

When I served a church in Houston, I worked with the Houston SPCA as a foster home for animals. I liked to foster kittens. They are so much fun to have around and I always felt confident that they would find a forever home. I even made it on Animal Planet's *Animal Cops Houston* with a pair I fostered. As their foster mom, my job was to get them healthy and big enough to be adopted and to socialize them so that they would be the lap cat we all want.

I once fostered a kitten that had me stumped. She was a little calico and had two brothers that were also at my house. They hadn't been around humans much and needed some regular contact to be adoptable. It went well with her brothers. They like to be petted and ended up being adopted together. But not her.

She would not let me touch her. I could get close, but if I crossed some invisible line, she ran away. I tried everything. She seemed to understand that I was the source of food and water and toys; she'd even play with a toy that I was holding. But as soon as my hand came near her – she was gone!

It was very frustrating. I knew that if I could not tame her, if she wouldn't accept human contact, her future wasn't bright. She wouldn't find a home. I wished I could get her to understand that I was there to help her, that my touch was gentle and she'd like it. I wished I could explain to her the alternatives, that I was not the bad guy. She wasn't a great listener...

As I struggled with my dilemma, I began to reflect that this is probably a lot like how God feels when dealing with us. God's love and grace is at work in our lives a lot like I was at work in this kitten's. God is there – offering, helping, providing, inviting. And we run away like God's going to bite us, or smite us. We let God get just THIS close, but no closer; and when God tries to make contact, we run and hide.

God loves the world. Jesus tells us that he came to save us, not condemn us. When we finally get the message, when we let God in and “tame” us at last, we realize what we were missing. Why did it take us so long to see that letting God close wasn't frightening but comforting and loving?

And God is wondering the same thing. After all, God's been telling us that for a long time. It's all there in the Bible, if we'd just stop and read it! God loves us. God wants to be in relationship with us. Let's stop running and rest in the security of God's arms.