

Distractions & Temptations for a pastor / shepherd:

-Popularity & Trends (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

If I lead the people like that guy leads people, they'll like me

-in reality, God has appointed specific elders for specific churches. Go where God leads YOU, not where others go (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:3)

-Feelings-based instruction (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

If I make people happy & make them like me, they'll stay here

-our job is to point people gently, lovingly to Christ, despite how people feel (if their feelings don't line up with truth) (Titus 2:1)

-Self-promotion (Ezekiel 34)

If people know how cool I am, they will like me and follow me

-we are called to entrust our reputation to the Lord (1 Pet. 2:28)

-we're called to the well-being of "the sheep" (Jn 21:15, 16, 17)

-Self-protection (Ezekiel 34)

If I hide my sin & mistakes, people will trust my leadership

-in reality, hiding our sin only hides the grace of God at work: forgiving, changing and sustaining us (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

-Legalism vs. Christ-following (Matthew 23:4, 23-24)

If I can get people to keep the rules of men, they'll feel like they know God

-bear the fruit of repentance: yes! Empty rule-keeping: NO!

-extra-Biblical rule-keeping puffs up sinful pride and self-dependence AND hides the Gospel (Colossians 2:20-23)

-Human Traditions (Matthew 15:5-9)

If I just get people to do what Christians have always done, we'll be fine

-in reality, we have our own joys to discover, sins to overcome and good works to walk in with God's help! (Ephesians 2:10)

-Position and titles (Matthew 23:5-10)

If I pride myself on my position and power and influence, other people will think I'm cool

-in reality, if other people make much of shepherds instead of making much of Jesus, everyone loses (Matthew 23:9)