maturity, theological precision, ministry output, or financial generosity.
 - ii. Outdo one another in giving honor away. In lifting others up.
 - iii. Who would win that contest in this room?
 - iv. Imagine what a small group—or a church—would look like when that becomes the actual operating posture!
- h. **And Peter gives us the theological reason from Proverbs 3: *God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble***
 - i. This is a structural statement about how the universe God created works.
 - ii. Pride positions you in opposition to God—not just vaguely, but in the actual mechanics of how grace moves into a community.
 - iii. When a church is marked by comparison, status-seeking, or the chronic unwillingness to yield to anyone else—
 - 1. it doesn’t just have a relational problem. It has a grace of God problem.
- i. **I want to say a careful word here to some of you:**
 - i. **Maybe you’ve been part of a church where a leader did not lead this way—**
 - 1. where authority was weaponized,
 - 2. manipulation dressed in spiritual language,
 - 3. speaking honestly got you punished.
 - 4. And you got used and abused
 - ii. That is a real wound.
 - 1. I know -- I’ve experienced the effects of that personally.
 - 2. And I’m so sorry.
 - iii. **But if that wound has hardened into a callous –**
 - 1. a permanent shield against ever being under anyone’s leadership again—

- iv. Peter has a word for that too. Not a harsh word. A pastoral one:
- v. **The Chief Shepherd is not like the ones who hurt you.**
 - 1. He is the Good Shepherd who gave his own life for the sheep.
- vi. **And he is calling you back to community—**
 - 1. not because it's completely safe,
 - 2. but because it's where healing and growth actually happen.
- vii. **Healthy submission does not mean tolerating abuse.**
 - 1. Healthy boundaries are not the same as a hardened heart.
- viii. **But neither does past hurt give permanent permission to stay permanently disengaged.**
- ix. The goal is supernatural softening—
 - 1. an ongoing willingness to re-engage, with discernment, under the care of the Chief Shepherd,
 - 2. in a community that is genuinely and imperfectly trying to live this out.

4. [6] WHERE ANXIETY REALLY GOES (vv. 6–7)

- a. *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6–7)*
- b. **Peter says humility is not just a posture we adopt toward other people.**
 - i. **It is fundamentally a posture we take toward God.**
 - ii. And Peter draws the two together directly:
 - 1. humble yourself under God's mighty hand—
 - 2. and in doing that—cast all your anxiety on him.
- c. **Casting your anxieties on God is itself an act of humility.**
 - i. It is the admission that you are not sufficient to carry what you're carrying.
 - ii. That you cannot solve what you are trying to solve.
 - iii. That you need a God who is bigger, wiser, and more capable than your worry.
- d. Here is where it gets really practical for us as a church:
 - i. **Both leaders and followers carry anxiety into our experience of church—**
 - ii. and both can be tempted to make the same subtle, deeply human mistake:
 - 1. **we start expecting other people to carry what only God can carry.**
- e. **Anxious leaders carry thoughts like:**
 - i. Are people following?
 - 1. Do they respect me?
 - 2. Am I making an impact?
 - 3. Will this church survive?

- 4. Am I enough?
- 5. What if I fail?
- ii. **And sometimes, consciously or not, leaders start using people to answer those questions.**
 - 1. Control becomes comfort.
 - 2. Approval becomes oxygen.
 - 3. The flock starts functioning to serve the shepherd's emotional needs.
- iii. Some of you have been in that kind of environment before.
- f. **Followers carry anxiety too:**
 - i. Will I be cared for?
 - 1. Will someone lead well enough for me to feel safe here?
 - 2. Will this community be worth my investment?
 - 3. What if they want me to do too much?
 - ii. And sometimes followers put a crushing weight on their leaders to be everything for them and never make a mistake.
 - iii. When the leader fails to satisfy—and every human leader will—the follower's faith wobbles and their commitment to connection in the body of Christ softens.
- g. **Both of these are the same move: using people to carry what only God can carry.**
 - i. **And both are addressed by the same command: *cast it on him*.**
- h. Cast is an active word —
 - i. Take what you're carrying right now and deliberately place it in God's hands.
 - ii. Why? Because he cares for you. Personally. Continuously.
- i. **When a church learns to actually practice this, it changes everything about how we relate to one another.**
 - i. We stop using each other. We start trusting God together.
 - ii. And that ripples out into a watching world.

5. [7] THE BATTLE UNDERNEATH (vv. 8–9)

- a. *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. (1 Peter 5:8–9)*
- b. Now Peter lifts up the rug and pulls back the curtain.
 - i. There is more happening here than just the relational dynamics and leadership patterns we see.
- c. **There is an enemy.**

- i. Spiritual. And quite real.
- ii. He is not passive or distracted.
 - 1. He is actively moving, looking for someone to devour.
- iii. **And one of his most reliable entry points**
 - 1. is not the isolated doubter—
 - 2. it is the fracturing church.
- d. **A community marked by anxious leaders using people, and disengaged followers protecting themselves—that community is already destroying itself from the inside.**
 - i. The enemy doesn't even need to work hard. He just needs to let the poison of unchecked pride and unmet expectation do its work.
- e. **This is why Peter's call to humble, mutually-submissive community is not just relationally healthy. It is spiritually strategic.**
 - i. The antidote to our enemy's assault is not better programming, preaching, music, or a compelling vision statement.
 - ii. It is a community that actually lives this way—where leaders lead from loving sacrifice, followers engage with trust, and anxiety is taken to God rather than leaked onto everyone else.
- f. **And Peter says to these churches: YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**
 - i. Your brothers and sisters throughout the world are experiencing the same kinds of suffering.
 - ii. It was true then. And it's true now.
 - iii. This community in St. George is connected spiritually to every congregation in the world fighting the same battles—the same temptation to pride, to control, to self-protection, to division.
- g. **Suffering tempts you to feel like you are the only one**—like your particular church struggle is uniquely unjust and unsolvable. But it isn't. And you aren't alone in it.
 - i. You stand in solidarity with a global body of Christ that has been navigating this for two thousand years—many of them under far worse pressure than ours.
- h. **So to those churches and to us today Peter says, "Stand firm. Together."**

6. [8] THE PROMISE THAT HOLDS IT ALL TOGETHER (vv. 10–11)

- a. *And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 5:10–11, NIV)*
- b. Peter closes with a promise.
 - i. Not a promise that it will be easy. (I'm sorry to say)

- ii. Not a promise that it will even make sense while you're in it.
 - iii. But a promise about what God himself will do *after you have suffered a little while*.
- c. He will restore you. Confirm you. Strengthen you. Establish you.**
- i. set firmly in place like a tree whose roots have gone deep into the Source of true and eternal life.
- d. This is the arc of the whole letter—and of everything we've been talking about since February.**
- i. The suffering is not the end.**
 - 1. The anxiety is not the end.
 - 2. The relational fracture—if brought honestly before God and met with humility—is not the end.
 - ii. The end is restoration and resurrection life!**
- e. This is the Chief Shepherd's final word over every flock he has given his life to protect.
- i. That God's dominion would be visible, his power displayed, his glory evident in and through the church.
- f. That is the ripple that ultimately matters. That will go to the ends of the earth.

7. APPLICATION: WHERE THIS HITS US

- a. Let me get specific. This passage lands directly on where we are as a church right now.
- b. [9] Our BHAGGs – Big Hairy Audacious God-Sized Goals – don't happen without this kind of church culture.**
 - i. We want 30 people in discipling relationships,
 - 1. 6 healthy small groups,
 - 2. and to help plant a new church in our state.
 - ii. That is the soil in which Kingdom-of-God multiplication grows.
 - iii. Without it, growth will merely expose our cracks rather than multiply our impact.
- c. Our history as a church is both an advantage and a vulnerability.**
 - i. We have people who've been here from the beginning
 - 1. and people who are brand new
 - ii. That combination is a genuine gift —**
 - 1. DNA and history on one side,
 - 2. fresh eyes and energy on the other.
 - iii. But the enemy wants to weaponize that difference —**
 - 1. To turn us against one another through our pride and anxieties.
 - iv. Peter's call is the same to all of us, regardless of how long we've been here:**

1. Clothe yourselves in humility toward one another.

2. And take your anxieties to God.

d. Our culture is not in line with this: it whispers lies to us--

i. promote yourself, protect yourself,

1. consume what serves you, leave when it gets hard.

ii. Church shopping is the liturgy of consumer Christianity.

1. And it is the exact inverse of what Peter is describing.

iii. Peter's call is:

1. Humble yourself.

2. Stay.

3. Give.

4. Trust.

5. Stand firm.

iv. Not because this church is perfect or because our leaders always get it right.

v. But because Jesus the Chief Shepherd is at work here, and your suffering, your service, and your submission are not wasted in his hands.

e. Here are some Clear next steps, wherever you are:

i. [10] LEAD – by example, not position.

1. If you are leading — formally or informally —

2. ask yourself: where am I leading for my own sake rather than theirs?

3. And consider: Who could I personally disciple this year? as a step of faith

ii. [11] FOLLOW – engage fully

1. If you are following — ask yourself where am I withholding full engagement?

2. And Who could I ask to disciple me?

iii. [12] CAST – your anxieties on God.

1. If you are carrying anxiety — name it,

2. and make the daily deliberate act of handing it to God rather than leaking it onto your leaders or your community.

iv. [13] REENGAGE -

1. If you have been hurt by church leadership —

2. the Chief Shepherd is trustworthy even when his under-shepherds have not been.

3. Bring the hurt to him.

4. Seek healing, not just safety.

5. And choose re-engagement — over permanent withdrawal.

6. including the vulnerable re-engagement of a discipling relationship

8. [14] RESPONSE PRACTICE: Imaginative Prayer

- a. Before we close, I want to try something together.
 - i. Some of you haven't done this before—that's okay.
 - ii. As Travis comes up and plays softly in the background,
 1. I'm going to ask you to use your imagination as a tool for prayer in response to this sermon.
 2. This practice is also called Ignatian Contemplation
 - iii. This is not fantasy. An ancient way of engaging with God.
 - iv. What happens between you and God right now is yours. Sacred. Personal.
 1. No one's going to ask about it.
 - v. Peter tells us to cast our anxieties on God — an active, deliberate act.
 1. That's what we're going to practice right now.
- b. **Find a comfortable position.**
 - i. Close your eyes. Take a breath.
- c. **Imagine you're standing in a relaxing place.**
 - i. Could be a quiet room or somewhere outdoors.
- d. **And in front of you there's a backpack that belongs to you.**
 - i. It's been with you a while. And it's closed.
 - ii. You know what's inside—the things you carry with you.
- e. **If you're willing, go ahead and unzip it. Look inside.**
 - i. **What anxieties have you been carrying?**
 1. What fears—about your family, your future, your faith, your relationships?
 2. What have you been carrying so long you forgot you were holding it?
 - ii. [Pause — 8 seconds]
- f. **Pick one thing up.** Just one. Hold it in your hands and feel the shape and weight of it.
 - i. [Pause — 5 seconds]
- g. **Now notice—you're not alone in this place.**
 - i. **Jesus is there.** He's been there the whole time, in fact.
 - ii. And he's looking at you the way someone looks at a person they love.
 1. Not with judgment. Not with impatience.
 - iii. He has a big chest beside him. And it's open.
 - iv. [Pause — 5 seconds]
- h. **Move toward him.**
 - i. You're standing close now. You can see the chest.

- ii. He's not reaching for what you're holding—just present. Waiting. Patient.
- i. **Show him what you're carrying.**
 - i. And tell him why it's been so hard to put down.
 - ii. [Pause — 10 seconds]
- j. Now—be honest. **Is something in you resisting giving this over to him now?**
 - i. If so, that's fine. Stay there.
 - 1. What would it cost you to let this go?
 - 2. What are you afraid would happen?
 - ii. If you have something to say to Jesus about that—say it.
 - iii. [Pause — 10 seconds]
- k. **Come back to the chest. It's still open.**
 - i. **When you're ready—place what you're holding inside it and take a step back.**
 - ii. [Pause — 10 seconds]
- l. **If you couldn't let it go today, that's okay.**
 - i. Staying honest with God about that matters too.
 - ii. There's no right way for this to go.
 - iii. Just stay curious about it with Jesus
- m. **If you did—he can be trusted with it.**
 - i. Not because the problem disappears.
 - ii. Because *he cares for you*. Personally. Continuously.
 - iii. **How does it feel to give that to Jesus and let him take it?**
 - iv. [Pause — 8 seconds]
- n. **Is there anything you want to say to Jesus?**
 - i. [Pause — 8 seconds]
- o. **Is there anything Jesus wants to say to you?**
 - i. [Pause — 8 seconds]
- p. **Take a breath. Come back to the room and open your eyes.**
 - i. [10 full seconds of silence before speaking.]

9. [15] CLOSING

- a. Peter tells us that God will restore you. Confirm you. Strengthen you. Establish you.
- b. That is the promise on the other side of casting.
- c. **Let's pray together.**



Rippling HOPE

in a Watching World

A Journey Through 1 Peter

RIPPLES START WITH SHEPHERDS

1 Peter 5:1-11



SHEPHERDS SET THE TONE

1 PETER 5: ¹ To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ² Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

HUMBLE FOLLOWERSHIP

⁵ In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.”



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ROMANS 12:10 - *Outdo one another in showing honor.*

WHERE ANXIETY REALLY GOES

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.



THE BATTLE UNDERNEATH

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.



THE PROMISE

¹⁰ And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. ¹¹ To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.



APPLICATION

Tru's 2026 BHAGGs:

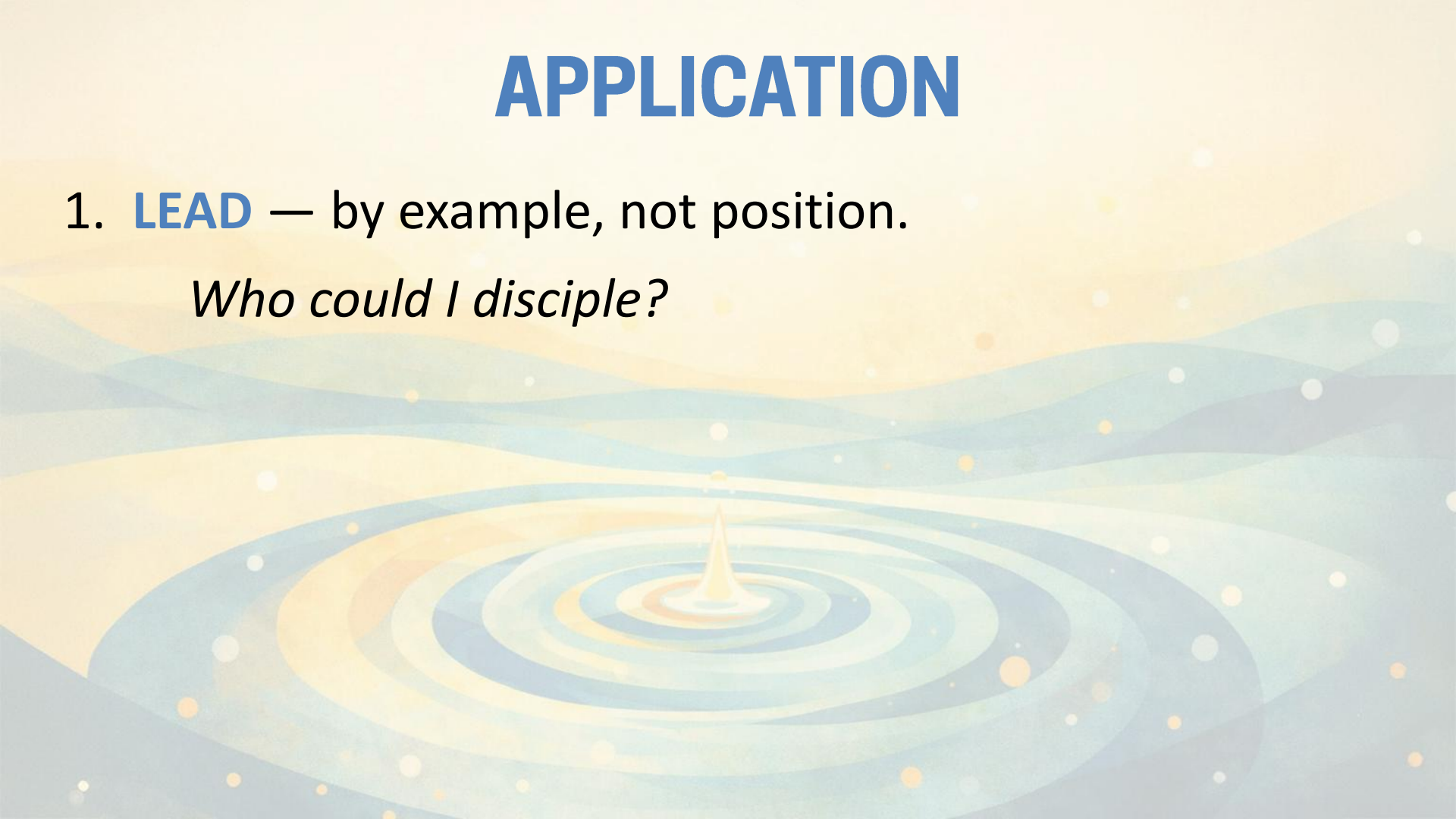
1. 30 people in discipling relationships
2. 6 healthy small groups
3. help plant a new church



APPLICATION

1. **LEAD** — by example, not position.

Who could I disciple?



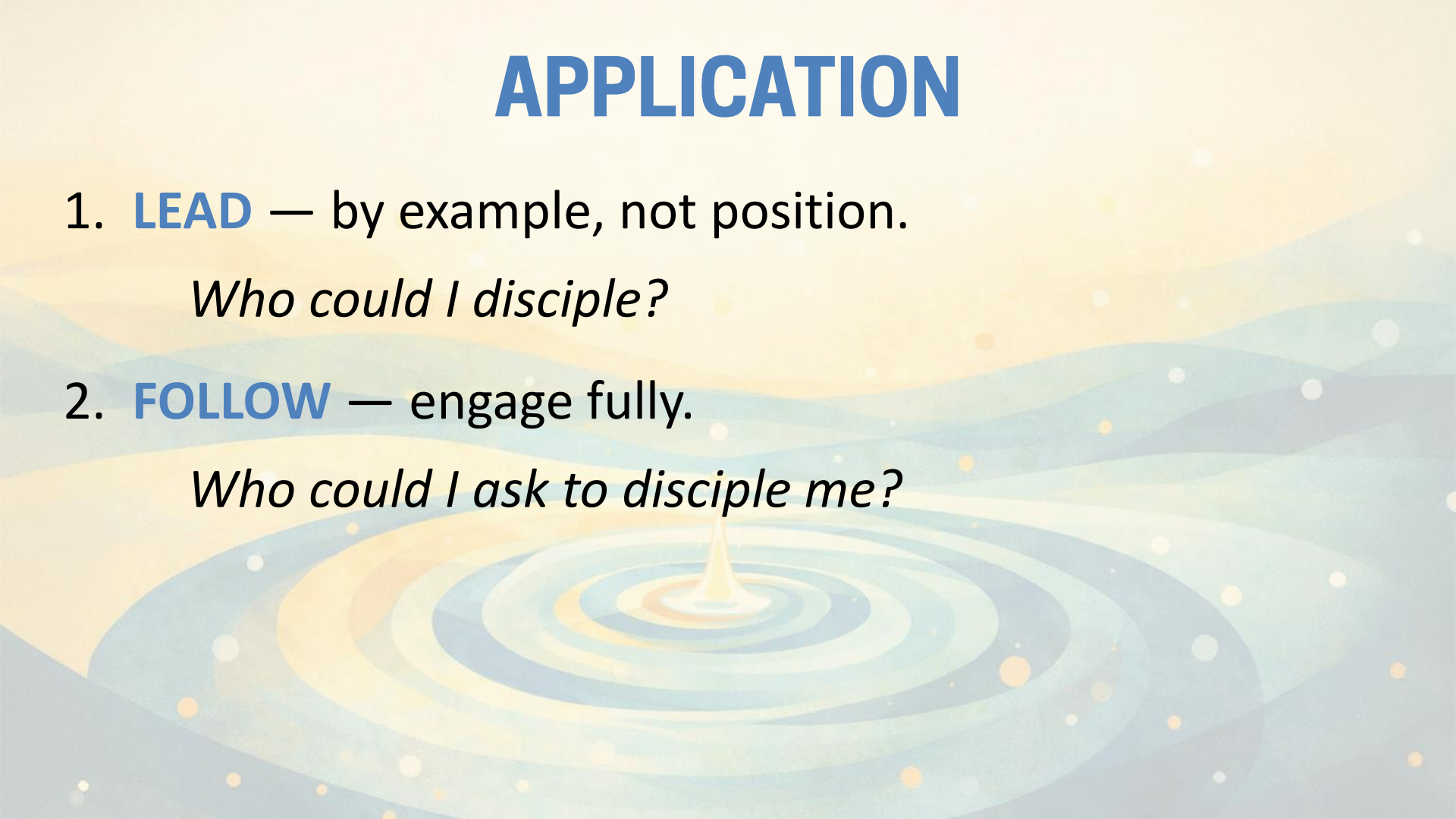
APPLICATION

1. **LEAD** — by example, not position.

Who could I disciple?

2. **FOLLOW** — engage fully.

Who could I ask to disciple me?



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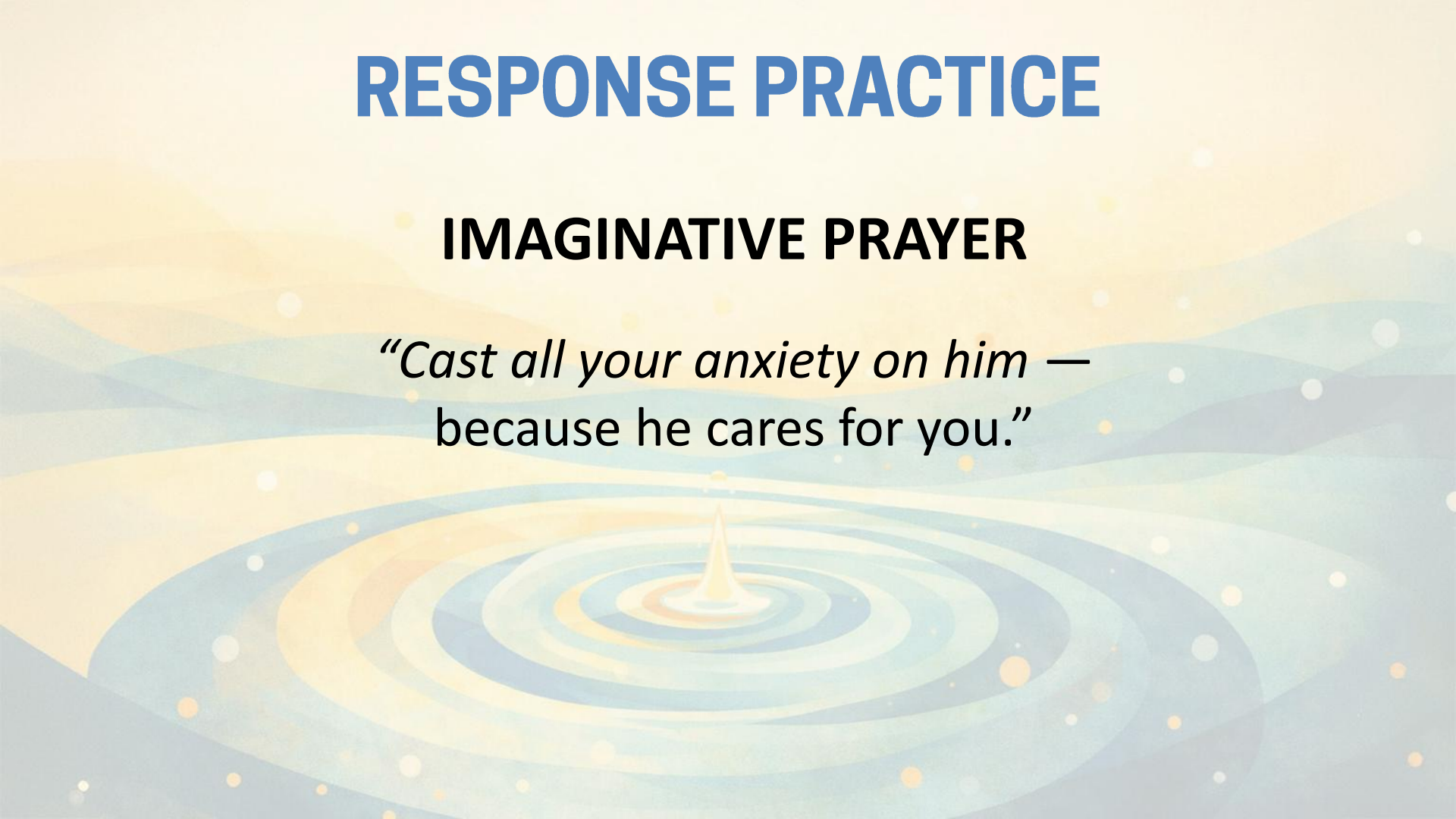
3. **CAST** — name your anxiety and hand it to God daily.

4. **REENGAGE** — bring your hurt to the Chief Shepherd.

RESPONSE PRACTICE

IMAGINATIVE PRAYER

*“Cast all your anxiety on him —
because he cares for you.”*



RIPPLES START WITH SHEPHERDS

1 Peter 5:1-11

