

Ecclesiastes 10:8, "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him."



The world's pits are surrounded by lights, music and other deceitful charms which lure us into them. The devil is hoping we will take a wrong step and fall into one of these deep pits: Pits so deep that we must have the help of someone to ever be set free.

Psalm 88:4, "I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength:"

Proverbs 1:12, "Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole as those that go down into the pit:"

The danger the unrighteous experience as they dig pits for the devil: they fall into the pit themselves.

Psalm 57:6, "They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah."

Psalm 9:15, "The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken."

Proverbs 28:10, "Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession."

We could say they deserve to reap what they sow. Yet let us never forget that our Father weeps over their sinful condition and He is grieved by their decision to follow the devil. His heart aches as they wallow in the pit of their own sins. May God use us to help others to climb out of their own pits and fill in the hole and serve the Lord!

Many pits we fall into are dug by others, but many are dug by our own rebellious foolish hands.

Psalm 7:15, "He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made."

Proverbs 26:27, "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him."

There are many times when God allows us to fall into our own pits because He knows that experiencing the despair and struggle can provide an instruction that will not be easily forgotten.

Psalm 88:6, "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in the darkness, in the deeps."

When we do fail God and fall into our own pit, it is wonderful to know that if we turn towards Him, He will graciously forgive us and pull us out of the pit. We can say like Job, we have found a ransom!

Job 33:24, "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom."

Have you ever stopped to think about all the many pits that God has delivered us from or has prevented us from falling headlong into?

Job 33:18, "He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword."

Job 33:28, "He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light."

Job 33:30, "To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living."

Psalm 40:2, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."

Psalm 30:3, "O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit."



God's Hedge of Protection:

Many times we forget or do not appreciate God's hedge of protection around us. Maybe that is because we cannot see it.

But the devil sees it and it aggravates him and prevents him from getting at us.

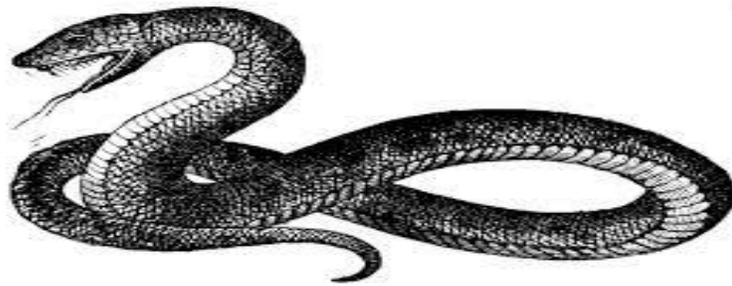
Job 1:10, "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land."

Zechariah 2:5, "For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her."

The hedge keeps us on the side of God's protection and delivers us from the pit of corruption.

Isaiah 38:17, "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back."

The devil desires to trick us into thinking negatively about this hedge of protection so we will foolishly break it down and come over to the other side where he is lurking.



Here are a few of the thoughts he may send our way in hopes we will break the hedge:

- 1) The hedge keeps us from enjoying life like everyone else. At the edge of the hedge, the devil has a loud speaker blaring the entertainment and jokes of the world. His propaganda message is simple: there is more fun on this side of the hedge. But what he does not want you to hear is the cries and agony. Those he will attempt to keep silent.
- 2) The hedge is comprised of the legal laws/rules of the Bible and you simply can't keep them all. You are too weak. You are not good enough to ever be able to keep them all. Just give up, quit making yourself exhausted and simply come over to the other side to rest and enjoy life.
- 3) Curiosity. The devil attempts to make the young Christian curious about what's on the other side. This curiosity leads to discontentment. They want to see over the hedge. Yet the hedge is too tall to see over. The devil attempts to create a rebellious spirit concerning the hedge. This rebellion can drive one's thinking to go against reasoning and break down the hedge.

God's Word creates the boundaries of the hedge. Those who are responsible for us spiritually: our parents, our husbands and our pastors and teachers are caretakers of the hedge alongside God who created the hedge.

Have you ever heard someone in church make the comment that the rules of the church are just too strict? What they are really saying is that they don't like the location of the hedge or the height of the hedge.

Why will people complain about the height of the hedge? It obstructs their view. The view of what? - The world and its allurements. The preacher is saying 'Don't even look – stay away from the curiosity'.

Possibly Lot would have never lived in Sodom if he had never pitched his tent towards Sodom and started looking over the hedge.

If we live close to the hedge, we will start wondering about the noise coming from the other side and become discontent. We begin desiring to discover the joy of the world and start complaining about the height of the hedge obstructing our view. The longer we stay at the edge of the hedge, the level of danger for us and for our children increases.

The devil wants us to forget that the pastor is accountable and carries the burden for each and every soul in his congregation.

Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Imagine being responsible for fifty people, a hundred people, hundreds of people or more. Would you build the hedge right next to the cliff? What happens when that one rebellious person is determined to break the hedge? Wouldn't you want the hedge or boundary to be far away from the cliff?

Many standards which may seem excessive to us are simply a method to have the hedge as far away from the cliff of destruction as possible. Standards are not for our harm but for our good.

Note that in Hebrews 13:17 it states that we are to obey and to submit. Have you ever wondered about the difference? Submitting is obeying even if you don't understand or agree with the right attitude. We may not understand or agree with all the standards of the hedge, but don't use that as an excuse to break it down! And watch your speech. Don't complain or question standards established. You may never struggle with the desire to break the hedge, but others listening might. Don't allow the devil to use your careless words to later taunt the mind of others to break the hedge.

I once heard about the written rules submitted to every potential graduate from flight school at Fort Rucker in Alabama. One of the rules for immediate expulsion is the removal of the boll weevil monument from downtown Dothan. Why was such an excessive rule established? Someone once kidnapped the monument.

Many standards established by the overseer are because someone broke the hedge. They may not be standards quotable from the Bible and may seem excessive, but they are standards for protection.

Instead of complaining about standards, let's decide to simply be thankful for the hedge. Put aside any curiosity and doubts concerning the hedge and determine to live not at the edge of it but in the midst of the presence of God – safe inside His hedge of protection.