

Intimacy and Obedience

by Peter John Schrock

*God's closest friends are the ones
He has found the most trustworthy...*

“Koiny, come here, No!” Splash, a spotted dog plunged into the water. Eight year old Alex stood by the creek behind his house in dismay as one of his pets ignored him. “Holly, No!” the white dog stopped dead in her tracks, watching her pack member snorting, barking, and swimming in the cool water of the creek. “Dad, Koiny got into the water again.”

Alex’s dad was a little ways away, kneeling down to see a bug that looked like a twig. “Alex come here, you’ve got to see this!” his dad said with a little thrill in his voice. Alex darted forward through the dancing rays of light pouring out of the green leafy trees above. Coming to the place where his dad was, he knelt down and looked intently.

“What dad? I don’t see anything.”

“Wait,” his dad replied, “there, do you see it?” The bug started to move forward again. Alex’s eyes lit up with amazement.

“What is it?” he asked.

“It’s called a Walking Stick,” his father answered. A white head appeared over Alex’s shoulder as Holly gleefully looked to see what the excitement was about. Alex reached up and wrapped his arms around the dog’s neck and gave her a playful squeeze.

“Holly, you’re a good girl,” Alex’s dad said as he rubbed the dog’s head.

Suddenly, a galloping sound caught Alex’s ears. Turning around, he saw Koiny running to join them. The dog tried to press in near, but Alex pushed him away, “Get back, Koiny. You’re all wet.” Koiny sat down a little ways away as they watched the Walking Stick crawl over little twigs and leaves toward a towering tree and started to climb upward.

A bell rang off in the distance. “Okay Alex, that’s your mother, it’s time for dinner.” Alex and his Dad stood up

and dashed off toward their house with Holly and Koiny close at their heels. It was a Friday evening and tomorrow they were going to go for a short camping trip. Nevertheless, because it was so nice out Alex and his Dad had decided to go for a little walk to take a break from packing before they ate dinner. Now as they neared the small house, they could smell the aroma of steak being grilled.

“Come and get it while it’s hot!” Alex’s mom called out as she saw her men and dogs steadily approaching. They slowed their pace and surrounded the grill eager to enjoy the food before them. Holly sat down next to Alex, panting from the short run; clearly hoping to get some of the tasty morsels as well. Koiny, was still wet and in an attempt to dry off began to roll around on the ground.

Alex’s dad, motioned toward the grass saying, “Koiny... not in the dirt. Go over there where you won’t get all messy.” When the dog ignored his command, Alex’s dad took his foot and gently pushed him toward the grass. Koiny got up quickly and started to jump up playfully. He barked and darted back and forth. Holly started to join in, but Alex’s dad said, “No, Koiny!” However, Koiny ran over to Alex and jumped up putting his two dirty paws on Alex’s white shirt.

“No Koiny, stop!” Alex shouted in dismay. Holly sat down again, but Koiny ran off toward the green grass and laid down. They pulled the meat off the sizzling grill and opened the screen door to bring it inside. Once inside they sat at the small table and Holly sat on the floor next to Alex waiting to see what might fall from the table. “This is really good,” Alex exclaimed as he took his first bite of the tender juicy meat. But he was quickly interrupted by the sound of Koiny barking from the screen door just a few feet away from where they were sitting.

“Koiny, you can’t come in because you are all dirty,” Alex’s Mom responded. But Koiny just tilted his head to the side, not seeming to understand. After a few whim-

pers, Koiny laid down in front of the door. Just then, as Alex went to get a drink he bumped his plate and a few pieces of meat fell to the floor.

“Well, there you go Holly. Eat up.” Alex’s Dad smiled as Holly jumped for the opportunity to enjoy the food from the table.

When they had finished eating, Alex had asked if he could play with the dogs outside. His mom had told him, “yes” and so he had gotten a Frisbee and was throwing it as best he could for the dogs to fetch.

“Okay, Koiny here we go...” Alex said as he got ready to throw the Frisbee. Leaning back, he cocked his arm. With a great lunge, he launched the Frisbee in to the air. Koiny jumped with glee watching as the wobbling disk began to level out and hover away. With great precision, Koiny ran after it, sprung into the air catching it in his mouth, and landed on the ground continuing to run in one fluid motion. He circled back around and brought it to Alex who was over joyed to send it flying away again. Holly chased after Koiny and tried to jump to snatch the Frisbee out of the air, but Koiny gracefully grasped it in his mouth before Holly really had a chance. Holly just wasn’t able to out perform Koiny’s death defying leaps; but nevertheless, she diligently ran around chasing Koiny with each new throw.

After about an hour Alex’s dad called, “Alex, you need to come in.”

Alex looked at Koiny and exclaimed, “your so good at playing Frisbee.” Koiny, panted and leaned forward getting ready to dart off again at the next throw, but when Alex set the Frisbee down, he began to bark. “No, I need to go inside now. I can’t play anymore.” Koiny barked again, but when Alex turned to run up the hill back toward the house both dogs followed behind.

When he reached the house, his mom said, “Alex don’t let Koiny inside, he is still too dirty from earlier and I don’t want him to make a mess before we leave in the morning.” Alex carefully let Holly inside and shut the door behind himself to make sure Koiny wouldn’t make it in.

After Alex had gotten cleaned up, he got into bed and Holly hopped up on top of the soft covers and laid down. The soft light from a lamp near the bed kept a glow in the

room as Alex’s dad came in to pray with him before he went to sleep. When they finished his father turned off the light and Holly snuggled in close to Alex for the night.

It was still dark out as the three family members were getting ready to go camping. Alex and his mom were already in their white pick-up truck and his dad was trying to get the last things loaded. A single flood light illuminated the dim area where he was working and Holly and Koiny were close on his heels as he moved around. Once he got everything into place, he picked up Holly and set her up into the back of the truck. Then he picked up Koiny, but as he tried to place him in the back of the truck, Koiny began to squirm and got loose. “Koiny, you need to trust me. You will be fine.” But as Alex’s dad tried to get him in the back of the truck, Koiny kept running away and barking. Eventually, Alex’s dad gave up. Returning to the car he exclaimed, “we have had Koiny for so many years now, but he just doesn’t seem to listen or trust me. I like him and he’s a pretty dog, but I think we are going to have to leave him this time.”

“Dad...” Alex pleaded, “we have only had Holly for a month now and she is coming.”

“I realize that son, but Holly has learned to trust us and she does what we ask. If we tell her to stop she does and if we tell her to come she will, but Koiny does whatever seems best to him. If we bring him, he would probably disrupt anyone else we are camping near. ...And you know, he will just bark if we have to keep him tied up...”

“You’re right Dad, I just wish Koiny would learn to be obedient so we could enjoy him more.”

Who are you most like, Koiny or Holly?

God desires to walk in close fellowship with you. Speaking to you, comforting you, and directing you. Nevertheless, if you ignore Him and don’t do the things He asks of you, He will never be more than a distant reality. Jesus taught that those who are found trustworthy with the little things in life will be trustworthy with bigger things too, but those who are not trustworthy with the small things will lose even the little things they have. Jesus

isn't simply referring to physical possession, but rather a depth of relationship with Himself. Many people claim that they have been Christians for many years of their life, but they simply don't let go of their pride and the things they love most. As a result, they forfeit what little closeness they have had with God for the temporary pleasures of whatever seems best at the time.

God doesn't just want to be first place in your life. He wants your whole life to be about Him. If you persist in doing things for yourself, without yielding every desire and hope to Him, you simply will not be able to get to know Him very well. All too often, people think that the little ways they disregard God doesn't affect their relationship with Him. Unfortunately, they have been deceived by the trickery of sin. For it is the little things people refuse to yield unto God which make them spirituality dry and prevent them from growing close to Him. If you think you can disregard the speed limit, fill your mind with violence and sexual immorality from movies, laugh at perverted jokes, occasionally get drunk, or eat in excess to an unhealthy manner you will never be able to know the true depths of peace and joy from being close to God. God wants your whole life, especially the things you love most. If you are not willing to sacrifice these things to obey Him, you will never advance beyond Koiny the dog, who in the end was left behind.

In the story, Koiny was always interested in doing what was most pleasing to himself at the time and as a result

he frequently remained distant at the most intimate times he could have had with Alex. On the other hand, Holly's obedience and yielded will frequently won her great privileges. In the beginning of the story, she enjoyed the affections of her master by being close to him, but Koiny being wet had to stand at a distance. Also, Holly got to eat food from the table and snuggle on Alex's bed while Koiny was left outside. All too often, people think they can live for themselves like Koiny and still enjoy the riches of being close to God. Nevertheless, Jesus taught in John 15:10 that if we keep His commands we will remain in His love. This is not to say that we earn Jesus' love by our obedience, but rather we get to experience His love when we obey. Just like Koiny was loved by Alex even though he was rebellious, Koiny still could not truly experience this love because of his disobedience.

Without obedience and diligence to remove things from our lives we will never truly walk in close fellowship with God. Instead, we will be like a toilet plunger in the service of the Lord. He will store us away from His presences and pull us out only to shove us down a nasty clogged toilet. The Bible teaches us in 2 Timothy chapter 2 verses 20 and 21 that if we want to be a tool that is useful for doing every good work then we need to purify our lives from things that corrupt us. What kind of tool do you want to be?

Therefore, take heed to what God told the nation of Israel a long time ago and to us as well:

*...Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion,
during the time of testing in the desert,
where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did.
That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said,
"Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways."
So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest."
(Hebrews 3:7-11)*