

Sample Devotional

MEET MY DOGS

Few things in life bring me more joy than my dogs, so I think it's about time I introduced them to you. Smokey and Pepper, brother and sister, are mini-schnauzers. We jovially call them "jumbo minis" because they are huge for mini schnauzers at about 35 pounds each. Smokey is tall, regal, dashing, and loves people. Pepper is short, portly, and ratty looking by comparison. When guests visit our home, she growls at them and then retreats to her hideout under our bed.

In the more conspicuous ways, Smokey seems to be a much better dog. He is more handsome, friendly, and even tempered. Yet, Smokey has caused his share of problems. My dapper boy is massively injury prone, and has required several major surgeries. His broken leg at four months old cost us literally thousands of dollars.

Because of Smokey's leg injury, he has never enjoyed long walks or jogs. Thus, Pepper is my best friend on the trails. Her rotund little body can hang tough for hours. Plus, since she doesn't like strangers, I know she will keep me safe from any creepers.

Despite their individual flaws, I adore each of my pups. I delight in their funny personalities and overlook frustrations that they cause. They are part of my family, and our home would be incomplete without them.

You are part of God's family, and he loves you even more than I love my dogs! God created you uniquely and loves you unconditionally. He knows that you have flaws, and he adores you anyway.

4 But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, **5** that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) . . . **10** For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

(Ephesians 2:4–5, 10)

God created us with beautiful differences. We each have our own strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes. God has given you a specific purpose for which you are ideally created, and which no one else can adequately fulfill.

You will find great fulfillment as you embrace your unique design, but comparison is a joy-killer. If you're looking, you can always find someone smarter, more successful, more attractive or more skilled than you. Instead, lean into God's plan for your life and become the best version of yourself. Thank Jesus for being perfect so that you don't have to be, and remember that in God's eyes, you are a masterpiece.



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Lord, thank you for loving me even when I was your enemy. Thank you for offering mercy and grace so that I can be part of your family. Help me to walk in your plans with confidence and humility. Give me the ability to forgive myself when I make mistakes. Forgive me for comparing myself to others and help me to overcome any jealousy in my heart. Help me to encourage my brothers and sisters in Christ rather than competing with them. Help me to serve out of the overflow of your love as I fulfill the good things that you have planned for my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Personal Reflection: As you go throughout your day today, take captive any self-deprecating thoughts and resist the tendency to compare yourself with others. Rather than beating yourself up for perceived flaws and mistakes, thank God for your gifts and talents.

