

On Dogs and Cats

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For several years, we have had dogs and cats as family pets, giving me an opportunity to observe both of these animals quite closely. Moreover, I have been observant of dogs and cats that belong to others and have generally found them to have rather well-defined traits common to their respective species.

It is no accident that the dog is called “man’s best friend.” Most dogs are eager to please their masters. Dogs are almost always very responsive to any friendly overtures from humans. I believe it is no exaggeration to say that dogs enjoy the presence of their masters and generally try to be obedient to them. It is also observable that most dogs are happy creatures.

Cats can be very warm and friendly, but this is not their constant disposition. As often as not, when a hand is extended to pet them, especially if that of a stranger, they will slap at it rather than purr. Cats are independent, even haughty. They care not for the will of their masters, but for their own will. They are “free spirits” that cannot stand to be held down or restrained.

It occurs to me that dogs and cats are illustrative of types of people and the way they respond to God. There are those who are very responsive to their Master and His word. They are most eager to please their Master in every possible way. If the Lord told them to “fetch a stick” they would gladly comply without question because they want to please the One who provides their every physical and spiritual need. Such a person loves to be in the presence of his Master and will never ever be heard to ask, “Do I have to attend Bible school and worship every time?” Neither do such individuals question what their Master commands, whether it be baptism, generous giving, soul-winning, practicing church discipline or any other requirement. These people are happy people because they are right with God and with the whole world.

Then there are the “cat people.” They can be sweet as sugar but do something that upsets them, and they come at you with all fangs bared. Even intended acts of help or kindness will sometimes set them off. They will do the will of the Master as long as it suits them, but when it doesn’t, they go their own willful way. They never learn the meaning of restraint or discipline and are willing to risk their own souls rather than be “tied down.”

Are you a “cat” or a “dog”?

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, April 29, 1982, of which I was editor.]

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