



Pedagogy from a Corgi^(Part 1)

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I often marvel that God made the world creatively enough to have pets. They supply seemingly endless hours of entertainment. They are loyal (usually). And they provide a comforting companionship, even on emotionally draining days.

For many the chief of pets is the dog. And for me, the chief dog in my household is my Pembroke Welch Corgi. Everyone is partial to their own dogs. At any given time, I will hear dog-owners delivering uncompromising truths about dog-ownership that would rival the local priest's own dogmatism. Even before we received our dog, the endlessly free 'advice,' which often contradicted another's, was available to us.

Apart from dog owners, our Corgi, Lady Lucia, has taught me new ways to see the world. Even in Scripture we find examples of watching animals and discovering truths. I am reminded of Solomon's wisdom in his observation of ants—the need to be

diligent lest poverty come. Or the metaphor gained in the eagle—the speed at which riches can disappear. Or the example of the ox—the strength needed to gather the harvest. In all of these reminders I take liberty to see what God has presented me in these ordinary days with my dog.

Lucia's eyes are eager when she catches her breath at the open gate. A whole world lies beyond a few planks of wood. She knows little about that world, apart from the trails we pathfind on our walks. She knows the distant sounds of barking and the peek of wide stretches beyond the yard.

If she were a person, I wonder how often she would reflect on the goodness of home. Food is always available at meal times. The yard is expansive enough for a hearty run. Even the cats come by for an occasional romp. The fence keeps the predators out—coyotes are known to prowl in these parts. And, best of all, her owners dance about with squeaky toys and scratch behind her ears. But her little dog self, from what I perceive, reflects little on the good life within the gate.

Her attention is on the unknown—the wilderness of asphalt and machine. When the gate is left open or a

hole is dug under the fence, she is quick to flee. When she sprints under my watchful eye, I hurry and shout after her, preventing her from the oncoming traffic and gathering her to the safe backyard. After my eloquent stern tone of rebuke, she trots around the yard again, barking at birds, and lapping from her water bowl.

The perspective switch to see the world through her eyes allows me to look again at my world through my eyes. There is much that is unknown about the wilderness beyond. Yet God's has spoken in his Word about the boundary lines of reality. He has told us of the dangerous places. He reminds us of the safety within his backyard, and the desolation that comes from beyond the border. How often do I gaze into the wild, holding onto empty wishes, simply because I've lost the gratitude and wonder of the shelter of God's good places? How often does God shout while I wander off?

Unlike my near-sightedness over Lucia, the Psalmist tells us that there is no place we can go that escapes the eyes of God (Psalm 139). No matter where we are, He is already there. He meets us in the remotest of places, even places where we've tried making the garden of our lives out of asphalt and machine. He

does this, not so that we will grow used to the wilderness, but so that He can bring us home.

Even today, in what areas of our lives are we wandering off? No matter where we are, our good depends on heeding the Master and following Him all the way home.

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