

Chasing our Tails

By Pastor Sharon Tidd

I am a cat-lover. This is somewhat new, as growing up we always had dogs, but I love my cats just as much ... if not more. My first cat was Calvin. He was a cuddler who loved to share love, and he was very much in tune with when I needed it most. He helped me get through some really rough days! Next came Phoebe ... a tiny mouser who is very independent and a little aloof; but with the ability to offer love too! Both were rescues who helped rescue me!

More recently, Loki joined our family. He's two and is always getting into mischief (living up to his name). He has a very strange habit of chasing his tail, so we say he's part dog. Truthfully, we encourage this behaviour quite often. If he's doing something he shouldn't, we'll try to distract him by asking him where his tail is, and it usually works. Within seconds he's back chasing it again ... round and round in circles. He seems to enjoy it, but after biting it enough times he'll switch to licking it. I assume he's trying to make it feel better! After all, his teeth are pretty sharp!

As I've sat watching Loki pursue this crazy habit, I've been caused to ask myself how often I waste time chasing my tail. That is, how often do I go round and round in circles pursuing past habits or thinking patterns that were harmful. Too often, it seems, I look backwards ... sometimes with longing, but mostly just because old habits are hard to leave behind. They have this ability to pull us in; especially cycles of negative thinking. It's hard to shut it down. So round and round and round I go, chasing my proverbial tail! And the problem with that is that when I'm chasing my tail I'm not progressing, I'm not moving forward. Tail chasing gets me stuck! Can anyone relate?

In writing to the Philippians (Philippians 3:13b-14) Paul, through the Spirit of God, was inspired to emphasize how important it is that in this Christian walk we are intent on "forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead", so that we "press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me

heavenward in Christ Jesus". We're not supposed to be chasing our tails. We're not supposed to be holding on to what is in the past, what is behind us. We are to be focussed forward, straining/leaning in to what's ahead for us ... heaven, glory, Christ! Chasing after old harmful habits will only bring us pain. We need to chase after all the beauty and glory and wonder that is Christ and Kingdom. We need to replace tail-chasing with glory-chasing!

That's why Hebrews 12:2 tells us to "fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith". Jesus is the initiator -- He gave us the gift of faith, of trust in His saving power. He started us on this journey. And He will perfect it! But for that to happen, we must daily fix our eyes on Him ... His love, His goodness, His mercy, His grace, His acceptance, His forgiveness, His saving might. We have to stop chasing our tails. We have to stop pursuing old harmful habits and allow Him to introduce new, helpful habits ... prayer, Bible reading, meditation, service. Instead of looking backwards, we must choose to look heavenward. We must fix our sight on Jesus so that He can perfect the good work that He has begun in us.

Are you ready to stop chasing your tail? (Doing so will only bring you pain in the long-run!)

Are you eager to look to Jesus, believing that He will bring your faith to perfection?

Are you willing to keep on moving forward, believing that His divine qualities of love will rise up in you as you journey hand-in-hand with Him?

Given the choice between tail-chasing and glory-chasing, I'm going for the latter! I hope you are too!