

**Reflection**

1. Some have observed that Christians in our culture focus more on a moralistic view of Christianity—as if Christianity amounts to doing the right thing. While the Bible includes teachings that guide behaviors, it grounds them upon and prioritize our relationship with God and the new identity we have in Christ (e.g. John 10:27; Ephesians 2:10; 1 John 4:7-12). What is lost and/or gained when we fail to grasp the priority of identity?
2. Our culture tends to celebrate individualism and independence, values which can have many benefits. In what ways and to what degrees, however, can these values distort and/or undermine our sense of fully belonging (i.e. body and soul, in life and in death) to Jesus and living as his sheep in this world? What can we do to counteract their influence?
3. Using the picture of sheep and their Shepherd and the idea of “belonging—body and soul, in life and in death,” how would you characterize the role (function, importance, benefits, etc.) each of the following serves for those who are the Shepherd’s sheep: intimacy, dependence, provision, protection, identity?

**Action –**

1. **Examine** ... Reflect on your belonging to Christ. In what ways and to what degrees is your belonging serving as your life-defining strength? What portions of your identity belong to someone/something else? To what degree and in what areas of your life do you continue to insist on retaining ownership?
2. **Share** ... Reach out to at least one other follower of Christ and talk with her/him about belonging to Jesus. Consider sharing what you’ve learned through this study.
3. **Celebrate** ... To belong to Jesus is life itself. Celebrate every day this week the good news of belonging to Christ.

**Pray** – If studying in a group, pray for one another and for each other’s spiritual growth throughout the coming week.

## Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 1

*What is your only comfort, in life and in death?*

That **I belong**—body and soul, in life and in death—not to myself but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Begin with Prayer** – *Father, with an expectation that you will use this study to grow me/us more into the image of your Son, I/we open our hearts and minds to your Spirit. Amen.*

**Follow Up on Know What Can't Be Known** – What thoughts, questions, actions, etc. resulted in your life this past week as a result of last week's sermon study?

**The Sermon's Main Point** – *The Shepherd's Sheep*

Belonging to Jesus means intimacy, dependence, provision, protection, and a new eternally secure identity. This belonging changes everything for the Shepherd's Sheep.

**Begin** – Choose from the following questions to begin thinking about the study's topic.

1. What clubs, groups, teams, etc. did you belong to when you were growing up?
2. If you were to take on a project are you more likely to want to do it by yourself or with a group of other people? Why? What are the benefits of each way?
3. Pick one of the following and explain how it serves as a particular source of strength for you: personal care, skills and abilities, friends and colleagues, family, wealth, perspective.
4. When do you tend to do some of your deepest thinking and reflecting? Do you seek out time to think deeply or is it more likely to happen in response to something occurring around you? How often do you spend time in reflection and what are the particular subjects that tend to rise to the surface?

*The Shepherd's Sheep*

John 10:25-30

## Grasping, Sharing, Learning and Appreciating

For each section of our passage, (1) note what it reveals about the relationship between the Shepherd (Jesus) and his sheep and (2) describe implications and ramifications associated with what is revealed (i.e. what does it mean for our lives?) :

- a. John 10:26
- b. John 10:27
- c. John 10:28
- d. John 10:29-30

What do each of the following passages add to our understanding of belonging to God/Christ?

- a. Psalm 100:3
- b. Romans 14:7-9
- c. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- d. Galatians 2:20