

Disciples and Dogs

Citizens of Heaven Intersect with Canine Good Citizen

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AKC Canine Good Citizen
Devotional - Canines for Christ



Canines 4 Christ

We want to share with you training disciplines that will make your dog a good citizen and enable you to take them with you to many places showing good manners and being well-behaved.

Much in the same way we can learn from these disciplines with our dogs, we can learn to develop Christian disciplines that will make us a good citizen of heaven and will help us live the way Jesus came to teach us to live in this world: DOG (Depending on GOD).

We know that dogs are domesticated animals that have proven to be able to coexist with humans by their side and were created by God with the purpose of accompanying us and being a source of blessing for us. However, it is in their nature to be "wild" and they do not know how to behave or interact in a healthy way without proper training.

When puppies are growing, we must guide them throughout their growth, so that they can face situations, know how to react, behave and obey, we are the ones who love them and know what is best for them in every situation.

Here are ten disciplines in which you can teach your dog, so they can become a canine good citizen:

1. Able to greet a stranger in a friendly manner.
2. Sitting politely for petting.
3. Allow themselves to be groomed or handled.
4. Go for a walk and maintain a loose leash.
5. Able to walk among people, maintaining control.
6. Wait until they receive their owner's instructions and obey the commands. Sit, Down and Stay.
7. Come when called.
8. Knows how to react to another dog without getting out of control.
9. Reacts well to a distraction and does not lose focus.
10. Be away from us with supervision without being anxious.

Disciples and Dogs

Much in the same way that dogs are with their owners, we were created by God for the purpose of loving Him, loving ourselves and others, caring for those around us, accompanying them, living a life of joy and peace, and being a source of blessing to many. However, in our nature there is "Sin" and as we grow, we do not know how to behave, interact with others and live the way God designed us to live.

When we are kids, our parents must instruct us and guide us to learn certain behaviors and disciplines that make us good citizens of heaven on earth, and better people.

Our Heavenly Father seeks to guide us while we are growing up, to face situations, know how to react, behave and obey His Word, since He loves us and knows what is best for us in every situation.

Therefore, here are ten Christian disciplines in which God guides us to be good citizens of heaven on earth:

1. Receive Jesus in our hearts. Trust and Faith.
2. Wait patiently and quietly for God to touch us with His hand and begin to work in our lives through prayer. Intimacy and Prayer.
3. Reflect God's love and the Fruit of the Spirit in our life. Identity.
4. Walk, guided by God's Word even during difficulties. Trust and Peace.
5. Connect with more believers and living a Godly life together. Community.
6. Learn to wait for God's guidance, read your Bible and listen to His voice. Patience and Devotion.
7. Respond to God's call and be able to act when He needs us. We come to be His hands and feet on earth. Obedience and Willingness.
8. Learn to approach other people who are not believers, without judging, being light and being a blessing in their lives. Self-Control.
9. Stay on the path of following Jesus, not getting distracted or diverted from what He teaches us and calls us to do. Focus and Persistence.
10. To have God's Word and His promises anchored in our hearts, so that when we go through times of difficulty, we can declare His Word that brings life. Independent - Dependent on God (DOG).

Discipline 1: Trust and Faith

- **Canine Good Citizen: Be able to greet a stranger in a friendly manner.**

To guide our dog to have a good reaction to the greeting and casual encounter with a friendly stranger.

Help them not to get too excited and end up jumping on you, the other person or overreacting.

General Tips...

Giving them the security, they need to be a good-mannered dog. One way to accomplish this is by taking them out for frequent walks, walks where they can burn energy and reduce anxiety. By being calm in front of friendly strangers, setting limits for the interactions and protecting them from dangers. Allowing positive interactions with adults and children, always be an advocate for your dog. Little by little they will have more confidence in us and in themselves. If your dog shows signs of jumping on a person or getting over excited, turn them around and try to approach the person(s) again when the dog has calmed down. [Click on the image below to view the YouTube video.](#)



CITIZEN OF HEAVEN & CANINE GOOD CITIZEN

- **Citizen of Heaven: Receive Jesus in our Hearts. Trust and Faith.**

In the same way we can know Jesus, who was a stranger before, and as we are feeling His Presence, His protection and His love, we become more confident that our Father God is with us everywhere we go.

Although God is our Creator and Father, Adam's sin separated us long ago and kept us away from Him, but through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we can have a new relationship and be called His children. God is gentle and although He has always been close, looking for us, He gave us the free will to make our own decisions, and waits for us to be the ones who decide to invite Him into our lives and open the doors of our hearts. We do this through His Son, Jesus, who is the only way, the truth and the life that leads us to our Heavenly Father.

We must place our trust and faith in Jesus, closing our eyes, believing in our heart and declaring out loud: "Lord, Jesus, I open the doors of my heart, I invite you to come into my life. I ask your forgiveness for my sins committed, I pray that my name is written in the Book of Life and I recognize you as my Lord and Savior. I want to start a new life guided by YOU...God, in the name of Jesus, Amen".

This is how we approach a stranger, with whom we will gradually establish a relationship.

Discipleship Steps...

Recognizing that we need God, making the decision to seek Jesus and opening the doors of our heart. Going to a space where we can be alone, closing our eyes, and seeking him audibly in intimacy with our Heavenly Father. Matthew 6:6 says, "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly".

The first time your dog saw you, you were a stranger to them, they didn't know what was going to happen or who you really were. But you knew that you would take care of them and that you would do everything to teach them the best and protect them.

In the same way, God receives us, you don't know Him, but He already has a plan for your life and He will take care of you.

Paws for Reflection...

- 1) Spend some time reflecting on when you first felt God's presence and when you accepted Christ into your life to be your personal Savior. How do you continue to live out your new life in Christ each day?
- 2) Knowing that we were once strangers to God but now have a purpose, what is God calling you to do for Him?

Prayer...

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you for who You are that while we were strangers and separated from You, that You called us to Yourself through Your Son, Jesus Christ. When we called or call upon His Name, the Name above every name we are no longer strangers, but sons and daughters of the Most-High King. By faith, we step into our new life of purpose. Help us to live for You each day. In Jesus' name...AMEN.

Discipline 2: Intimacy and Prayer

- **Canine Good Citizen: Sitting politely for petting.**

That your dog trusts you, obeys you, manages to sit and trusts themselves to allow to be petted by a stranger who, although they are unfamiliar but know they are being kind and don't represent any danger.

General Tips...

Having completed the steps in the previous point, our dog will become more confident every day. After that, we can teach them to obey certain basic commands, such as sit. We can rehearse it at home, saying the word in an audible way and with a treat in our hand, doing the action of telling them to sit, rewarding them and letting them stay seated. We can do exercises with familiar people in our house, petting them while they are sitting and as we advance, we can do the exercise with neighbors or distant but familiar people, until we can do the exercise with strangers. Always being attentive to the dog's expression/behavior in each situation. [Click on the image below to view the YouTube video.](#)



CITIZEN OF HEAVEN & CANINE GOOD CITIZEN

- **Citizen of Heaven:** Wait patiently and quietly for God to touch us with His hand and begin to work in our lives through prayer. Intimacy and Prayer.

It is God who begins to work in our life, and not in our own strength that we achieve a change. However, we must do our part, being patient and allowing Him to enter into every area of our life. At first, He is a stranger to us, but if we understand that we need Him and if we make the decision to seek Him, we will build a relationship, through intimacy and prayer.

Discipleship Steps...

Praying is talking to God, in the same way that we begin a relationship with another human being, we must do it with Him. Look for spaces alone, where we can express what is inside us, and tell Him things that we would not tell anyone else. Giving Him thanks for what we have and to ask Him for what we would like in every area and situation of our lives. Understanding that He will respond, knowing what is best for us and relying on that His will is best for our lives.

Your dog never worried about what the next step will be or what else they should learn; they just trust us blindly and let us teach them. Let God work and give Him control of your life.

Paws for Reflection...

- 1) Spending time with God through prayer is a very important discipline to grow in our relationship with Him. How is your prayer life? What are ways that you can find more time to spend with God in prayer?
- 2) As C4C volunteers we are sometimes asked to pray, are you comfortable with praying out loud for others? If not, commit to taking time to find resources or practicing with others allowing the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Prayer...

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for prayer, thank you for an intimate way we can come to You and communicate everything about our lives. You know us completely, so we bring all our praise, burdens, worries, joys, temptations our whole lives to You. Please help us to find time and space to communicate with You daily, to quiet our hearts. Even in our moments of hurry, help us to stop and pray seeking Your guidance in every decision we make. We pray all of this in Your Son's Name, Jesus...AMEN.

Discipline 3: Identity

- **Canine Good Citizen: Allow themselves to be groomed or handled.**

A good-mannered dog should allow themselves to be groomed and other actions required to its physical care without being aggressive or extremely nervous. It is normal for them to feel fear, it happens to most, if not to say all of them at some point. We want them to be comfortable and give them security so that they know how to react and understand that it doesn't represent a threat. Bathing and physical care is important for health to include brushing, grooming, nail clipping, etc.

General Tips...

Start by doing it at home, carefully, with love and for short periods, then you will increase the times and activities until they understand that it is safe and part of their life. Combing their fur, cleaning their ears, touching their paws, etc. Some things will bother them, others will not, but as we repeat them with love, their anxiety and fear will decrease. At the same time, you can offer high value treats, placing a positive association with these activities. With these healthy habits our dog's appearance will be pleasing, and people will take notice. [Click on the image below to view the YouTube video.](#)



CITIZEN OF HEAVEN & CANINE GOOD CITIZEN

- **Citizen of Heaven: God's love and the Fruit of the Spirit in our Life. Identity.**

The same way our dog begins to feel secure and establish an identity given by us, when we begin to spend time in intimacy with God, we get to know Him, and He begins to work in our lives. There is something that begins to reflect on our exterior. It begins to change the way we look at things, the way we speak, the way we think and act. We can see those reflected by the Fruit of the Spirit, to include Joy, Peace, Patience, Meekness, Faith, and Love for Others. We see how we begin to be more patient; we manage to love and help others without even knowing them, we experience peace, even amid trials and we are filled with faith, believing that with God everything is possible. This happens because this change works from the inside out and the Holy Spirit (God's Spirit) begins to work in us. Galatians 5:22-23

Discipleship Steps...

In the same way that we begin to resemble that person we spend more time with or talk with the same words, it happens to us in our spiritual area, when we spend time in intimacy with God, we begin to seek Him and establish a relationship, we begin to see subtle changes that are reflected in us without even realizing it. The Fruit of the Spirit is a product of having accepted Jesus into our hearts, seeking God in prayer and spending time in intimacy with Him. By believing in Him we know there is salvation and by trusting, we lay our burdens aside, handing them over to God, and by spending time in His presence alone, we are filled with joy and peace.

Example: If my dog spends time with a dog that barks all the time, they will end up learning the same thing. If they spend time with a calm and well-mannered dog, that obeys and knows how to interact in a healthy way, they will learn to do that and will be influenced by what that other dog does.

Others notice the progress in you. You may only see small steps, but others see the great love and dedication reflected in your life. In the same way, others will notice a change in you, and without needing to speak, they will notice something different that comes from the Fruit of the Spirit of God in you.

Paws for Reflection...

- 1) As God is working in and through your life how have people noticed a change in you? By your words and actions can others see Christ through you?
- 2) What Fruit of the Spirit do you need to allow God into, so that you can become more like Him? *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*

Prayer...

Dear Heavenly Father,

We ask that through your Holy Spirit that the Fruit of the Spirit spills out in our lives. That love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control is all that people see so that they can see You. We ask for forgiveness when we fall short and that by your mercy and grace we can be sanctified and do better not in our own strength, but in Yours. Surround us with people that nurture these characteristics in our lives as well. We love You, Lord...AMEN.

Discipline 4: Trust and Peace

- **Canine Good Citizen: They can go for a walk and maintain a loose leash.**

It seems like something very basic, but when we have a puppy or a dog that has never been exposed to the outside environment, the street, noise or more people, it can be a challenge, facing insecurities, lack of knowledge and fear of the unknown. That is why your dog must learn to walk outside, being with you, without fear, using the leash, without being over aroused and nervous about the environment. They must know that you are guiding them, protecting them, they must also trust themselves, be confident and be able to walk by your side.

General Tips...

By doing the action and being constant in the routine. Taking them for regular walks on a safe path, with external noises such as cars, birds, people talking, at first without crowds. Wearing a collar or harness that allows them to feel comfortable. Reward them often, encourage them that they are doing what you want them to do, make interactions positive. Over time, you can take them for a walk where there are a few more people so they can get used to the outdoors, noise and people without being afraid. Most of the time a dog that is being reactive, is because they are being exposed to an unknown environment that generates a lot of anxiety and they end up expressing themselves in negative ways.

We want to maintain a loose leash when we are walking with our dogs. Reinforce this behavior by rewarding them for staying close to you on the leash, if they begin to pull stop and start again, turn in a circle to get them to refocus on you. For every step you take with your dog pulling the leash, you are reinforcing a negative behavior which will become a habit, just like in our lives practice good habits that lead to Godly behaviors. [Click on the image below to view the YouTube video.](#)



CITIZEN OF HEAVEN & CANINE GOOD CITIZEN

- **Citizen of Heaven: Walk, guided by God's Word even during difficulties. Trust and Peace.**

In the journey of life, we have to go through many situations that represent a challenge, sometimes they generate anxiety or fear, but they are part of living, part of achieving the goals and purpose with which God created us. In the Bible there is a verse that says, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. Here in the world, you will have many trials and sorrows; but cheer up, because I have overcome the world" John 16:33. This means that by knowing and receiving Jesus in our hearts we will not stop facing trials and difficult moments, but we can walk confident that God is in control and as long as we walk hand in hand with Him, listening to His direction, we will be safe and will have someone to lean on. In the same way that our dogs go for a walk, confident that we are by their side, directing their steps, preventing them from stumbling and accompanying them. We would never send them out alone on the streets, knowing the dangers that exist and the bad decisions they could make. We always go with them.

In the same way, even though we don't see God visibly, He is by our side, and we can walk through life, trusting Him to guide us on our way.

Discipleship Steps...

Making the decision to follow God's instructions and to live guided by Him and not by our own knowledge and decisions.

Growing in intimacy with God and releasing our worries to Him, expressing what we feel and trusting that He is the one in control which in turn will give us peace that passes all understanding.

Just as our dogs know that we will always lead them on the right path and trust us blindly, we should believe in God and understand that only He can see beyond what our natural eyes see. Our eyes see the present reality and what is around us. God sees the future, the final picture and the big picture. What better than to rest in the fact that God knows what is best for us. Leave the decisions in His hands, trust Him and allow His peace to surround you each day.

Paws for Reflection...

- 1) What area(s) of your life do you need to trust God with? School? Marriage? Relationship? Etc?
- 2) With trust comes peace, re-call times when God has brought peace out of trust and times of difficulty. Thank Him!

Prayer...

Dear Heavenly Father,

Help us to trust you more in all areas of our life, you know what is best for us even in the darkest and most difficult times. We thank you for guiding us and leading us, which leads to a peace that passes all understanding. Help us to rest in this assurance each day of our life, through the highs and lows knowing that you can be trusted and that we are Your children, we rest in this peace. In Jesus's Name...AMEN.

Discipline 5: Community

- **Canine Good Citizen: Able to walk among people, maintaining control.**

One thing is when our dog walks with us outside the house and another is when they must learn to walk when there are more people around them, more movement and in a crowd. This can generate excitement and sometimes anxiety. We must work in different environments and help them get used to it and give them security so that they can walk in the middle of a crowd and have a good reaction, not shying away, getting too excited or becoming unfocused.

General Tips...

Having practiced the previous point, we move on to exposing our dog to a larger number of people, it can be at home, preferably known people, and then progressing to being able to take them to public places with strangers and just walk through with them, without having any interaction with anyone. As they do this in different places and see that there is no threat, they are learning and feeling more comfortable, secure and confident. [Click on the image below to view the YouTube video.](#)



CITIZEN OF HEAVEN & CANINE GOOD CITIZEN

- **Citizen of Heaven: Connect with more believers and living a Godly life together. Community.**

God created us to be in community so we can help each other. In Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 it says “Two *are* better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him *who is* alone when he falls, for *he has* no one to help him up”. That is why it is necessary to be surrounded by more people who also believe in God and can lift our arms or give us wise advice at a time when we need it. It would not be healthy to ask for advice for our marriage relationship from a person who does not believe in marriage. It would be better to go to a believer who has a healthy marriage and even though he or she has gone through a difficult time, believes in marriage and believes that God can do something supernatural.

It is also not good to stay alone, to isolate ourselves and not have contact with other people, because then we become an easy prey for the enemy, God did not create us to be alone.

In the same way our dogs need to have encounters with different humans and be able to manage themselves in a crowd.

Discipleship Steps...

By surrounding ourselves with people who know God, who have a relationship with Him and contribute to our spiritual growth. We must trust in God and socialize in community with fellow believers. Finding a local church is important as well, God designed us to be in community.

Paws for Reflection...

- 1) What ways are you in community with fellow believers? If not, what is holding you back from forming those relationships?
- 2) Within that community, what special gifts and talents do you bring? How can you use those to build up the Body of Christ?

Prayer...

Dear Heavenly Father,

You made us to be in community to not be alone, but to do life together. Through your Church, Bible studies, small groups, and other opportunities. Help us to be in community, to bring our praise and worship and to lock arms with one another to advance Your Kingdom on earth. If we have past hurts from a community of believers, help us to forgive, help us to move forward. When we belong to a community of believers, help us to find unity and healthy relationships to grow us in You, so that others can know we are Christians by our love. In Your Son's Name, Jesus...AMEN.

Discipline 6: Patience and Devotion

- **Canine Good Citizen: Wait until they receive their owner's instructions and obey the commands.**
Sit, Down, Stay.

You are the person who loves them the most and whenever you give them an instruction it is to protect them, guide them and take care of them. Teaching them to wait and respond to basic commands will help them to have better communication, relationship and interaction, making them feel comfortable and avoiding situations that could make them uncomfortable or put them in danger. For example: when we tell them to stop before crossing a street, we prevent them from being hurt by a car, and when we tell them to move forward, it is because we know that the street is free and it is time to move forward, this will make going for a walk to be an environment of peace and care.

General Tips...

Teach them at home the basic commands, all of them with the use of treats, something to eat that catches their attention and that they like. You can purchase treats at any pet food store. We must always use the same name for the command and the same intonation, do not tell them one day "sit" and another day to "lower the tail." It is better if the commands are short and easy to understand. Remember that they don't understand our language. Be consistent, use a marker word, reward for desired behavior.

Sit Command: Take the treat in your hand, stand in front of your dog, show them the treat, raise your hand indicating (right above their nose) for them to sit and at the same time say the word. Mark behavior and reward. You can release them from the sit and repeat.

Down Command: Have your dog in a stand position and lower a treat to the ground right under their nose, inching the treat along the floor until they reach a down position, then say the word “down” and give them the treat. Mark the behavior and reward. You can release them from the down and repeat.

Stay Command: With your dog by your side in a sit or down, say the word “stay” and then take one step away from them, return giving them a treat if they stayed in the position. Over time increase the steps you take away, return giving them a treat if they stayed in the position. Start by facing them and then eventually turning your back and moving in other directions.

[Click on the image below to view the YouTube video.](#)



CITIZEN OF HEAVEN & CANINE GOOD CITIZEN

- **Citizen of Heaven: Learn to wait for God's guidance, read your Bible and listen to His voice. Patience and Devotion.**

When we know God and begin to see and understand what we face out there, in the world we live in, it can be overwhelming, but we must learn to trust and listen for God's voice. What better way to learn about God and what His voice sounds like than to spend time in reading the Bible, God's Holy Word each day.

In the same way our dogs learn to trust and obey our voice and commands, by spending time with us and learning that we can be trusted. We must go to our Heavenly Father, know His voice, understand what direction He gives us, and that He strengthens us. We must read the Bible, because there is where it is written of God's character, the promises He has for us, and there is where we know His heart and love for us.

Discipleship Steps...

By going to the Bible, getting one, starting to read it, looking for a version that is easy to understand at the beginning, it can be NLT (New Living Translation) or NIV (New International Version). Starting preferably with the New Testament, the Bible is divided into two Testaments, Old and New. Begin to know the story of Jesus, what He came to do and what He teaches us. As you progress, God will speak to you, and you will be able to recognize His voice. Find fellow believers to study with and encourage one another. After getting to know God better, we can go out into the world, following the direction He gives us and obeying Him, because He will always lead us to what is best for us.

Paws for Reflection...

- 1) Spending time in God's Word is an important discipline, what ways are you spending time in His Word? Commit to memorizing Scripture or read through the Bible in a year...find fellow believers to do this with, holding each other accountable.
- 2) Take time to listen for God's voice, what are some ways that you can find more space in your schedule to stop and listen?

Prayer...

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for Your Word, the Bible that tells us the greatest love story of all time. Your His-Story, Your Character, Your Love for US. Feel our hearts with the desire to want to know more and more about You in the Scriptures, to commit those teachings to our heart and to live them out in our lives. Let us be guided by Your Word and look through the lenses of Scripture for daily decisions and life choices. We love You and want to know more of You through Your Word. In Jesus' Name...AMEN.

Discipline 7: Obedience and Willingness

- **Canine Good Citizen: Come when Called.**

We, as their owners, know what is best for them and it is necessary and healthy for our dogs to learn to recognize our voice, to attend when we call their name and that they come to us. With our voice we can direct them, even if they do not see us, tell them to move forward or stop in case of danger or call them so they can find their way back home. Likewise, they begin to understand that they are a team with us, that the relationship with us has made them healthy and safe dogs, confident that they must respond to our voice when called.

When we learn to recognize God's voice and know His heart, it is easier for us to be guided towards the direction He has for us and to obey, acting at the moment when He calls us. We came to be light and to be a source of blessing for others, many still do not know Jesus and their lives remain in darkness and pain. That is why it is part of our responsibility as believers, to be able to carry that message of salvation and be the hands and feet of God on earth.

General Tips...

Just as we teach them commands, we will teach them to come when we call their name. We will start in a place with visible physical boundaries so they cannot go far away (even keep on a long leash) and have treats they like. Start by calling their name, followed by the command “come”, showing with our hand the treat and the action, using our hand and body language, we will move our body backwards to attract them. We will repeat this several times, remember that all exercises must be repeated, and it is a matter of discipline and consistency. Until we get them to respond to their name and come to us. Over time add more distance and distraction, always keep in mind to keep them safe. [Click on the image below to view the YouTube video.](#)



CITIZEN OF HEAVEN & CANINE GOOD CITIZEN

- **Citizen of Heaven: Respond to God's call and be able to act when He needs us. We come to be His hands and feet on earth. Obedience and Willingness.**

Discipleship Steps...

When we feel God leading us to do something, do it. To be His hands is to help another who has a need at the moment, a hug, at the market, crossing the street, or a helping hand at home. To be his feet is to go to places where they need a word of encouragement, a smile. Just as in Canines for Christ, we go with our dogs to places of need, nursing homes, clinics, to bring a message of hope, to share the joy of our dogs and make them smile and know that there are more of us who care and pray for them, even if we do not know them. In the Bible there is a verse that says: "For I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me" Matthew 25:35. Start acting on behalf of others.

Paws for Reflection...

- 1) Where is God calling you to be more obedient to Him? Where is God calling You to serve and be the hands, feet, and "paws" to those in your family or community?
- 2) When we feel the Holy Spirit's prompting what are some things that keep us from carrying those actions out? Time? Inconvenience? People? Search your heart...

Prayer...

Dear Heavenly Father,

You have asked us to be your hands and feet to serve others, help us carry out those acts of kindness to those in need. Whether it be a simple "hello" or providing a meal for a co-worker. Help us to not miss those divine appointments because of our hurry and unwillingness. Help us be obedient when we hear you call, "Whom shall I send? Let us be a people that say...Here I am, Send Me." In Your Son's Name, Jesus...AMEN.

Discipline 8: Self-Control

- **Canine Good Citizen: They know how to react to another dog without getting out of control.**

When we walk down the street or arrive at a place and meet unfamiliar dogs, our dogs often react. Sometimes well, other times not so well. It is normal that they notice and want to say hello or go to investigate, but we are the ones who teach them to keep their distance, have a good reaction without getting out of control and not being responsible for starting a fight or a bad situation. Let them be the good-mannered dog that shows self-control.

General Tips...

Always use your leash in outdoor spaces, even if we trust our dog, we should not go out without a leash because we do not know the reaction of other dogs. Having a leash is like holding our children by the hand.

Introducing dogs to one another. Walk calmly and have one dog walk in front, then the other dog walks in front, then side by side allowing them eye contact and keeping our voices calm as well. Depending on the reactions you can then proceed to having them sniff one another, correct any bad reactions and continue on your way. As the dogs get to know each other and meet again, you can allow them more time together.

As they go out in the street, see more dogs, we keep calm and they do not have accumulated energy and self-confidence, they will have better reactions to encounters. However, they are animals that act by instinct, and we do not know the other dogs, so in public always use a leash, keeping distance, and by watching their body language. [Click on the image below to view the YouTube video.](#)



CITIZEN OF HEAVEN & CANINE GOOD CITIZEN

- **Citizen of Heaven: Learn to approach other people who are not believers, without judging, being light and a blessing for their lives. Self-Control.**

God calls us to be light in the midst of darkness. In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus says: “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”. We can approach more people who do not know God, not to judge, but to be the ones who carry a message of love, hope and salvation. Remember that they do not know what we have already experienced.

Discipleship Steps...

Fill yourself with God and start with those around you, there will always be someone to talk to about the perfect love of Jesus. Use self-control, always showing God's love and mercy to those you meet, even those that are not like-minded.

By understanding that just like people who are not believers, we did not know Jesus before, and someone at some point spoke to us and was used as an instrument of God in order for us to come and know Him. We are the ones who should pray for others and speak of God's perfect love. In the Bible there is a verse in Romans 10: 13-15 "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved". How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Paws for Reflection...

- 1) What area(s) of your life do you need to ask for more self-control?
- 2) When speaking to those that are not believers and have a worldview, how do you show self-control in your tone of voice and how you approach people? What ways do you show them God's love even when there is conflict?

Prayer...

Dear Heavenly Father,

We live in a world desperately seeking acceptance and a sense of belonging, a world full of pain and suffering. We know that the only answer is Your Son, Jesus Christ to bring love, hope and belonging. Help us to practice self-control when speaking with people that may not be willing to listen or have hardened their hearts towards You. We are to be the mouthpiece of the Good News, help us to speak with Truth and Grace. In Jesus' Name...AMEN.

Discipline 9: Focus and Persistence

- **Canine Good Citizen: Reacts well to a distraction and does not lose focus.**

It is normal for our dogs to be easily distracted and lose focus, but this can cause havoc and make it difficult to take them to other places or even in our day to day. For example, when we are walking and they see another dog, a squirrel or bird they would like to chase, they can lose control and pull on the leash and cause us to get hurt. When they are in a situation where they must remain calm, such as a family meal, children eating a snack or when they smell food that is not necessarily for them, they lose focus and rush to take it away, without waiting for our approval. They may be presented with new and different things like an umbrella or walker that is unfamiliar, we must let them know that these items/situations can be handled without losing focus. We must guide them in this type of situation, so they can be dogs that, although they see the distraction, maintain their focus and wait for their master's response and approval.

General Tips...

It all starts at home, setting limits, rules to follow and being persistent in teaching them what is right and what is wrong, always with love. Do not let them climb on the food table and to steal the food. Take them for a walk and when they want to go after an animal, repeat the command "walking" and continue in exercise mode. Small exercises, repeatedly, will eventually make them learn and not get unfocused by any distractions. However, it is normal that this happens, remember that as I already mentioned, they are animals that, although they are domestic, have a wild instinct, which makes them act without thinking about the consequences, but you are there to guide them. If certain items or noises cause them fear or anxiety work with them and expose them slowly to these distractions, reinforcing them with positive experiences so they can overcome the fear. [Click on the image below to view the YouTube video.](#)



CITIZEN OF HEAVEN & CANINE GOOD CITIZEN

- **Citizen of Heaven:** To stay on the path of following Jesus, not getting distracted or diverted from what He teaches us and calls us to do. Focus and Persistence.

Discipleship Steps...

Even though we know the truth, we can make mistakes and in the midst of life's journey make bad decisions and get distracted from God's purpose for our lives. The enemy knows the blessing we have and will always put situations or people to distract us and take our focus away. Just as with our dogs, as doggy parents, we detect that which diverts them from the right path and we put them back on track, for the love we have, we take care they don't make a mistake that has bad consequences. In the same way, our Heavenly Father, warns us when we are going astray, and reminds us to keep our focus. In the Bible there is a verse in 1 Corinthians 10: 12: "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

By always seeking God's direction no matter how small the decision may seem, not trusting so much in ourselves if we believe we no longer need God, and walking through life, knowing that we live in a world dominated by the enemy, and we must always keep ourselves well surrounded by people who lift up our arms. In intimacy with God and being obedient to our Heavenly Father.

Paws for Reflection...

- 1) What are some ways that this world can cause distraction and take our eyes off Jesus?
- 2) In your personal life, what main distraction do you struggle with? Could you share with one other person and ask for prayer to regain focus on Jesus?

Prayer...

Dear Heavenly Father,

This world is full of distractions, we are bombarded with messages, sound bites, noises and the list goes on and on. Help us to keep our focus on You to quiet the world around us, to rid ourselves of some of the distractions that take us away from You. The enemy is waiting for us to lose focus and to use those distractions to tempt us and steer us away from Your will for our lives. We ask for Your strength to keep our eyes on You so that we do not miss all that You have for us in this life. In Your Son's Name, Jesus...AMEN.

Discipline 10: Independent but always DEPEND ON GOD (DOG)

1. Canine Good Citizen: Can be away from us with supervision without anxiety.

There may be times when we are physically separated from our dogs, but we are supervising them and it is an environment where there is security, but even so, when not close to us, they can become desperate, feel anxiety and that anxiety can lead them to have bad behaviors and end up reacting in an uncontrolled manner. We wouldn't want that to happen, since we will encounter many moments where we will be away from them a little bit, without leaving them, they should be able to behave in a good way. This happens because they have many insecurities that make them unclear about their identity and when they are faced with stressful situations or without seeing their master, they may lose control and not know how to behave.

General Tips...

By teaching them all the nine steps mentioned above. They can trust us and know how to act in different situations, when they are good-mannered dogs, who have learned to handle themselves in different scenarios, they will not lose control when they do not see us, because they will know how to behave in safe environments, knowing that we will not abandon them. If we do not teach them all the nine steps above, they can be insecure dogs, who act by instinct and end up making mistakes and misbehaving in different scenarios. Start by going a short distance from your dog and returning to them when they are under control, repeat this exercise slowly moving further away and as well as removing yourself from their sight, increasing the time you are away. Be mindful to return when they are under control and reward them for this behavior. [Click on the image below to view the YouTube video.](#)



CITIZEN OF HEAVEN & CANINE GOOD CITIZEN

- **Citizen of Heaven:** To have God's Word and His promises anchored in our hearts, so that when we go through times of difficulty, we can declare His Word that brings life. Independent - Dependent on God (DOG).

In the same way, God takes us through a path of learning so that we can be safe and confident, even in the midst of difficult places or situations that we have to go through.

When we understand the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross, we receive it in our hearts and understand the identity that we have in Christ, as God's children. We can be confident that even in the middle of trials and difficulties, He will never leave us. We can understand that it is not a matter of not having difficult moments, but as believers, we can go through them hand in hand with Jesus, knowing that He can understand us and accompany us through the darkness that we are going through. John 16:33 says "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Discipleship Steps...

By declaring His Word and His promises. Memorizing key verses in the Bible, that you can call to mind when in a difficult situation. Seeking intimacy and knowing His heart, to such an extent, that we can be confident that He is our Heavenly Father who loves us so much, that He promises to be there for us, and gives us infinite promises, for every situation we go through and will go through on the road of life.

Depending ONLY on God, He is the one who guides us and holds us in His hand. That gives us the peace and confidence we need to walk calmly and with faith in Him.

Paws for Reflection...

- 1) Through this devotional, what has encouraged you? Challenged you?
- 2) What is one thing that you can re-commit in the coming days to spend more time practicing (prayer, Bible reading, serving, etc.)? Share with one other person.

Prayer...

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you that through faith, purpose, intimacy, prayer, trust, peace, Your Fruit of the Spirit, serving, community, Scripture and our dependence upon You that others can see the work You are doing in our lives and come to know Your Son, Jesus. Help our lives to always point to Jesus and bring You Glory! In Jesus' Name...AMEN.

Isaiah 41:13 "For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'"

Trust God, just as your dog trusts you!

Depend On God



AKC CGC™ RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER'S PLEDGE®

CANINE GOOD CITIZEN® OWNER'S COMMITMENT TO RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

I understand that to truly be a Canine Good Citizen, my dog needs a responsible owner. I agree to maintain my dog's health, safety, and quality of life. By participating in the Canine Good Citizen test, I agree:

I will be responsible for my dog's health needs. These include:

- routine veterinary care including check-ups and vaccines
- adequate nutrition through proper diet; clean water at all times
- daily exercise and regular bathing and grooming

I will be responsible for my dog's safety.

- I will properly control my dog by providing fencing where appropriate, not letting my dog run loose, and using a leash in public.
- I will ensure that my dog has some form of identification (which may include collar tags, tattoos, or microchip ID).

I will not allow my dog to infringe on the rights of others.

- I will not allow my dog to run loose in the neighborhood.
- I will not allow my dog to be a nuisance to others by barking while in the yard, in a hotel room, etc.
- I will pick up and properly dispose of my dog's waste in all public areas such as on the grounds of hotels, on sidewalks, parks, etc.
- I will pick up and properly dispose of my dog's waste in wilderness areas, on hiking trails, campgrounds and in off-leash parks.

I will be responsible for my dog's quality of life.

- I understand that basic training is beneficial to all dogs.
- I will give my dog attention and playtime.
- I understand that owning a dog is a commitment in time and caring.

Owner's Signature _____ Date _____

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

I

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

II

Thou shalt not make
unto thee any graven image.

III

Thou shalt not take the name of the
Lord thy God in vain.

IV

Remember the sabbath day,
to keep it holy.

V

Honour thy father and thy mother.

VI

Thou shalt not kill.

VII

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII

Thou shalt not steal.

IX

Thou shalt not bear false witness
against thy neighbour.

X

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house.