

A Sermon on Understanding Dogs

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for February 19th, 2023 (and beyond)

Like many sermons, this one is in dialogue format and requires a little imagination on your part. Dog's lines are in English though not intended to anthropomorphize the dog.

DIALOGUE:

Human: What happens when I feed you before I feed myself?

Dog: You showed submission and have indicated I am your alpha.

Human: If you are my pet and I leave you alone for hours, why so excited when I return?

Dog: If we are the same pack and share the same territory and I consider you my alpha I feel I've been shunned or rejected every time you leave and overjoyed that whatever wrong I was punished for has been forgiven. If I believe myself to be the alpha, it concerns me that you thought I was exiling you and I am relieved that you recognize your own misunderstanding because I need to be fed and food insecurity can really result in unnecessary aggression.

Human: Why do you urinate on property and/or people?

Dog: I'm marking territory. The longer I can hold my urine, the greater the smell of ammonia and the more ammonia I can mark with, the less likely predators or nuisances are to trespass. I'm protecting the property and the people/pack.

Human: So, I shouldn't feed you first and should eat in front of you before feeding you to establish I'm the alpha. And, I should always leave you with at least one other member of the house to avoid your becoming insecure or aggressive. Should I also walk you where other animals urinate so you instinctually relieve yourself there instead of non-designated property or people?

Dog: I like to mark outside of where I eat and sleep to create a kind of boundary around that so I feel safer where I eat and sleep while also knowing if anyone crosses the line they likely couldn't smell the ammonia or felt they could take me based on what they did smell. Also, I do not wish to be exiled nor killed, though do like being rewarded for cooperating.

Human: Say you are a wild or feral canine, friendly or not?

Dog: Are you trespassing or am I? Do I have pups? Am I hungry? Do I need to feed myself and my pack? Do you have food to share? Am I injured or ill? I need answers to all of these before I can respond. There are too many variables for me to respond to it as vague as worded at this time. But, the 5% of wild dogs that make it to adulthood often live 10 years. 95% of males die within the first 81 days and 95% of females die within

the first 112 days of life in the wild. I may not have understood, just skimmed:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4726281/>

Human: You are trespassing because nonhumans do not have property rights recognized at law. Do you not know whether or not you have offspring, are hungry, injured or ill?

Dog: For one, if I'm a pet then the wild dog question is hypothetical and if not then the pet question is hypothetical. I assumed I'm a pet and therefore the wild dog question was hypothetical and as such I require more information from you regarding my hypothetical conditions before I can respond. You would know whether or not I'm your pet though. Are you feeling okay? If not, if I like you I may try to comfort you and if I don't I'll challenge your authority. Sound good?

Human: I'm glad you recognize my authority.

Dog: "If" was the operative word. Do I like you or not? I think I'll urinate over here and see what happens. Also, if a pet, I would prefer mobile veterinarian and grooming services be provided in-house. The smell of all the anxiety and discomfort in those office and salon environments makes the experience that much worse and I could get over it in the environment I'm accustomed to much quicker even if momentarily unpleasant.

Human: It's double the price of taking you to their locations for services, but arguably reduces the risks of exposure to such environments. The law doesn't recognize urination as a way to establish property rights.

Dog: Natural law does so recognize.

Human: I'm sure there are people downtown who wish you were right and that natural law applies. The funny thing is though, if a place becomes uninhabitable enough to the civil majority, the civil majority just avoids it conceding the territory at times.

Dog: Told you so.

END DIALOGUE

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

For More About COPE and the HEAL Mission, see:

<https://www.cope.church> and <https://www.heal-online.org>