

# ***HARLEY AND THE STICKS***

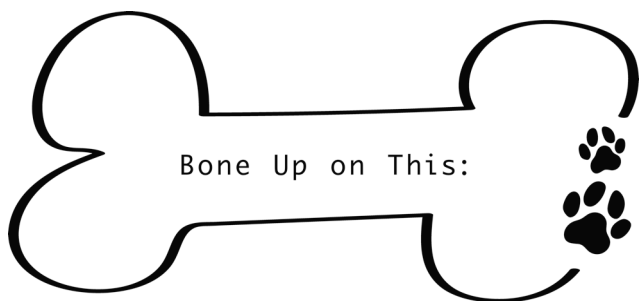
ANNIE'S best friend in all the world was a squatty, brown boxer named Harley. Harley lived two houses away. When she heard Annie and me, she would come running down the lane so she could walk with us. Whenever Harley appeared, Annie became a leaping, tail-wagging bundle of excitement. They greeted each other with sniffs and kisses. Then they walked together, sharing every good smell and interesting clump of grass.

Sticks, however, were not shared. Both Harley and Annie loved to chase sticks. When I threw one, they barreled across the yard, grabbed it in their strong jaws, and eventually brought it back to me. If Harley and Annie happened to reach a stick at the same time, they both seized an end. Annie went one direction; Harley went another. Two equally strong dogs at an impasse. Neither dog could move forward until one gave up.

Sometimes we are like Annie and Harley in our relationships. Whether it is family, work, or church, we often grab hold of something and try to keep it all to ourselves. It might be an idea of how something should be done or control over a certain situation. We hold that "stick" and refuse to give in to the person on the other end of our disagreement. As a result, we are stuck in the same place, and nobody

wins. Just like Annie and Harley, we hold opposite ends of the stick and cannot move forward.

Working together is a behavior that pleases God. Sometimes we need to simply let go of the stick and let the other person carry it. Sometimes we need to work out a compromise and carry it together. However we work it out, it should be done with unity.



*How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!*

*Psalm 133:1*



Lord, help me to work in unity with others to accomplish Your purpose.

