

*Another dog day lesson*

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I was going through some old photos on my computer and found some buried treasure. Actually, they were pictures of my dog Pepper when she was just a pup and smaller than the size of my foot. My heart warmed as I saw her with rabbit ears which her face has now grown into and the excited look she has always had just hanging out with me.

Over the last three years, she has changed in some ways and has stayed the same in others. If you had told me that my semi-hyper dog would adopt a kitten to play with and to protect, I would never have believed it. It has happened.

Another thing has also happened. I used to find it amusing that many pets and pet owners start to look and act alike after a certain amount of time. I recently came face to face with the reality that although my dog and I don't share some of the same physical attributes, we do have some of the same personality quirks.

While on vacation in North Georgia, I bought a large watermelon which we put in the cold trout stream to cool down. When we went to retrieve it during the heat of the next day, the watermelon was gone. It had rained during the night, and the watermelon had become dislodged. We found it downstream at the base of a steep drop off.

We sent my young and agile nephew down the steep bank to retrieve the watermelon, and Pepper decided to go down with him. I grabbed the watermelon as it was lifted up and then gave a hand to help my nephew up. Pepper tried to go up the steep bank, but didn't make it. Then she tried swimming across the stream, but the current keep sweeping her further downstream. She was stuck in the small bend of the river and was trying again and again to get footing to get out.

Seeing my dog struggling, I called to her, but she didn't respond. So, I went down the bank into the water to help her. She was so caught up in her situation that she still didn't come to my calls. She had already tried to go up the bank and had failed. I was wading in water that she would have to swim in to get to me. She was trying to do it on her own, and did not trust to go into the deep for me to help her out. Running out of options, she finally got close enough that I was able to get a hold of her and give her a boost up the bank. Where she had failed before on her own efforts, she was successful when she let her master help her up.

Upon reflection, I saw myself in her actions in my relationship with my Master. Often when I get in a jam or a tough situation, I try to get out of it all by myself with my own efforts. I don't always use all of the resources or people God has made available to help me up and out. I can imagine God's frustration in calling to me, reaching out to me, trying to show me the way out from His higher perspective, while I struggle in the currents that are rushing at me, threatening to sweep me away. Knowing my relief and joy, I can imagine His relief and joy when I finally let go and let God, and use those resources and people He has blessed me with to help lift me up to higher ground.

Lord, help me to not be so caught up in my situation that I don't respond to Your voice. Help me to remember that I'm not alone and that I don't need to do it all myself.