

REFLECTIONS

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My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:12-13

Lessons from Cats and Dogs

Stop, Look, and Listen. Those were some of the first words we learned from a first grade reader. They are also a lesson of life that we often fail to heed. So it was a refreshing adventure when Janice and I studied a book with our granddaughter, Lindsey. The book was about living the blessings of each day, and on one particular day it led us to stop, look and listen to life lessons we can learn from cats and dogs.

Our cat is an example. Fredrick has been around our home for a number of years now, so he is a part of our family. But Fredrick, like other cats, is really into self-care. He meows for everything he wants. He meows when he wants the door opened; he meows when he is hungry; he meows sometimes just because he is not happy. He is not obedient to our commands; rather he approaches life on his own terms. But at the end of each day, Fredrick snuggles up to one of us looking for our affection. And when he receives it, he purrs himself to sleep.

Then there was Winston, a little Yorkshire terrier we had for many years. He was a part of our family too. As we stop, look and listen fondly to our memories of him, Winston was all about giving. His entire life was dedicated to pleasing us. He came when we called, stayed on command, and obeyed the boundaries around the house that we set for him. Winston approached life to obey his master. Yet like Fredrick, at the end of each day he would snuggle up to one of us in a show of affection; and he received ours too.

The study with Lindsey led us to stop for a moment to look and to listen to the life lessons from cats and dogs. We discovered some of their distinctive qualities in ourselves and in those around us. Far too often we find ourselves going through life like Fredrick, living life on our own terms. And sometimes we follow the command of our Master to give our lives for others like Winston did. But we also discovered something else.

At the end of the day we can snuggle up to the Master and be assured of his love whether we have followed the ways of Fredrick or Winston.

The Master gave his life for both—and there is no greater love.

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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