

I love my dog. She is well cared for, fed, protected, maybe a little spoiled and enjoys my attention and abundant affection. Being passionate about the Bible and following Christ, I decided to see what God said about dogs.

Yikes, not very flattering. Apparently, dogs were not appreciated then as they are today. Bible passages associate them with the worst of the worst, and definitely not a hint of them as pets. We are told to care for animals as part of creation, so what about the idea of pets in general?

There is a passage that hints that this is not an unknown, nor even strange, thing. Nathan the prophet, in rebuking David, tells him a story.

The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. 2 Samuel 12:2-4

Now that's a passage I can relate to. And David didn't think it was strange. In fact, he responded in anger that a rich man had taken this poor man's lamb for dinner. The guy with the pet is the good guy in the Biblical story. Here is an example of man with limited means, showing compassion and care for God's creature, and received affection from it in return.

We have learned to appreciate dogs, for their loyalty, work, and companionship. They bring comfort to the hurting, teach trust to the betrayed and play to the young at heart. They are one of God's beautiful creatures and a gift for so many of us. We find ourselves learning to express mercy through shelters and rescues, patience with training and selflessness in caring for something outside of our self. Let's hope we can remember to treat our fellow people, all made in God's image, with as much love and care as we treat our pets.

Oh, and by the way Caleb (who's name means dog) was one of the early heroes of faith in conquering the Promised Land. Either his parents weren't thrilled about him, or (tongue planted firmly in cheek) they were ahead of their time and recognized the good attributes of "man's best friend." Either way, God worked mightily through a man named Dog.

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