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Lessons From Bear

By Teresa Hampton

Recently we were faced with a heartbreaking decision. We had no idea that the small puppy we adopted two years before would grow to be a large ninety pound friend. With my disability, it became clear that his care was more than I could manage. So, we found a loving couple with a son. The young man was waiting for his second kidney transplant. He wanted a dog of his own. It was a perfect home for our Bear.

Of course, it broke our hearts to see him go. Over the the next few days Gary and I found ourselves talking about lessons we learned from Bear and how they relate to our Christian walk:

- He was loyal/faithful to his owner. Jesus is *our* owner. He bought us with his precious blood (1 Corinthians 6:20), and urges us to be faithful to Him unto death (Revelation 2:10).
- He greeted every morning with excitement. We would do well to likewise approach every new day. David wrote, *This is the day the Lord has made; I will rejoice and be glad in it* (Psalm 118:24).
- He was content with little things. Give him a chew toy and he would gnaw for hours. *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have* (Hebrews 13:5a). *Now godliness with contentment is great gain* (1 Timothy 6:6).
- He was noticeably gentle with me, perceiving my needs. Christians are to be *kind to one another, tenderhearted* (Ephesians 4:32). Additionally, we will be judged in the last day based on how we responded to those in need (Matthew 25:31-46).
- He valued time with his master. He savored every moment, whether playing, walking, or lounging. Jesus is *our* Master. Time spent with Him in studying the Bible and in prayer reflects how much we value Him.

The two years we had with Bear were very special. We were able to teach him many things. He, in turn, reminded us of these valuable spiritual lessons!

Today's Verse: *For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.* (Matthew 25:35).

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