

Cats and Dogs

I have two dogs and two cats. At times, they get along with each other and will play together, then at other times the cats want nothing to do with the dogs. They are such different animals, but both are my responsibility to feed and care for.

My cat Max is a complex creature. I can call his name and he ignores me, pretends like I'm not even speaking to him. I have to say his name over and over to even get him to look my way, and don't even think he is going to come to me. If I happen to walk over to pet him and he doesn't need anything from me, well forget that, he will simply give me that "you're getting on my last nerve look" and walk off. He might decide he wants some affection from me, but it has to be on his terms. He will come to me when he needs something, but he never asks me nicely, he makes demands. He demands to be let out, demands me to feed him; it is like he's giving me the privilege of serving him. There are times he tries to show me his love by killing a bird, squirrel or rodent and leaving it on the front doorstep for me to clean up. He has no idea how much it makes my skin crawl to see that poor shredded animal laying there dead and knowing that if it isn't cleaned up it's going to start to stink. Most of the time, he only tolerates me. Probably because I am the one in the freezing winter who remembers he's outside in the cold. When he hears me call, he will come running until he has reached the yard, then he will slow down and walk ever so slowly to the door, he doesn't want to seem overly excited about me doing him a favor. He really believes he calls all the shots. He thinks he's the master and I am the pet.

My dog, Pressley, however is devoted to me. When he is downstairs sleeping and I call his name I can hear his tags jingling as he comes running up the stairs excited I want to see him. He follows me around the house looking for opportunities to get my love and affection. There are times when he is laying on my bed and I make eye contact with him; it makes him so happy to know that I've noticed him. All I have to do to see that little tail wag and wiggle is to say his name. He begs me for my attention and he will sit with me as long as I am paying attention to him. He will come to me and sit and look in my eyes craving me to pet him and talk to him. He knows that I will feed him and play with him. He knows I will take good care of him and I love him. He also knows I enjoy his company. He understands I am his master is and this makes him happy. He's the one I take for car rides and neighborhood walks.

Watching my pets and their reactions to me got me to thinking about Mary and Martha. Mary would sit at Jesus' feet hanging out with Him, happy to be in the same room with Him. Martha, however, didn't have time to sit idly by and chat with Him. She had to fix Him a sandwich He didn't ask for. I kind of see Martha as a "cat woman" which then led me think about how many times I have acted like a "cat" Christian. There have been times when I only wanted Jesus when I needed something from Him. There were days when I would try to show Him my love by trying to give Him something He really didn't want to begin with, such as working myself silly in church and giving all my time to doing, instead of being. How many times have I started out running to Jesus only to hit the brakes and slow down, if I act too excited

about Him, what kind of freak would I look like? There have been times when He has called my name and asked me to do something for Him and I ignored Him, pretending not to hear Him. I have shut Him out when I felt He was trying to get too close and I did not want to be bothered. I have even placed demands on Him, thinking I knew better than He did. I tried to master Jesus instead of letting Him master me. There have been seasons in my life when I only went to Him when I wanted or needed something. I had that “cat” mentality.

It wasn't until I began to really understand how great Jesus' love for me is that I felt comfortable sitting at His feet and getting to know Him. This was when I started shedding my feline instincts and allowed Him to “master” me. It's still a process, but I know when He calls my name now, more often than not, I will respond. I love being with Him. I also realize, that yes, Jesus does know what's best for me and He will care and provide for me. I can see no matter which path I choose, I belong to Jesus. I have the choice to receive His love and affection on a daily basis or to only go to Him in need. I know whichever choice I make doesn't change how He feels about me at all. I can live this life knowing about Him and being disconnected to Him or I can choose to be His best friend. That's the beauty of who He is. He has given me the choice and He allows me to live by my choices. I am choosing to journey with Him as His devoted companion, because I know life is so much simpler when I allow Jesus to take the lead.

I would love to hear from you at mdorris@iggm.org