

What to Do When You Spot a Deadly Wolf in the Flock

The Bible uses certain animals as metaphors to depict certain kinds of people in the kingdom. Pastors and senior leaders of organizations need to discern at least three kinds of people in their organizations to effectively lead.

Although most people may have a mixture of all three traits at times in their lives, it is very possible that either the negative or positive traits of a person can suck them fully into either the dark side or the light of the kingdom of God. It is inevitable that every growing organization and/or church will attract all three of these kinds of people simultaneously.

Following are some of the main characteristics of wolves, sheep, and horses as based on my observations during almost 30 years of ministry in the church and marketplace.

Wolves

Wolves say yes outwardly to spiritual authority but say no in their hearts.

Wolves attempt to fool the shepherds among them by outwardly being agreeable to the vision, ministry and responsibilities of the organization but inwardly they have no intention of fully obeying spiritual authority. In the beginning they will either do the absolute minimum of what is required—or maybe even excel—but it is merely for them to position themselves into a place of trust among the leadership so they can leverage more influence and fulfill their fleshly schemes.

Wolves have their own vision.

Senior leaders make mistakes when they think that division in

their ranks only comes from gossip or slander. There is more division in churches and organizations than most leaders realize because its covert operation is not based on slander but on hidden agendas. Any person who perpetuates their own vision within the overarching vision of a church or organization is in fact a divisive person and a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Wolves are not accountable in ministry and walk in the dark.

Any person or secondary leader that doesn't allow their overseer to see what kind of work they are doing, gets annoyed when asked for reports, or shuns honest open relationships and accountability, or obstructs usual communication systems, is potentially a wolf in the making.

Wolves are not authentic because they attempt to look like sheep.

People who are not authentic to themselves are candidates for turning on others at any given time. If you are not true to yourself and to who God made you, then you will not be true to other people. Wolves wear sheep's clothing because they attempt to fit into the overall scheme and structure of an organization or church. That is to say, they fit right into all of the cultural norms of their surrounding.

For example, if they are in a church they will regularly attend church services and leadership meetings, pay their tithes, perform ministry tasks, and attempt to outwardly excel in spiritual disciplines more than anyone else. Most pastors are preaching every Sunday to a percentage of people who are wolves since they have no discernment, or because their church is too large for them to smoke the wolves out. Given time, a wolf will attempt to position themselves in some way for more influence so, generally speaking, a senior leader will eventually find out who these people are.

Wolves position themselves to be close to those in power.

As stated in the previous point, wolves crave proximity to power. They will attempt to garner favor with the senior leader by acts of service, sacrifice, financial giving and by flattering the leaders among them that are the most susceptible to false praise. For example, if the senior leader is not accessible enough, wolves will work to attach themselves to secondary leaders they perceive have influence with the senior leader. They do this to curry favor with the secondary leader to slowly build another infrastructure loyal to a subversive agenda instead of to the senior leader and the vision of the organization.

Wolves desire the perks of the organization without paying the price for the organization.

I have learned that those who really have a sincere heart will function in any capacity without a title or position, as long as they are properly stewarding their gifts. Since wolves don't want to pay the price over the long term, they position themselves to receive accolades, prestige, and a platform as quickly as possible—even over those who have paid the price for the organization for many years.

Senior leaders have to be wary of those who constantly crave position, titles and authority without proving themselves over the long haul.

Wolves camouflage their motives and actions with spirituality.

These people are not open and broken regarding their personal flaws. Rather they attempt to put up a veneer of super spirituality to fool others to the point that even the senior leader is not really spiritual in comparison to them. Their criticisms are not outwardly slanderous but involve subtleties and innuendos that involve second guessing senior leadership decisions, implying the church isn't spiritual enough, or that the senior leader doesn't really hear from God and doesn't really pray much, etc. Basically, a wolf is trying to do

anything that can successfully instill seeds of doubt about the senior leader in the minds of the people around them.

Wolves use and abuse people to accomplish their own agenda.

Although wolves come off as if they love everyone around them, they are only using these people to gain influence and power. As soon as they have what they want from these naïve people they eat them, spit them out and move on to the next person who can deliver them the platform they desire.

Wolves can't be led but must be driven away by shepherds.

Some senior leaders attempt to rehabilitate every person that comes into their church or organization. This is a huge mistake! A wolf will always be a wolf, a sheep always a sheep, and a horse always a horse, no matter how much you fast and pray for them. Once a person is identified as a wolf, a shepherd should confer with other leaders for confirmation of this fact, then monitor this person closely and not allow them any harmful leverage in the church.

In most cases, a senior leader can't just throw the wolf out. If a senior leader does this, then innocent people that have already been influenced by the wolf will get hurt as well. The senior leader has to wait until the wolf reveals their true motives by "giving them enough rope to hang themselves." When it is manifest, they can be driven out!

Wolves attempt to destroy the shepherd as a way to consume the sheep.

By and large, wolves are in competition with the senior leader of an organization they are a part of, instead of serving as their promoter and protector. The reason for this is because the shepherd (senior leader) has what they crave: the most influence in the organization. Because of this, wolves will do everything in their power to tear down the shepherd so that the sheep are vulnerable to their wishes.

Wolves are not sons but bloodsuckers of the house.

Years ago, after a very difficult time in our church, the Lord spoke through a member of our church who said that God was going to give me “sons and daughters who would never betray me.” Since that time, I have built the leadership of our church with sons and daughters of the house, not with those merely desiring a position for their gifting to be displayed. This strategy has served our church well the past 20 years. I encourage all pastors to build key leadership with these criteria.

Wolves are those who are not grateful for what the senior leader does or what the organization has to offer. Instead, they are always complaining about their needs not being met. No matter how many times you aid a wolf, they will always crave more fresh meat to eat and blood to drink!

Sheep

Sheep outwardly and inwardly attempt to follow their spiritual authority.

Sheep are those who both say yes outwardly and inwardly (in their hearts) to those directives from those in spiritual authority over them. Sheep make up most of the congregation and will always gravitate towards a leader who is a legitimate shepherd that watches out for the best interests of the flock.

Sheep reflect the vision of the shepherd.

True sheep move in the general direction of the flock and reflect the vision of the shepherd and the organization. They don't care much about position, or leadership. What they care about most is that their needs are met and that the organization has stability, especially in the midst of the storms of life.

Sheep desire to be accountable as long as they feel a place of

safety.

Sheep will open up both their hearts and their wallets for the sake of a place of safety for them and their families. They want to be honest and open about their needs and hurts, and greatly desire mature people they can trust that will listen to their cries for help and guide them towards the path of life.

Sheep run when they sense instability in a church or organization.

Sheep understand that while they are in pasture they will experience inclement weather, so they don't blame the shepherd for the storms of life or the attacks of the enemy on the organization. But one thing they will not tolerate: They will flee and run to another fold if they think the shepherd lacks integrity or is not a strong enough leader to continue to offer stability for the flock in the midst of the storm.

Sheep depend on shepherds to feed them and lead them.

Sheep will graze where they are fed. Sometimes when sheep leave a church or organization and go to another it is because they are hungry and need green grass to be nourished. If the grass (preaching of the Word) is stale or if the shepherd is not leading them beside still waters or helping them feel refreshed in their souls, they will eventually go where this is offered so they do not die of malnutrition. No matter how many responsibilities a senior leader has, he or she must always make sure the first order of business is to continually offer fresh green grass (fresh, relevant *rhema* words from God) and pure water to the flock so they don't die of malnutrition or flee to other shepherds who will take care of them.

Sheep are vulnerable to wolves that prey on them at night.

Sheep cannot defend themselves, don't have much discernment, and may even wander off at night right into a pack of wolves.

This is why a shepherd must continually identify where the wolves are and keep them away from the sheep. Sheep must also be closely connected to others in small group settings so they receive the proper oversight and care.

Sheep love and flock around true shepherds.

Sheep can always tell who a true shepherd is. One of the things I tell people who feel called to be pastors is that one of the proofs you are really called to be a pastor is if the sheep start gravitating towards you for comfort, nourishment and advice. If a person doesn't attract sheep then, no matter how many years they had in seminary or how many prophecies they had spoken over their lives, they are not yet ready to serve as a pastor.

Horses

Horses are multipliers with unique leadership abilities in a church or organization.

Horses often are used as a metaphor for something stately and powerful. Probably less than 5 percent of people in any organization fit into this category. These folks are creative, and multiply and develop other leaders, ministries and programs. They are not the kind of people that like to be micromanaged. Like horses, they need to have space to run and harness their energy.

Horses will say yes to spiritual authority once they understand the concept and buy into the agenda

Horses are the kind of people that will be reluctant to get involved in something unless they fully understand the concepts involved. The reason for this is because they wisely manage their time and don't get involved in initiatives not suited to their gifting and mission.

Senior leaders need to recognize these kinds of leaders so

they will not mistake their reticence for insubordination.

Horses will be transparent and personally accountable to those who train and release them to their potential.

Horses are the kind of leaders that will gravitate toward those who bring them to the next level. If senior leaders recognize a horse among them they should prioritize pouring time into them. Horses will usually hold themselves accountable and be transparent to a senior leader investing in them that has already developed a bond of trust with them.

Horses will reflect the vision if the visionary invests in them.

Horses will gladly perpetuate vision if they know the senior leader is creating capacity for them to grow in the organization and is willing to invest time nurturing them.

Horses will possess the vision if the visionary utilizes them to help fulfill it.

Often, sheep have ownership of an organization to the extent they are getting their needs met. On the other hand, once horses are loyal, they will exhibit a spirit of proprietorship. They are the kind of folks designed for battle and will be loyal and excel in their responsibilities—at times, even unto their own death!

Horses will carry the vision to the next level if the visionary rides upon their gifting and harnesses their ability.

Horses, more than any other people in an organization, can carry numerous people on their backs while riding at light speed and promoting vision. To get an understanding of the growth capacity of a church or an organization, a senior leader merely needs to calculate the number of horses they employ on staff and as volunteers. Horses are the only ones in

the organization with the innate potential to multiply other leaders and create ministry. Wise senior leaders will allow these (proven and tested) unique leaders to run swiftly and not be slowed down by over management and insecurity (on the part of the senior leader).

Loyal horses will outpace and scare off the wolves.

Since horses have an amazing combination of speed and strength, they are the most capable in an organization to be released for battle in times of war. Wolves are intimidated by strong, loyal horses and will not mess with them and those in proximity to them.

Horses were born to race and will be bored with a slow pace.

Horses, like apostolic leaders, are used to moving, seeing and working at light speed. Horses see so far ahead with concomitant speed that sometimes they assume everyone else is moving at the same pace.

Because of this, they can easily become bored. The senior leader must continually challenge horses by giving them the next big thing to conquer as soon as they see a horse has mastered and established their particular assignment. Pastoral senior leaders cannot adequately oversee people such as these in the long-term; only accomplished apostolic leaders can stay ahead of horses in movement, strategy and vision.

Horses crave accomplishment and significance, not titles or positions

Horses are driven by accomplishment, not empty titles and positions. They don't need to be in the spotlight. They are usually alpha males (or alpha females) with a high "D" personality that is obsessed with solving problems, creating movement, and bringing transformation and an improved quality of life to people, places and things.

When people are vying for positions and titles it is a good sign they are not horses but either confused sheep or wolves in the making.

Horses are potential successors to the visionary.

Horses are the only folks with the potential to take an already established apostolic organization to the next level of vision and destiny. Senior leaders who are transitioning out of their organization often make the mistake of choosing an administrator instead of a horse. This is why apostolic movements usually settle for the status quo and concentrate on self-preservation in the second generation of their existence.

If you want an efficient organization choose an administrator to lead it. But if you desire an effective organization choose a proven, loyal horse with energy to create the movement necessary to expand the already established horizons for years to come. {eoa}

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