

Animal Rights

I. Do animals have rights?

1. Yes and no.
2. Animals do not have rights inherently.
 - A. No animal has positive rights, such as the right to demand food or shelter from another animal or a man.
 - B. No animal has inherent negative rights, such as a right to not be killed or stolen from by another animal or a man.
 - C. If a cat kills a mouse, a lion a zebra, or a man a cow, no animal rights violation has occurred.
 - D. If a man takes an egg from a chicken, the chicken's rights were not violated.
3. Animals do have some "rights" which are the result of duties toward them that are imposed on men by God (more on this later).

II. Animals were made for men, not men for animals.

1. God gave men dominion over the animals, not vice versa.
 - A. **Gen 1:27** - So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.
 - B. **Gen 1:28** - And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.
2. Animals are primarily made to be eaten or to work for us.
 - A. **Gen 9:2** - And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.
 - B. **Gen 9:3** - Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.
 - C. **1Ti 4:4** - For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:
 - D. **1Ti 4:5** - For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.
 - E. **1Ki 19:19** - So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him...
3. Animals can also serve as pets which can be the objects of our affection.
 - A. **2Sa 12:3** - But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

III. A human being should ALWAYS take precedence over an animal.

1. If an animal kills a person, it should be put to death.
 - A. **Exo 21:28** - If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit.
 - B. This is an Old Testament law and is therefore not binding on Christians today, but it is a wise and common sense law that I believe should be adopted by civil governments.

- C. I believe that an animal that attacks a person unprovoked should also be put to death, even if it didn't kill the person.
- 2. If an animal kills a person and its owner knew it was dangerous beforehand, both the animal and the owner should be put to death, or the owner should be made to pay a fine of the victim's family's choosing if they don't demand the owner's death.
 - A. **Exo 21:29** - But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death.
 - B. **Exo 21:30** - If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him.
 - C. **Exo 21:31** - Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him.
 - D. This is an Old Testament law and is therefore not binding on Christians today, but it is a wise and common sense law that I believe should be adopted by civil governments.
- 3. People who take the side of an animal who harmed a person, without being first attacked by that person, are mentally ill.

IV. Biblical animal "rights".

- 1. A man should regard the life of his beast and therefore treat his animal justly by not starving or abusing it.
 - A. **Pro 12:10** - A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.
 - B. **Deu 25:4** - Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.
- 2. But a man is not obligated to spend money to keep his animal alive if it becomes sick and is justified in killing it humanely to end its sufferings.
- 3. Animals are not rational beings made in the image of God and therefore do not have to be, and should they be, treated with the same care as humans.
- 4. Those that spend large sums of money to keep animals living in comfort or to keep them alive when sickness comes have an inordinate affection for their animals, especially if they are neglecting human needs to do so.
 - A. Inordinate affection is a sin.
 - B. **Col 3:5** - Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:
 - C. Inordinate *adj.* - 1. Not 'ordered'; devoid of order or regularity; deviating from right or rule; irregular, disorderly; not regulated, controlled, or restrained.
- 5. Moderation is the key when it comes to our dealings with animals.
- 6. They should not be mistreated, but neither should they be treated as people.
- 7. The fact that many people today treat animals as good as or better than people is indicative that we are living in "perilous times" when "men shall be...without natural affection" (**2Ti 3:1-3**).