

mercEmail

A Weekly Devotional from the
South Green Street Church of Christ

Don't Fence Me In

By Steve Higginbotham

While growing up, I wasn't allowed to have a dog. We tried a few times, but dogs are messy, and my parents...well, let's just say they're not messy people (they're reading this). Anyway, I used to tell my Mom and Dad that as soon as I graduated from college, I was going to get married and buy a dog. And I did. We loved our dog, Whitney. We had a fenced in backyard where she could run and chase birds and squirrels to her heart's content. She was living a dog's life. Pampered, petted, well fed, and loved. However, one day she escaped the confines of our yard, ran into the street, and was killed by a passing truck. It was a sad day for our family.

But now, this article isn't really about our dog, but about the purpose of fences. The fence we had in the back yard was not an effort to punish or unnecessarily restrict our dog from "enjoying the good things of life." It was there for protection. It was there for safety. Placed within the confines of the fence were all the things a dog needed for happiness. The fence wasn't there to torment our dog, but to keep her safe.

Can you not see the application? God loves us dearly, and has "fenced us in," not as a punishment, but as protection. There are things out there in the world that will ultimately lead to our hurt and ruin. God is not a kill-joy. The rules and regulations he gives us, which restrict our conduct, are given with the intent of protecting us from harm. Within the confines of the Christian lifestyle are all the things a person needs to be happy, satisfied, and fulfilled. But what do we do? We escape. We break through the barrier God built, and eventually we get hurt. How it must break God's heart to witness his children "break free" from his constraints only to be hurt from the dangers he knew were just outside his "fence."

Friends, remember, the commandments of God are not grievous, but good. They are given because God loves you and wants the best for you. Be content and satisfy yourself with the good God has fenced you in with, and trust him when he tells you not to go beyond his limits.