

From The Pastor's Study A Dog's Life

When I have trouble sleeping I try to allow my mind to drift and sometimes it lands on comparisons of life and in general and God's relationship with us. I have discovered so many things by this, perhaps, unusual mental exercise. A few nights ago sleep was avoiding me and once again I began my exploration and what I discovered surprised me.

I have to start at the beginning. For years we have wanted another dog. Our Chow had died and since Joyce had a child care business in the home and we didn't want to see one of the children hurt, so we held off on getting another pet. Add to that the fact that I often worked two jobs and was on sea duty and often gone for long periods of time. So I wouldn't have time to spend with and train a dog.

About four years ago I decided to start looking for the right dog. Joyce would have preferred a small dog while I wanted a larger one so finding one was hard. After about a year we found a rescue that we hoped was the right pup and Chaz was a blessing to us. He was larger than Joyce would have preferred but she went along.

It didn't take long before Chaz became not just the family pet but a true member of our family. He was a calm dog from day one and a great comfort to us and a tremendous companion for us both. We noticed Chaz did little but sleep so we decided it was time to once again add to our family.

It took us just about a year to find Chaz and I expected it to take that once again. We wanted a smaller young adult female as a sister to Chaz; we wanted to find a pup that would get Chaz on his feet but not a hyper dog, Chaz doesn't like hyper little dogs, so the search was going to be a hard one and we had a list that had to be met.

First it had to be a female so there wouldn't be the competition. It had to be energetic without being hyper. She couldn't be aggressive but not completely passive. She couldn't be too small or too large and most important she had to be acceptable to Chaz.

I won't go through our search but it wasn't a year and when we found the little girl Chaz was kind of non-committed. On the long trip home the two dogs soon found their places in the back seat and settled in. Her name is Happy and it fits, she is a happy dog and always looks like she is smiling. Shortly after we arrived home

Happy began jumping on Chaz who, at first, growled and tried to get away but Happy was relentless and kept playfully kept going after him. In short order they were playing like puppies.

So what does this compare with and what can we learn from it? We can compare the connection between these two dogs to a lot of things. But since we are in church, perhaps we can connect this with our faith. No, I don't see that, though I am sure someone could. But I do see a comparison to our relationship with God, Lets see if I can make the connection I did the other night. Unfortunately before I completed the connection I fell asleep, which was the purpose of the exercise but it would help if I had been able to finish.

Both of these wonderful animals became recues though under different conditions. Chaz was rescued from an abusive situation while Happy's family could no longer provide care for her and turned her over to a rescue. With both dogs the hope to find a welcoming, loving home. Just as with many of us come to Christ for different reasons, with different histories, but to the same God.

Our pets depend on us to provide their every need; we protect them from the cold and the heat; we see they are kept healthy, that they have food and plenty of water; that they are shown love and attention so they are never in doubt. We love them unconditionally, they aren't just pets, we make them part of our families and celebrate their birthdays and include them in Christmas.

Our relationship with God is much the same. He loves us unconditionally, and we return that love. He provides our needs, not just in this world, He has built our homes to last for eternity. Our pets look to us almost in worship and we return with praise for them; We worship God because He is our savior, because He is with us always and never turns His back on us. Our pets depend on us to always be there for them and we are there for them.

We might turn our backs on our pets but they continue to love us unconditionally, but God never turns His back on us; so our roles are reversed. When our days are bad our pets seem to sense it and are right there for us, just as God is there to comfort us and hear our every concern.

We don't condemn our pets when they make a mistake and Jesus doesn't condemn us when we turn from Him or go the wrong path. Jesus loves us any way, just as when our pup makes a mistake on the floor. Always loving, always there.