

## Animals A basic understanding and ministry from God's perspective

I am going to be starting an interesting series but before we get started lets go to God's word for guidance as well as warning

*Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life--the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals."*

**God created people to rule over creation.** God gave the right of dominion over all living things to man.

The command to subdue it (1:28) implies that there was work involved, even in the perfect setting of the Garden, to bring the creation under man's rightful dominion.

This dominion involves a stewardship of the earth and its resources under the sovereignty of God. **But Note Carefully The Following :**

Fallen man has gone in two directions when it comes to the earth and its resources. Either he has tended to spoil the creation, through pollution and other forms of wanton disregard; or he has been ruled by creation, through false worship of nature. Romans 1:20-20

The two extremes exist in our present society now more than ever: some want to rape the land for their own profit or enjoyment; while others hold a reverential awe for nature, making man submissive even to the animals. **Neither extreme is in biblical balance.** For example, "PETA", "Tree Huggers" etc, where nature and animal worship is practiced, is not in God's plan, any more than the Slash and Burn means of clearing land is.

Both the animals and plants are living creatures are living things created by God for man. But only man was created in the image of God So the bottom line is, we are to avoid the extremes. ***We are to rule over the animals and nature but we are not to abuse them, and we are not worship them,***

**NOTE:** Like many folks, although I do not want any pets myself, I do find something quite enjoyable, interesting, and as we will see, educational, when it comes to the animals. Animals are so interesting in fact that while, I am personally neither an animal lover, nor an animal hater, I have been actually been working on a whole animal series entitled, "Spiritual Lessons from Nature's World" I want to spend some time looking at some of the spiritual lessons we can learn from our furry and feathered friends



## I. The Albatross

The albatross is a large seabird. One species has the longest wingspan of any living bird in the world. Amazing in flight, the albatross can stay aloft for months without ever touching land. They are able to do this by drinking seawater and eating fish and squid from the ocean. It even sleeps as it rides the air currents over the water.

The albatross is among the most respected and legendary of birds. Despite this, it has had a hard struggle to survive. Once there were nearly twenty-four species, but today thirteen remain. By 1950 however the albatross had become one of the world's rarest birds but thanks to government intervention, the albatross is making a slow recovery.

An albatross baby enters life with the desire to fly, but it must practice for many months before it can lift itself off the ground. Then more time is required before it is able to fly even short distances. Eventually, though, the young albatross masters the art of graceful flight.

The outstanding and unique feature of this bird is their wings. God designed the albatross with very large powerful wings that take it wherever it needs to go.

I would like to think for a moment or two, about wings and our spiritual life. Just as the albatross's wings are necessary to keep it aloft for weeks on end as part of its lifestyle, for the Christian, our spiritual wings are necessary to keep us aloft in our spiritual life.

The wings of the albatross make it able to ride above many of the storms on the ocean. Likewise, for us, the spiritual wings that God provides at salvation helps us ride above the turbulent waters and winds of our life's storms.

***Note this though:*** What our spiritual wings **won't take us over**, this same God, the creator of the majestic wings of the albatross, **will take us thorough**

As the albatross, on its great wings, soars above an endless expanses of plain and boring water, seeing only food,

our spiritual wings take us over a brilliant and patterned landscape where we can be on the look out to see in our world who needs the help that only the Lord can give.

Listen to these words, as you picture yourself soaring on your spiritual wings

### Looking Through His Eyes

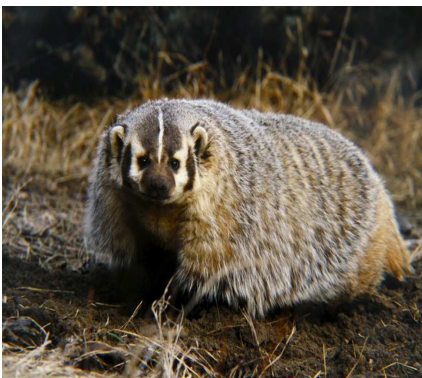
"Let me see this world, dear Lord,  
As though I were looking through Your eyes.  
A world of men who don't want You Lord,  
But a world for which You died.  
Let me kneel with You in the garden,  
Blur my eyes with tears of agony;

**For if once I could see this world the way You see, I just know I'd serve You more faithfully.**

Let me see this world, dear Lord,  
Through Your eyes  
when men mock Your Holy Name.  
When they beat You and spat upon You, Lord,  
Let me love them as You loved them just the same.  
Let me stand high above my petty problems,  
And grieve for men, hell bound eternally;

**For if once I could see this world the way You see, I just know I'd serve You more faithfully."**

Before we move on lets remember the help, ministry and beauty that is ours, thanks to a lesson learned from the Albatross



## II. The Badger

The American badger, a medium sized mammal, is related to the otter, skunk, and weasel. All these animals have glands at the base of their tails that produce a strong-smelling scent.

God designed the badger to have a wedge-shaped head with white markings, a short neck, and strong legs, as well as the ability to be an excellent digger. The badger uses its strong forepaws and claws as shovels to tunnel into the ground to make a burrow. The badger can move dirt faster than any other mammal, including a person with a shovel!

The badger's extremely tough, and oddly oversized, hide greatly enhances its ability to defend itself. Badgers are also fierce fighters. When not hunting or eating, the nocturnal badger spends most of its time alone in its den; it has virtually no social life.

Our first spiritual observation from the badger is unlike the badger, which has few friends, **nor apparently desires any for that matter**, we need and can and should enjoy great fellowship with other believers.

God's Word says in I John 1:7 that *If we live in the light in the same way that God is in the light, we have a relationship or fellowship with each other.* **Watchman Nee observed,** "Fellowship is important because, fellowship means among other things that we are ready to receive of Christ from others. "

Other believers minister Christ to me, and I am ready to receive. Likewise others can or should be ready to receive from me as well. So while the badger is a loner, Christians should never be loners. There is a time to be alone, but not being alone, **or a-loner**, as a way of life. We need and can draw strength and encouragement from one another.

Secondly we observe that as a powerful digger, the badger stops at nothing to get what it wants in its search for food or shelter, and this is a lesson for us to be relentless in our pursuits.

My daughter once gave me a plaque she had made that said, winners never quit and quitters never win. Said another way, Go the extra mile in your pursuits and ministries in the Chr. life because it's never crowded.

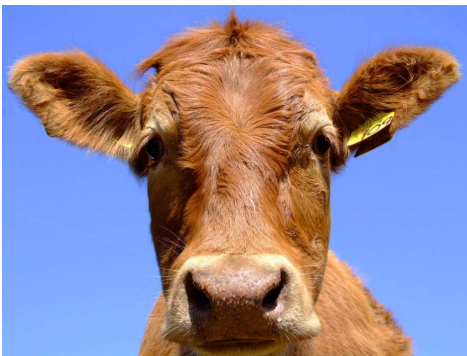
Thirdly from the badger we see that unlike the badger which is also **fiercely independent** we are created to be dependent not independent. Dependent on God for our spiritual strength and ministry John. 15:5 reminds us *I am the vine, you are the branches. The one who abides in me while I abide in him produces much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.*

Dependent on one another for help, and encouragement in the general trials and work of life  
**Note:** The world, like the badger, prides itself on being independent but since when is the Christian to be like the world?

Then just as the badger is a fast and powerful digger we need to have the Lord help us dig quickly out of the messes we sometimes get ourselves into.

Lastly we observe that the badger is a unique creature, well equipped to meet all the challenges it faces. As God's children we are unique and very individual. There will never be another person just like us.

The lesson I see here is be who God created you to be, and stop trying to be like the movie stars, sports heroes and other popular people in our society. God created you to be and be able to do exactly what he had in mind for your life. These have been just a few thoughts from our friend the badger



### III. The Cow

I would like to look at cows and see what we can learn from the animal world, that we can apply in our world. Did you know that there are over 900 types of cattle in the world and cows were domesticated about 5,000 yrs. ago.

Concerning the idea of a cow's eating, we know that after the plant material is processed in the rumen, it is later regurgitated. This material is now called "cud", and the ruminant chews it again, up to 8 hours a day. The reason is that, the additional chewing breaks down, even more, the cellulose content which is difficult to digest. This regurgitation and chewing of the cud is called rumination. It is from this basic idea of rumination that I really want us to learn from.

**Remember**, to ruminate is to chew on again such as chewing a cud. So first and foremost

A. Chew on God's word because it is the source of our spiritual food

Psalm 19:7 *The Law of the LORD is perfect; it gives us new life. His teachings last forever, and they give wisdom to ordinary people.*

Here it is talking about the law of the Lord being good and helpful in keeping our hearts and mouths clean and to make us wise. **Question:** But how does it get broken down, so it does us the most good spiritually?

Like a cow who grazes on grass and then goes and lies down and regurgitates part of that meal, chews it over and over to make it more digestible, that is what we need to do. It is like coming to church and SS. We hear the lesson or sermon and then we need to go home and think about it again and again.

A good time to do that is at Sunday lunch and while you eat your food, you can also digest the sermon in conversation around the table. Chew on the word you heard, not on the preacher who delivered it, and we will all be better off.

Discuss ways you can apply what you heard, as well as think about other things, or ideas that I could not cover in just 20 minutes or so. That way you will be making your time more profitable.

B. We need to chew for a while on decisions we need to make **before** we just jump in and make them. Proverbs. 11:14; 15:22; 24:6,, all talk about counselors as a part of victorious living.

We need to ask for advice from the Word and also friends and then we need to chew on it before we make decisions.

**Thought:** A man should give a lot of thought to a sudden decision. Don't forget the old Proverb **Haste makes waste**

C. We need to chew on the good things the Lord has done for us. James 1:17 reminds us *Every good present and every perfect gift comes from above, from the Father who made the sun, moon, and stars. The Father doesn't change like the shifting shadows produced by the sun and the moon.*

When we chew on these good things we can draw out a lot of extra nourishment that will help us get through the rough times in life. **Thought:** The next time you are having a down day, chew for a while on the great things God has done in your life and you will find your present circumstances a bit more tolerable.

D. We need to be careful to chew **on our tongue** when we feel like ripping someone who does us wrong.

Proverbs. 15:1 says *a gentle answer turns away wrath*

Ephesians 4:31,32 reminds us to *Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

So next time you feel like chewing on someone, you can help fulfill *Psalm 19:14 where it says May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer And the way we can do that is to chew, not our cud, but our tongue, so we don't pop off, too soon or too loudly, and in the wrong manner.*

E. Chew long and hard before trying to get even, or get revenge

Chew on Romans 12: 19-21 *Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord. Instead, do what the Scriptures say: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you." Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good.*

If you still have trouble swallowing this, then chew on it some more till it gets to the point that you can get down, where it can do you some good in the practice of living.

**Yes**, the cow is an interesting animal and we can really profit from this one special capability they have, and that is to chew what we think, and say a little bit more than we often do.

So the next time you see a cow just lazily standing or lying there chewing her cud, think about the spiritual application and practice a little extra chewing yourself. Well this is enough for us to chew on this time but we will be looking at another group so keep an eye open.

**A final thought:** Maybe you need wings like the Albatross to carry you over storms you may be having in your life right now. Maybe like the Badger you are alone by choice or by chance and deep inside you realize that it isn't working well for you. If this is the case then from the cow, why not chew on the following,

Simply read, think about and follow up in these next few lines and you will have Him there to help you over those rough and lonely times.

Realize you are a sinner Romans 3:23

Understand that the payday for sin is death or eternal conscious separation from God. Romans 6:23a

Know that there is a way of escape for you. Romans 6:23b and John 1:12

Desire to escape and pray this or a similar prayer.

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins, and I confess them all to You [name them]. Lord Jesus, forgive all my sins and come into my heart as my Saviour and Lord. I receive You right now. Help me from this time forward to live for You. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen."

On the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ I became a Christian by inviting Jesus Christ into my life to forgive my sin.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have further questions or have chosen to do this, be sure to let us know so we can help you, pray for you and encourage you in your new life.

You can reach us at [lapeerchurch@gmail.com](mailto:lapeerchurch@gmail.com) Subject line: (Salvation)