



CHURCH OF GOD BANNER



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THE OLD MAN AND THE DOG

by Catherine Moore

"Watch out! You nearly broad sided that car!" My father yelled at me. "Can't you do anything right?"

Those words hurt worse than blows. I turned my head toward the elderly man in the seat beside me, daring me to challenge him. A lump rose in my throat as I averted my eyes. I wasn't prepared for another battle.

"I saw the car, Dad. Please don't yell at me when I'm driving." My voice was measured and steady, sounding far calmer than I really felt.

Dad glared at me, then turned away and settled back. At home I left Dad in front of the television and went outside to collect my thoughts. Dark, heavy clouds hung in the air with a promise of rain. The rumble of distant thunder seemed to echo my inner turmoil. What could I do about him?

Dad had been a lumberjack in Washington and Oregon . He had enjoyed being outdoors and had reveled in pitting his strength against the forces of nature. He had entered grueling lumberjack competitions, and had placed often. The shelves in his house were filled with trophies that attested to his prowess.

The years marched on relentlessly. The first time he couldn't

lift a heavy log, he joked about it; but later that same day I saw him outside alone, straining to lift it. He became irritable whenever anyone teased him about his advancing age, or when he couldn't do something he had done as a younger man.

Four days after his sixty-seventh birthday, he had a heart attack. An ambulance sped him



to the hospital while a paramedic administered CPR to keep blood and oxygen flowing. At the hospital, Dad was rushed into an operating room. He was lucky; he survived.

But something inside Dad died. His zest for life was gone. He obstinately refused to follow doctor's orders. Suggestions and offers of help were turned aside with sarcasm and insults. The number of visitors thinned, then finally stopped altogether. Dad was left alone.

My husband, Dick, and I asked Dad to come live with us on our small farm. We hoped the fresh air and rustic atmosphere would help him adjust. Within a week after he moved in, I regretted the invitation. It seemed nothing was satisfactory. He criticized every-

thing I did. I became frustrated and moody. Soon I was taking my pent-up anger out on Dick. We began to bicker and argue. Alarmed, Dick sought out our pastor and explained the situation. The clergyman set up weekly counseling appointments for us. At the close of each session he prayed, asking God to soothe Dad's troubled mind. But the months wore on and God was silent.

Something had to be done and it was up to me to do it.

The next day I sat down with the phone book and methodically called each of the mental health clinics listed in the Yellow Pages. I explained my problem to each of the sympathetic voices that answered. In vain. Just when I was giving up hope, one of the voices suddenly exclaimed, "I just read something that might help you! Let me go get the article." I listened as she read. The article described a remarkable study done at a nursing home. All of the patients were under treatment for chronic depression. Yet their attitudes had improved dramatically when they were given responsibility for a dog.

I drove to the animal shelter that afternoon. After I filled out a questionnaire, a uniformed officer led me to the kennels. The odor of disinfectant stung my nostrils as I moved down the row of pens. Each contained five to seven dogs. Long-haired dogs, curly-haired dogs, black dogs, spotted dogs, all jumped up, try-

Continued on next page.

THE OLD MAN AND THE DOG

ing to reach me. I studied each one but rejected one after the other for various reasons, too big, too small, too much hair.

As I neared the last pen a dog in the shadows of the far corner struggled to his feet, walked to the front of the run and sat down. It was a pointer, one of the dog world's aristocrats.

But this was a caricature of the breed. Years had etched his face and muzzle with shades of gray. His hip-



bones jutted out in lopsided triangles. But it was his eyes that caught and held my attention. Calm and clear, they beheld me unwaveringly.

I pointed to the dog. "Can you tell me about him?" The officer looked, then shook his head in puzzlement. "He's a funny one. Appeared out of nowhere and sat in front of the gate. We brought him in, figuring someone would be right down to claim him. That was two weeks ago and we've heard nothing. His time is up tomorrow." He gestured helplessly.

As the words sank in I turned to the man in horror. "You mean you're going to kill him?"

"Ma'am," he said gently, "that's our policy. We don't have room for every unclaimed dog."

I looked at the pointer again. The calm brown eyes awaited my decision. "I'll take him," I said.

I drove home with the dog on the front seat beside me. When I reached the house I honked the horn twice. I was helping my prize out of the car when Dad shuffled onto the front porch.

"Ta-da! Look what I got for you,

Dad!" I said excitedly.

Dad looked, then wrinkled his face in disgust. "If I had wanted a dog I would have gotten one. And I would have picked out a better specimen than that bag of bones. Keep it! I don't want it." Dad waved his arm scornfully and turned back toward the house.

Anger rose inside me. It squeezed together my throat muscles and pounded into my temples. "You'd better get used to him, Dad. He's staying!" Dad ignored me. "Did you hear me,

Dad?" I screamed. At those words Dad whirled angrily, his hands clenched at his sides, his eyes narrowed and blazing with hate.

We stood glaring at each other like duelists, when suddenly the pointer pulled free from my grasp. He wobbled toward my dad and sat down in front of him. Then slowly, carefully, he raised his paw.

Dad's lower jaw trembled as he stared at the uplifted paw. Confusion replaced the anger in his eyes. The pointer waited patiently. Then Dad was on his knees hugging the animal.

It was the beginning of a warm and intimate friendship. Dad named the pointer Cheyenne. Together he and Cheyenne explored the community. They spent long hours walking down dusty lanes. They spent reflective moments on the banks of streams, angling for tasty trout. They even started to attend Sunday services together, Dad sitting in a pew and Cheyenne lying quietly at his feet.

Dad and Cheyenne were inseparable throughout the next three years. Dad's bitterness faded, and he and Cheyenne made many

friends. Then late one night I was startled to feel Cheyenne's cold nose burrowing through our bed covers. He had never before come into our bedroom at night. I woke Dick, put on my robe and ran into my father's room. Dad lay in his bed, his face serene. But his spirit had left quietly sometime during the night.

Two days later my shock and grief deepened when I discovered Cheyenne lying dead beside Dad's bed. I wrapped his still form in the rag rug he had slept on. As Dick and I buried him near a favorite fishing hole, I silently thanked the dog for the help he had given me in restoring Dad's peace of mind.

The morning of Dad's funeral dawned overcast and dreary. This day looks like the way I feel, I thought, as I walked down the aisle to the pews reserved for family. I was surprised to see the many friends Dad and Cheyenne had made filling the church. The pastor began his eulogy. It was a tribute to both Dad and the dog who had changed his life. And then the pastor turned to **Hebrews 13:2**. "*Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.*" "I've often thanked God for sending that angel," he said. For me, the past dropped into place, completing a puzzle that I had not seen before: the sympathetic voice that had just read the right article... Cheyenne's unexpected appearance at the animal shelter. . .his calm acceptance and complete devotion to my father. . .and the proximity of their deaths. And suddenly I understood. I knew that God had answered my prayers after all.

◆ Received from James Sparks

You should keep your words soft and sweet in case you have to eat them.

The 10 commandments are not multiple choices.

ALASKA'S HAPPENINGS

CHURCH EVENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM
MORNING WORSHIP 11:00 AM

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TUESDAYS

KID'S CLUB
3:30 — 4:30 PM

~
WEDNESDAYS

BIBLE STUDY RESUMES
7:00 PM

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
9:00 AM

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VALENTINE BANQUET
1:00 PM

~
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10

COOKS HILL MANOR
REST HOME SERVICE
2:00 PM

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16

MEN'S BREAKFAST
7:00 AM

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17

FOOD BANK SUNDAY

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23

ALL SKATE & PIZZA
12:00 NOON - 4:00 PM

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 29

ALL CHURCH GAME NIGHT
6:30 PM

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

**THURSDAYS,
FEBRUARY 7 & 28**

HAM RADIO CLASS
6:00 PM

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14

AMERICAN LEGION 40 & 8
6:00 PM

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16

SCRAPBOOKING
10:00 AM 6:00 PM

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**WEDNESDAY,
FEBRUARY 20**

SENIORS ON THE GO
12:00 NOON

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21

AMERICAN LEGION
AUXILIARY
1:00 PM

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AMERICAN LEGION
7:00

PNA EVENTS

**SATURDAY - MONDAY
FEBRUARY 16 - 18**

YOUTH WINTER RETREAT
@
DOUBLE K

MORE POLICIAL CORRECT HEADLINES

On the birth of Christ:
**HOTELS FULL, ANIMALS
EJECTED FROM SHELTER**
*Animal Rights Advocates Enraged
by Insensitive Couple*

~
On feeding the 5,000:
**LAY PREACHER STEALS
CHILD'S LUNCH**
Disciples Mystified Over Behavior

~
On healing of the demon-
possessed man in Gadarenes:
MADMAN CAUSES STAMPEDE
*Local Farmer Faces Bankruptcy
After Loss of Hogs*

VALENTINE BANQUET

There will be an Valentine Banquet on Saturday, February 9 in the church Fellowship Hall. This is opened to any and all who would like to attend. We will be passing a sign-up sheet around the next two Sundays in order to get a headcount so we will know how much to prepare for. You may also call the Church office at 978-4161. Bring your spouse, neighbors and friends and enjoy a great meal and wonderful fellowship. There will be no charge for the banquet but for those who would like, we will accept donations for the new Fellowship Hall.



CHARLES SCHULTZ PHILOSOPHY

The following is the philosophy of Charles Schultz, the creator of the "Peanuts" comic strip.

You don't have to actually answer the questions.

Just read the e-mail straight through, and you'll get the point.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America Contest.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday.

These are no second-rate achievers.

They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish.

Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worth while.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreci-

ated and special.

5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier?

The lesson: The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards.

They are the ones that care.

Pass this on to those people who have made a difference in your life.

◆ Received from Katie Jackson

DOES PRAYER CHANGE THINGS?



They say that prayer changes things, but does it REALLY change anything?

Oh yes! It really does!

Does prayer change your present situation or sudden circumstances?

No, not always, but it does change the way you look at those events.

Does prayer change your financial future?

No, not always, but it does change who you look to for meeting your daily needs.

Does prayer change shattered hearts or broken bodies?

No, not always, but it will change your source of strength and comfort.

Does prayer change your wants and desires?

No, not always, but it will change your wants into what God desires!

Does prayer change how you view the world?

No, not always, but it will change whose eyes you see the world through.

Does prayer change your regrets from the past?

No, not always, but it will change your hopes for the future!

Does prayer change the people around you?

No, not always, but it will change you – the problem isn't always in others.

Does prayer change your life in ways you can't explain?

Oh, yes, always! And it will change you from the inside out!

So does prayer REALLY change ANYTHING?

Yes! It REALLY does change EVERYTHING!

◆ Received from Joe & Freda Downs

ALASKAN CLYDESDALE

Only in Alaska. This guy raised an abandoned moose calf with his horses, and believe it or not, he has trained it for lumber removal and other hauling tasks. Given the 2,000 pounds of robust muscle, and the splayed, gripping hooves, he claims it is the best work animal he has. He says the secret to keeping the moose around is a sweet salt lick, although during the rut he disappears for a couple of weeks, but always comes home.... impressive!

◆ Received from Jude Cooper



DOG TIRED

An old, tired-looking dog wandered into the yard. I could tell from his collar and well-fed belly that he had a home.

He followed me into the house, down the hall, and fell asleep in a corner. An hour later, he went to the door, and I let him out. The



next day he was back, resumed his position in the hall, and slept for an hour. This continued for several

weeks. Curious, I pinned a note to his collar: "Every

afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap."

The next day he arrived with a different note pinned to his collar: "He lives in a home with ten children -- he's trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?"

◆ Received by Eva Dean Stone



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Last month my sister, Katie Jackson, was the only one to come up with the correct answer to last month's quiz. The answer is found in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke. It was the

priest who performed Jesus' circumcision.

Here is this month's quiz.

*There was a queen who had her say,
And wanted to put all the prophets away.
But I was smart and hid each man,
So they could not be found within the land.*

There was one prophet she really wanted dead.

She sent many out to bring back his head.

I saw him one day in the desert alone.

And I told the king just where he called home.

The king went out to meet him in the desert so dry.

And while he was there eight hundred fifty men had to die.

They prayed and they cried as hard as they could.

But when they got through their god heard not a word.

But the prophet of God prayed just 63 words,

Which the God of the heavens quickly heard.

God sent down the answer when the prophet did cry.

And all of the altar was quickly fried.

Now name me that great prophet of old.

The name of King & his queen of the story I told.

Give me my name if you think you can.

And maybe a candy bar the pastor will place in your hand.

DO NOT TALK TO MY PARROT

Wanda's dishwasher quit working so she called a repairman. Since

she had to go to work the next day, she told the repairman, "I'll leave the key under the mat. Fix the dishwasher, leave the bill on the counter, and I'll mail you a check."

"Oh, by the way don't worry about my dog Spike. He won't bother you. But, whatever you do, do **NOT**, under **ANY** circumstances, talk to my parrot!" **"I REPEAT; DO NOT TALK TO MY PARROT!!!"**

When the repairman arrived at Wanda's apartment the following day, he discovered the biggest, meanest looking dog he has ever seen. But, just as she had said, the dog just lay there on the carpet watching the repairman go about his work. The parrot, however, drove him nuts the whole time with his incessant yelling, screeching, and name calling. Finally the repairman couldn't contain himself any longer and yelled, "Shut up, you stupid, ugly bird!"

To which the parrot replied, "Get him, Spike!"

PLANNING AHEAD



A minister waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant

worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him in front of the service station. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump.

"Reverend," said the young man, "sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip."

The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business."