



faithful

100 DEVOTIONS INSPIRED BY DOGS

paws

Editors of All God's Creatures

Foreword

One of the joys of editing one of Guideposts' annual devotionals is working with the same writers year after year, hearing about their new discoveries, sharing their triumphs and their challenges as they move throughout the year. In this devotional made just for dog lovers, we've put together one hundred of our favorite devotions that feature our writers and their canine companions—the challenges, the lessons, and most of all, the love.

As you travel through the pages of this devotional, you'll meet some dogs in passing and follow others as they grow and learn along with their owners. We're especially excited to feature a series of devotions from Edward Grinnan, the editor in chief of *Guideposts* magazine, all centering on his special relationship with his golden retriever, Gracie.

But whether you read this book from beginning to end or just dip in when the mood strikes, we hope that you'll find as much joy and inspiration in reading this book as we did in putting it together.

Editors of *All God's Creatures*

Growing Pains

So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. . . . All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

—COLOSSIANS 1:9-10 (NLT)

My phone rang at work the other morning. My wife, Julee. She was close to tears.

“She destroyed another pillow,” Julee said. “There were feathers all over the living room. It looked like a hurricane hit a chicken coop.”

I knew how she felt. Among the items Gracie, our adorable young golden retriever, has gleefully masticated are a number of TV remotes. Just that weekend I spent half of my Saturday waiting for the cable guy to show up so he could replace two more remotes that Gracie had attacked.

Gracie is as sweet and playful a dog as you will ever meet. But left to her own devices (I know, I know), Gracie will gnaw on almost anything—remotes, phone chargers, credit cards, cell phones, rugs, gloves, a shower curtain.

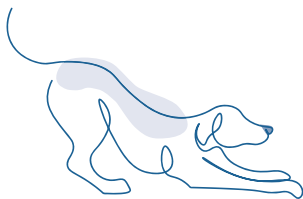
“When will she grow out of this?” Julee wailed before hanging up. I’d asked the Lord that same question, many times.

I got home that night and took Gracie to the park. I talk to my dogs, and I talked to her about my worries over her chewing. We found a bench and I invited her up. With a seventy-five-pound puppy sprawled across my lap, I sat there speaking and gesturing quite earnestly. Perhaps I looked crazy.

Suddenly, Gracie jumped up. I saw what she saw—one of those Styrofoam clamshell boxes that sandwiches come in. She tore off in its direction, me after her. All at once she veered away and fell upon a stick, taking it in her mouth and rolling happily on her back. A stick. This was progress! And a reminder: dogs do grow up eventually. We all do.

Edward Grinnan

*Father, just as You have helped me grow up
and out of temptation, I know You will guide
my pets because You love all creatures.*



Rescue or Puppy?

He gives food to every creature. His love endures forever.

—PSALM 136:25 (NIV)

It was an impossible choice: Adopt a rescue dog or pick out a puppy. At first, the answer had been clear. My husband, Brian, and I finally had a fenced-in backyard, and we could give a home to a dog in need. We monitored the rescue websites, waiting to find our perfect pup.

Finally, tired of waiting for direction or guidance, we headed to north Georgia, where one litter of puppies was ready to leave their mom. As we looked for the rural address, we got a call—a miracle, really, because we were in an area with little cell reception. It was the adoption agency telling us they had an eighteen-month-old golden retriever named Colby who was perfectly healthy, homeless, and ready to be loved. I told her we'd think about it as we pulled into the driveway of the puppies' house.

Brian and I spent the next hour surrounded by impossibly furry bundles of energy whose teeth were so small we couldn't even feel them gnawing on our shoes. We held them and snuggled them, and then we looked at each other and knew: these pups weren't for us.

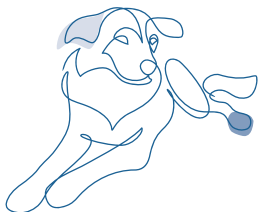
We hopped in the car and headed for Atlanta, where we found Colby waiting for us. When we walked into the room, he came over and sat down between us, as if he'd known he was ours all along.

As I often do, I had tried to rush God's plan. I had tried to force a puppy to fit into the hole in our family that had been made just right for Colby. God allowed me to follow my own path but then gently nudged me back.

As we packed Colby into the car and headed home, he crawled into my lap, and I knew that this decision—God's decision—had been right all along.

Ashley Kappel

*Lord, help us know when it's time to adopt—
and when it's time to wait.*



Ten-Year Prayer

***Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks
in all circumstances; for this is God's will
for you in Christ Jesus.***

—1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18 (NIV)

Time to give up praying, I told myself sadly. My prayers were for someone I loved very much. But after ten years, they were still unanswered.

Later that afternoon, a letter to the editor in the local paper caught my eye. “Time to take down the ‘Annie—Lost Dog’ posters. Annie is back home!” I could hardly believe the amazing news. I’d prayed for Annie for nearly a year because her stubborn and desperate owner had refused to stop looking for her and to take his ad out of the paper. The ad had described Annie as very shy and feeling lost in unfamiliar surroundings, and said that she had run away during a visit to the owner’s daughter in Athens, Georgia.

A few days later, the paper ran a full-length story with a picture of the black Labrador-retriever mix and her happy owner, who said he had simply refused to believe his dog wouldn’t be found. He’d returned to Athens on

weekends, walking the streets, calling for Annie late into the night, and sitting outside his daughter's home in thirteen-degree weather, hoping to get a glimpse of his pet. When the daughter begged her father to relinquish his hope of finding the dog and to begin the grieving process, he only intensified his prayers.

Ten full months after her disappearance, Annie was discovered, still wearing her identification tags, twenty-five miles from Athens. "I especially want to encourage others who have lost pets not to give up hope," Annie's ecstatic owner said.

Those last five words—not to give up hope—seemed to leap off the newspaper and land right in my heart. Laying the paper aside, I resumed my ten-year prayer.

Marion Bond West

Heavenly Father, help me draw my strength and hope from You as I face the trials of everyday life. Nothing is impossible in Your name. Amen.

