

## A Good Dog...

Early last week, I got an afternoon call at the office from my wife. Our fifteen year old Labrador retriever, Murphy, had not gotten up, nor hardly moved all day. We had been trying to put it off for months and Jennifer made the right decision. It was time.

Whether you are a dog lover or not, there's no denying that putting down an old friend is a rough experience. No matter how right the decision is, it still hurts. For better or worse, I will long picture old Murph in his Momma's arms as he took his last laboring breaths. He was a good dog.

Now, I'm not going to bore you today with stories of a tree climbing dog or his antics at just about every river and creek crossing in the Hill Country. That might be more boring than reading weekly articles about teeth. No, old Murph's life has gotten me to thinking about what makes a good dog and why they end up such a big part of our families.

A good dog is happy for you to be home every day. He barks and wags with joy, no matter how good or bad his day has been. He's even happier to see you when you've had a bad day. A good dog barks at the door when he needs to go outside. He barks extra loud and urgently when he needs to expel that bag of Cheetos the kids spilled on the floor. He puts up with children pulling and grabbing at his every body part. You can turn your back and know that your child will not be bitten. A good dog loves strangers, but inherently knows to stay between the kids and an unknown delivery driver. He makes his family feel safe. A good dog follows the kids around the barn and pastures, always looking to protect. To them, he can be an annoying tag-along. To him, they are the most valuable thing in the world. A good dog makes those running motions as he dreams. It's hard not to smirk when you see a dog run in place while lying down. A good dog gets along with other animals, whether he's the boss or a follower. Everyone is treated fair. A good dog loves unconditionally.

The funny thing about good pets is that they start as a responsibility and end up giving a lot more than they ever take. May you all have a good dog some day.

Until next time, keep smiling.

-Comments can be sent to Drs. Parrish through their website: [www.ParrishDental.com](http://www.ParrishDental.com).