



FEED THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER

by Ron Story
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As empty nesters, the other occupants of the home Peggy and I live in are two dogs ... Sherlock, a 95-pound Labradoodle, and Sweet Pea, a 70-pound Golden Retriever. During the day, they are Peg's primary companions, following her throughout her day. They are her two best friends, and my part is to walk and feed them. At 6:00 a.m. each morning and 5:00 p.m. each evening, Sherlock and Sweet Pea find me and sit and stare at me until I feed them. I'm not sure how Peggy taught them to read the clock, but their timing is spot on! After I fill their bowls, they sit patiently and wait as I pray. I thank God for the day and His blessings, asking for His favor for family and other needs, sometimes slipping in the missionaries. There is a sudden excitement when I say, "In Jesus' name;" they stand up, and as I say, "Amen," their heads are in their food bowls ... just like teenage boys!

This feeding routine reminds me of an old story about a Native American Indian who described his life as two dogs fighting. One was a wolf, the other a Golden Retriever. When the wolf won the fight, the Indian found himself acting badly, operating selfishly, often impure, immoral, with anger striking out at others, causing friction and division. When the Golden Retriever won the fight, the man's attitude and character would be more loving, unselfish, kind, gentle, and thoughtful, setting aside selfish impulses for the good of others. When asked what determined which animal wins the fight, his response was, "Whichever one I feed the most!"

Hopefully, you recognize that this illustration represents the battle between our natural selfish sin nature and, as believers, the Holy Spirit's presence and empowerment we

receive when we repent and put our faith in Jesus. (Galatians 5:16-25) We continually struggle with whether we think, say, and do our own self-centered thing or yield to what we know to be what thoughts, speech, and actions represent Jesus and are pleasing to God. Ultimately the deciding factor in this battle is "Whichever one we feed the most!"

All through the day, the world around us feeds the wolf! The environment, the culture, the media, the people, and what we view and hear is primarily feeding the "me first" nature. Take care of yourself, love yourself, claim your rights... you deserve to be happy. The primary message is that "You" are what is most important; you are the God worthy of worship. The wolf finds food everywhere!

On the other hand, to feed the Golden Retriever, we must be intentional. That food is not as readily available. We must make time each day to read and study God's Word and schedule time for personal prayer and worship with our Lord. We must intentionally carve out time in our busy schedules to plug into opportunities for fellowship with other believers to further feed our faith. This is why God's Word says in Hebrews 10:24-25, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

Fellow Christian Warriors, in this raging battle with all the ungodliness and wolves surrounding us, be sure you FEED THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER!