

God Provides a Hedge

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

When we think of hedges, the image that comes to mind is often of the elaborately trimmed greenery surrounding someone's yard. If well-tended, they are very beautiful and defining elements of a piece of property. Nice hedges can do a lot for the appearance of a home.

In the Bible, God uses the word "hedge" to describe His protection and provision surrounding His people. The Lord's hedges are a boundary, protecting those who belong to Him. Satan and his demons are very aware of who belongs to God, and they cannot penetrate those hedges without being given an opening by God.

Psalms 80:12 reveals that where the hedge is torn down, people become vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy. Though we may come under attack, we do not need to succumb. In the midst of the trial, we can rest in the truth of the Finished Work gospel of grace and obey Ephesians 4:27: "Neither give place to the devil." God may

have allowed him access, but we do not have to give him a place.

This booklet defines the ways God protects His people with hedges. As we come to understand the importance of having a hedge about us, we will grow into mature, secure servants who go forward in the Father's plan and purpose, revealing the risen Savior wherever we go.

Chapter One

LIMITS ESTABLISHED BY GOD

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

“Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

“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.

“But put forth thine hand now, and touch all

that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD” (Job 1:6-12).

Satan accused God that Job was only blessed because God had put a hedge around him. So when God removed the hedge from Job’s life, Satan was allowed access to Job.

The Word of God clearly teaches that every born-again believer has a hedge around him. There are, however, many things in our lives that can break down the hedges. In Psalm 89:40, the psalmist declared that God had broken down Israel’s hedges.

For so long, the people of Israel had rebelled against God’s provision. They did not realize what the hedge around them was—the hedge of protection, the hedge of provision, the hedge of the Finished Work. And in verses 30 through 37 of Psalm 89, though there was a price to pay for rebellion, David recalled the promise of God’s everlasting covenant:

“If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;

“If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;

“Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

“Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

“My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

“Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.

“His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.

“It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah”

The hedge of the Finished Work has salvaged the lives of so many Christians. It demonstrates God’s covenant of sure mercies toward David and His faithfulness to everyone who belongs to Him. As children of God through adoption, we have this hedge. It is a hedge of unconditional love, of being complete in Christ, the One who has power over all principalities and powers. We are one with Christ. We were buried with Him in baptism, and now we operate in the reality of Jesus Christ’s resurrection and ascension.

No one in the history of Christianity has ever been defeated when he operates on the grounds of the Resurrection and stands in the

communion of the Ascension. But as we saw with Job, God allowed the hedge to be broken. Yet, while He allows His people to experience severe trials, He promises never to forsake His covenant.

Unconditional love is a tremendous hedge. God rested in that love toward Abraham. In Genesis 16, Abraham agreed with his wife, Sarah, to help the plan of God along when he committed adultery with Hagar. Satan caused them to rationalize their situation, but glory to God, Abraham had a hedge of unconditional love around him, and he became the father of our faith through the promised son, Isaac. Though God allowed much suffering to come upon Abraham's descendants, His mercies are still sure and His covenant is forever.

God Cannot Lie

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

"Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

"He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nei-

ther hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them" (Numbers 23:19-21).

In Genesis 27, Jacob sinned when he stole his brother's birthright and tricked Isaac, his father, into giving him the blessing of the first-born. Afraid of what his brother might do, Jacob fled to his Uncle Laban's house where he hoped to find a suitable wife. For twenty years, this man worked diligently, serving a crook of a man and yet loving him consistently. To honor an agreement to marry Laban's beautiful daughter, Jacob worked beyond what he should have worked—seven years for the first wife, seven years for the promised wife, and six years for the animals—and he was being trained by God through it all. Some consider Jacob's labors to be a form of discipline, and in a sense it was. Yet, Jacob had a hedge that God had put around him: That hedge was the positional truth that God did not behold any iniquity in his life.

As I think of my life, the great key to my success has not been anything about me. The key has been that God puts His hedges around me. "I will take care of Carl Stevens," God declares.

The Principle of Rebound

There is the hedge of rebound when I fail, even when I fall into the same sin many times in a day (see Proverbs 24:16). This hedge provides the forgiveness I need every time I fail.

It is crucial that we do not continue in sin, for there is discipline and chastisement that God must bring, but it is always brought to us in love and grace. We must not be deceived, however, into thinking that our sin will cause grace to abound. That is turning the grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude 1:4).

Any attitude that is not derived from operating in the nature of God is probably motivated by wrong choices, rebellion, passivity, depression, or comparison. Satan compared himself to God and he became jealous and full of envy. Iniquity was found in him and it became rooted in his heart. That led to covetousness—a sin that is always associated with evil.

Job responded perfectly in his first trial; he never failed. His attitude was “God giveth, God taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” He was perfect in the same way through his second trial. But then, things kept going downhill and Job’s attitude changed. He was hurting. His

health and his wealth were gone. His family was gone.

Eventually, at the end of his trials, Job became right with God, and he received more than he ever had before. Through it all, God kept His hedge around Job's life. Though Satan was allowed to afflict Job, God restricted the devil's influence. Oh, thank God for His hedge.

Chapter Two

THE SERPENT'S VENOM

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste” (Isaiah 28:16).

I have wept over dear people who have made wrong decisions and choices, because I know it will cost them down the road. They have made hasty decisions because they were influenced by the air. They can be helped, but only if they will heed the Word of God.

So many couples rush to get married. This doesn't mean that all of these marriages have problems. But a time of dating and courtship will allow the relationship to develop and to be tested, as well as to allow any jealousy or insecurity to come to the surface.

Some women think they never look good enough. You hear them comparing themselves

to every other woman in the room. Other women do not like their husbands to do anything without them. A husband comes home a little late and there are all kinds of questions: "Where were you? What did you do? What happened?" Certainly, it is a good idea for a husband to communicate and to honor his wife. But sometimes the questions come as accusations.

To the same degree, there are husbands who can be overbearing. They won't let their wives talk to anyone else. These men carry a possessiveness that is almost fanatic. They cannot bear it when they are not the center of their wives' attention.

What is wrong in these situations? The hedge of trust has not been built into the relationships. Through prayer and investment in each other, two people can develop a hedge against jealous spirits, selfishness, and possessiveness.

Satan's Poisons

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

"Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endan-

gered thereby" (Ecclesiastes 10:8-9).

"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

"Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear" (Psalm 58:3-4).

When the hedges are down, this is when the serpent can come in to bite. I think we all know who this serpent is. Satan, like a snake, lurks near the hedges, waiting for us to allow him an opening. Then quickly he springs through the breach and injects his poison into a situation.

Science tells us that poisonous snakes carry one of two types of venom. While the hemotoxic venom infects the bloodstream, causing physical afflictions and pain, the neurotoxic venom attacks the nervous system of a victim. Similarly, hell tries to afflict Christians with poisons that affect the emotions and the mind—the neurotoxic attacks of the devil.*

It is interesting to note that the Bible compares the wicked to a "deaf adder" (possibly a cobra)—not because they have no ability to hear, but because they *will not* hear, according to Fausset's Bible Dictionary. They contort or twist the truth, relying instead on their own wisdom from

below, inflicting their victim's mind and emotions with Satan's poison.

That serpent, Satan, is trying to make us ignore the Word of God in the same way that he does. He does it by trying to get us to bring down the hedges.

Thank God that *He* is the husbandman (John 15:1). He is the keeper of the hedge, and nothing can get through without His permission.

**For more about these venomous attacks of the serpent, Satan, read Table of Grace by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998.*

Chapter Three

SURROUNDED BY THE FIRE OF THE FINISHED WORK

“And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

“And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will” (Acts 13:21-22).

In His Word, God speaks of David as a man after His own heart. This is what the Lord says about David in spite of what happened with Bathsheba. The king did commit adultery with her and then conspired to arrange the death of her husband, a loyal soldier named Uriah. Still, God boasted in His choice of David as His man, even knowing every detail of the choices David

would make. God established David in “sure mercies.” That covenant remains toward us today.

Demons Fear God's Fire

“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

“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” (Zechariah 2:5).

The Lord is a wall of fire around us. His Word is the spirit of burning (Isaiah 4:4), and the demons cannot break through it. Demons cannot stand the fire of God. They scatter quickly when God's fire is near. Think about how the demons reacted to Jesus' presence, according to Luke 8:27-31:

“And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

“When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of

God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

“(For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

“And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

“And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.”

Demons do not like the fire of God because they know their destiny—the lake of fire. They understand where they are going, and they are out to take as many souls with them as they can.

Incidents with demon-possessed people have been recorded where the demons begin to say things such as, “God is not fair! You humans have sinned, but you can get saved, and we cannot be saved. It is just not fair!”

The demons would love to get Christians to pity them. They don’t want to be cast out. They would like to be able to feel “at home” and to have a person to dwell in and control. Otherwise, they are just roaming around the atmosphere, seeking people to devour and destroy.

A believer can allow his mind and emotions

to be influenced either by the Holy Spirit or by the spirit of darkness (James 3:13-18; Ephesians 4:27). As Christians, we cannot be possessed by demons (1 John 4:4); however, a Christian can become obsessed, heavily influenced by the demonic atmosphere.

The fact that we have a wall of fire around us is established in the positional truth that we are hid with Christ in God. The work of our salvation has been finished. We have been sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption (see Ephesians 1:13-14, Ephesians 4:30). Jesus Christ dwells in us, and demons cannot dwell where Christ dwells. The power of the Holy Spirit enables us to submit to God and to resist the devil. When we obey God's Word and refuse to give him a place, the devil has to flee from us.

Thank God that He provides such hedges around us. We must not allow ourselves to forget that we are complete in Christ. Our salvation is eternally secure, and we are hid with Christ in God. Ultimately, though he may try, Satan cannot get to us because God protects His people with everlasting hedges of grace and mercy.

CONCLUSION

One of the Hebrew words for “hedge” (*gadar*, in the Old Testament) describes a fence made of stones. Those fences were often topped with thorns. To me, this is a great picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, our ultimate hedge and protector, who wore a crown of thorns.

Here is the beautiful principle: God has hidden us in His place of protection. Christ finished the work of our salvation and has hedged us about as “peculiar people”—prized and favored possessions. The Cross, where our Savior crowned with thorns died, stands between us and judgment, between us and defeat. The Son’s victory established God’s hedge of protection around us.

The attacks of the enemy have been thwarted by God’s hedge of protection. And even when God allows the hedge to come down for a season, we have the awesome provision to be protected by a wall of fire, which speaks of

categorical doctrine: specific truth from God's Word to meet the specific situation in which we find ourselves.* Beyond that, the Lord uses the things Satan throws at us as a testimony of His power. Just as he did with the attacks on Job's life, the serpent will try again and again to poison our experience with God. But the fact remains that the hedges of protection and provision through unconditional love and the Finished Work encompass us, and we are His forever.

**Read Building Walls of Doctrine, by Pastor Carl. H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1999, for more about our part in spiritual warfare.*