

126. LITTLE BY LITTLE. DAY BY DAY - MONDAY - MAY 18, 2026

Good morning, Grace Harbor – it's Dan. Happy Monday!

Did you have a good weekend? Did you do anything fun? We had absolutely gorgeous weather, so we spent lots of time outside. We did the hike to Trinity Falls on Saturday afternoon, and it's still not warm enough to swim there yet, but we waded around in the cool water, and it felt so good.

Well, this week, I've got a new goal, and it's related to our dog, Luke. He's a one-and-a-half year old golden retriever, which means he's big and strong and full of energy. He's tons of fun, but sometimes he can be a bit much.

We've started to work with a dog trainer to learn how to help him make good choices. For example, whenever anyone knocks on our door, he starts barking really loud and racing around. It's part his natural instinct to protect us and part excitement because he loves people and wants to meet everyone.

And if it's someone that gets to come in, he keeps barking and tries to jump up to lick their face – which is his way of saying hello.

It might sound sweet, but it's not really what we want him to do. He's so big, he could knock you over. And most people don't really want to be licked in the face, even if

they love dogs.

So you see, we have this challenge. He loves people, and he's super friendly, and we love that about him. But when he gets excited, he goes overboard, and that's when it becomes a problem.

I wonder if you could put yourselves in his shoes... er, his paws? What do you think is going through his head when he gets that excited? If you could speak dog, what do you think he's saying with all of those barks? Share your guess, and if you need more time, feel free to pause the podcast. I'll be right here when you get back.

[PAUSE]

My guess is that it's something along the lines of, "Hi, hi, hi! Oh, hello! I love people! You're a people! Let me say hi! Oh, your face is up there? Let me come see it!"

Well, the trainer gave us some exercises to work on that help teach him how to take all of those good feelings and express them in a way that's safe and helpful and fun – for both our guests and for him.

But here's the thing. I can't just teach it to him all at once and expect it to stick. It takes dedicated time and attention. You work on it one step at a time. And if we can work on it a little bit each day, it'll make a big difference in the long run.

That got me thinking about this series we've been doing for

the last couple of weeks about the Fruit of the Spirit. That's the good stuff God wants to grow in our lives.

Just like the good stuff I want to grow in my dog's life, it grows slowly in us too. Every once in a while, we might hit a growth spurt, but most often, God is doing a little bit at a time, day-by-day.

We've talked about the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and goodness. With something like patience, you might not feel any different today than you did yesterday. But maybe if you look back a year ago, you can see that you're more patient with a sibling or a co-worker now than you were then.

That's why I like to say that ordinary days can lead to extraordinary lives. Each day gives us the opportunity to trust God and take one small step forward, no matter how normal or even boring the day seems. And when we do that consistently, it really makes a difference.

There's a word that describes someone we can count on regularly, and that word is faithful. God is faithful. It's one of the main ways the Bible describes God. No matter what's going on, God is there for us every day.

Well, God wants to grow faithfulness in us too. God wants to be able to count on us to show up each day and be the people we were made to be. And when we do that, we're also going to be faithful to the people and world around us as well. We're putting God's love and faithfulness on display through *our* love and faithfulness.

Ok, let's close in prayer. If you want to, you can close your eyes and fold your hands.

Dear God, we thank you that you're always there for us, and that you love us no matter what. We're grateful that each day, you're there inviting us to take our next step. As we do, may the fruit of faithfulness grow in our lives, so that we can be there for others as well. Amen.

Ok, Grace Harbor. Have a great day, and I'll talk to you tomorrow.

© 2026 Defining Grace, LLC | Written by Dan Wunderlich