

Holding It All Together

by Amy McCollom



Our Dogs

Do you trust your dog? Do you think your dog is a good judge of character? Have there been people that your dog just has not liked and it's given you pause, and made you question that person's character and moral qualities? Most people who I have asked those questions have replied YES. People believe their dogs can tell good people from bad people. Are they right?

Science says yes. Dogs don't like liars. A team of researchers led by Akiko Takaoka of Kyoto University in Japan conducted a study which found that dogs know if you are to be believed or not. In the study, dogs were tricked, in the name of science, to believe a trainer was going to give them a treat. But when the trainer lied about the treat after a few attempts, the dogs no longer believed the trainer at all and ignored their commands. A second trainer then worked with the dogs and DID give them the treat, teaching the dogs that they could trust them. The dogs favored the trainers they could always trust and disregarded the trainers who had lied to them.

Apparently it doesn't take dogs as long as humans to realize they are being lied to. I wonder why that is? Are humans more kind

and willing to give second chances to people who have lied to them? Or are humans just less willing to admit to themselves the truth that is before them; that they have been lied to and now must make a decision based on that reality?

The dog is man's best friend for a reason. We trust our dogs. We welcome them into our families, give them rights and privileges that not even other humans are allowed to have. And we love them like our own children. We nurture them, talk to them, care for them, and confide in them. Dogs are a huge part of being an American.

So how many dogs live in the U.S.? According to the latest statistics from www.worldatlas.com, 75.8 million doggos reside in the United States. That is a whole lot of truthful barking opinions there!

With a dog's keen sense of lie detection and a nose for bad character finding, don't you wish your dog could talk to you? Dads wouldn't have to be cleaning their shotgun when being introduced to their daughter's boyfriend for the first time, if Fido was sitting on the couch ready to ask his own set of questions. There would be fewer arguments at bedtime if the dog could tell you which child didn't brush their teeth, had comic

books hidden under their pillow, or saw who started the pillow fight.

And don't even get me started about voting. As if there are any politicians left that aren't liars, but what if Bowser could sniff out the best candidate just by looking at him? Or even give us a clue who to avoid voting in. Wouldn't that be something? We just might have a chance to turn this country around! Gee, dogs really are man's best friend.

I read once that dogs DO speak, but only to those who know how to listen. If you have never looked into the eyes of a dog and seen a loving soul, I am sad for you. A dog offers everything to please you; a true teacher of humility and humbleness, faithfulness, devotion, love.

Somewhere the grass is always green, and good dogs romp and play, and listen for that familiar whistle or voice in the distance. Yes, I do believe in Doggy Heaven, for there is nothing I have found on this earth that is as close to perfect as the love between a dog and its human. That kind of love can only come from God, and what God makes, He keeps. God bless all the dogs, here and in the great beyond. And comfort the hearts of those who have lost their tail-wagging best friends. Until we meet again.

Hook, Line and Sinker



With Tony Hooker

Unintended consequences

The pages of history are rife with examples of unintended consequences. Some have been for the positive, but many more have been of the negative variety. As early as the late 1600's, John Locke used his theory of unintended consequences to argue against lowering targeted interest rates in the finance industry. "It will make the Difficulty of Borrowing and Lending much greater. It will be a Prejudice to none but those who most need Assistance and Help, I mean Widows and Orphans, and others uninstructed in the Arts and Managements of more skillful Men." "It will mightily encrease the Advantage of Bankers and Scriveners, and other such expert Brokers," and finally "That it is likely to cause great Perjury in the Nation; a Crime, than which nothing is more carefully to be prevented by Lawmakers, not only by Penalties, that shall attend apparent and proved Perjury; but by avoiding and lessening, as much as may be, the Temptations to it." Sounds like old John was a pretty smart dude.

More recently, Barbra Streisand once sued a photographer for publishing a photo of her house online. Before the

lawsuit, it had been viewed exactly six times, and two of those viewings were by her attorneys, but because of the publicity the lawsuit drew, it ended up being viewed over 400,000 times. In fact, "the entire phenomenon of an attempt to hide, remove, or censor information that has the unintended consequence of increasing awareness of that information, often via the Internet," is now known as the "Streisand effect."

So, what does this rambling, incoherent prose have to do with life in Douglas County, you ask? Glad you did. You see, this weekend, I saw what I considered to be unintended consequences in action, right here in the river city. As most know, Saturday morning was city-wide cleanup day, and at 6 a.m., 8 shiny green and yellow Waste Management trucks roared into town and began collecting things from the curbside. What many might not know, however, is that on Friday night, some of the more entrepreneurial and thrifty types among us were cruising the streets, looking for treasures. In fact, I hadn't even finished hauling my rubbish to the curb before I was approached about the metal items I was

casting away, and they are sure to find themselves at a recycling center rather than a landfill, and that's a good thing. It was also comforting to me that folks were finding ways to repurpose items rather than let them be hauled to the dump. The EPA reports that in the US, we generated 294 million tons of Municipal Solid Waste in 2018, the last year I could find numbers. Of this, we were able to recycle or compost around 90 million tons, which is a respectable number, but not enough. If you do the math, Americans generated almost 5 pounds of MSW per day. Crazy right? I know, given the enormous numbers that I just quoted, that what we repurposed here in VG on Friday night isn't enough to make even a dent, but it felt good that we were able to do at least that much. Think about it. If everyone in the US reduced their MSW production by 1 pound per day, we could send 50 million fewer tons of waste to the landfill each year, which would be pretty cool. As for Friday night, there was something thrilling about finding something useful for free, and the fact that it was keeping it from the landfill was, in fact, an unintended consequence.

Pastor Stahl's Weekly Message of Faith

Hello Everyone!
Last Saturday night, we got a little bit of rain. That was a Blessing. We need more! We

told everyone at Countryside to bring an umbrella to Sunday morning worship. That is faith, carrying an umbrella in the midst of a drought! We pray to Almighty God that He Will Send the rain so our crops can survive. Lord, Hear our Prayers!

Back in Exodus, the children of Israel were out in the desert, thirsting for water. At that point, they felt that being slaves in Egypt was better than dying in the desert. Moses prayed to the Lord, Who Told Him, "Behold, I will stand before you on the rock in Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel." (Exodus 17:6) Moses prayed, and God Provided.

The Depression years were certainly no time to go into business. Ted and Dorothy purchased a little drug store, and were struggling to make ends meet. It was a hot and dry Summer, no Air Conditioning in 1931. Dorothy thought to herself, "What do I need right now that other people need too?" "Water!" She thought most of her friends and the community of Wall, South Dakota were thirsty too. Her husband Ted went 25 miles in each direction and put up signs that said: FREE ICE WATER AT

WALL DRUG STORE. Every few miles: "YOU ARE ONLY A FEW MILES AWAY FROM FREE ICE WATER."

Before Ted got back to the store, people were stopping in for free ice water, a tradition that continues to this day. Now lots of places give away free ice water, but Ted and Dorothy were the first to advertise it.

Our Lord Jesus Proclaimed that HE Was Living Water from Heaven, that the Refreshment He Gives is Eternal. He Offers us Living Water that will quench our thirst for eternity. Water is a powerful force in the Scriptures. The Spirit of God hovered over the water at the creation. Noah and the Ark were preserved from the world wide flood that wiped everything else out. Jesus Came to the Disciples Walking on the water. Peter even walked on the water for a few moments.

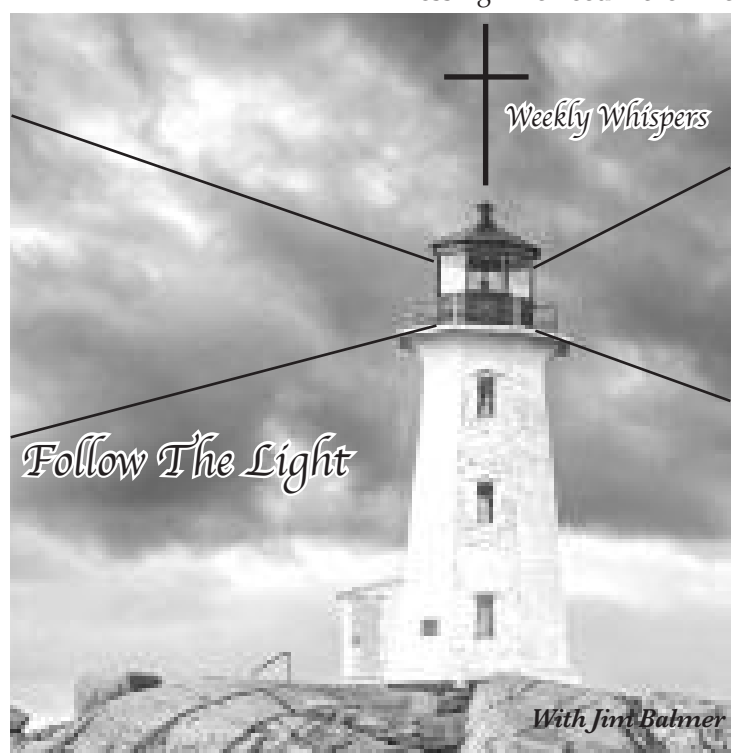
God Reaches out to us and Promises that if we trust in Him, He Will Quench our spiritual thirst.

Let us pray that God Will Bless us abundantly, and that He Will Pour out Heavenly Rain on each of us.

May God Richly Bless you!

Pastor Jeff Stahl

Countryside and Ogden United Methodist Churches



Proverbs 4:5-10
New International Version
5 Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them.
6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you.
7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom.

Though it cost all you have, [b] get understanding.
8 Cherish her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you.
9 She will give you a garland to grace your head and present you with a glorious crown."
10 Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many.

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