Sudoku Solution

6	7	4	1	3	8	2	9	5
3	8	5	9	6	2	7	1	4
2	1	9	5	7	4	6	3	8
5	4	3	7	8	6	9	2	1
1	2	6	4	9	3	8	5	7
7	9	8	2	5	1	4	6	3
8	5	1	6	2	7	3	4	9
4	3	2	8	1	9	5	7	6
9	6	7	3	4	5	1	8	2

Crossword Solution

M	A	S	T		D	A	T	E	S		L	A	N	D
A	B	L	E	M	I	S	H		P	O	O	R	E	R
J	O	E	L		S	H	A	D	Y		R	E	B	A
O	N	E		W	H	A	T			A	D	D	O	N
R	E	P	L	I	E	D		F	A	S	T			K
			A	L	S	O		I	M	P	O	S	E	
B	E	R	Y	L		W	A	R	E	S		E	L	I
O	W	E	S		U		S		N		R	E	S	T
Y	E	A		G	R	A	S	P		D	A	R	E	S
	S	P	R	I	G	S		L	A	I	N	No.277		
S			A	R	E	A		A	R	E	G	L	A	D
H	A	D	I	D			U	N	I	T		E	R	E
A	M	O	S		W	A	N	T	S		A	P	I	N
M	A	L	I	C	E		D	E	E	P	N	E	S	S
E	D	E	N		T	H	O	R	N		T	R	E	E

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The Serpent and the Hedge

By Kurt Bomar
Avery County

In Ecclesiastes 10:8 we read that *"whoever breaks a hedge will be bitten by a serpent."* If you're snake hunting that's a great place to look because they like to hide there. They are protected by the intertwined branches and thorns and at the same time, other critters in there make for a good food supply.

Most of us aren't snake hunters, however, we're snake avoiders so we're careful when we walk through any kind of hedge. So why would this verse be in the Scriptures? I doubt it's a brief safety course for campers. More likely it's there to teach us a lesson.

What are hedges? They are generally boundary makers. We protect our houses and gardens with them. The one who breaks through from the outside runs the risk of punishment for his lawbreaking. This is indicated by the previous verse "*Whoever digs a pit (sets a trap for someone) will fall into it.*"

But I think there is a deeper meaning. Hedges also protect us from going places we shouldn't. We must build hedges around our families, our marriages, our children, and our walk with God…parameters concerning that which we will not allow being crossed.

This is especially true in the areas that we know in which we are prone to sin. If you're trying to lose weight, keep the chocolate out of the house. If you struggle with drinking, keep all alcohol on the other side of the hedge. If pornography is an issue, put filters on your computer or give others authority to have access to your searches.

By doing these things, by keeping your hedges thick and thorny, you don't have to fight the temptation when you are the weakest. The result will be victory in areas where you have struggled most. Maybe this is why God told the Hebrews just before Passover, "make a search of your house and throw out all the levin (yeast)." It's hard to be tempted by something on the other side of the hedge.

Finally, remember who the enemy is. Satan is typified by a snake. He's always looking for ways to destroy you through sin.

Sin will always: take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.

Build your hedges strong and firm, and once you build them—never break them, and you'll be kept far from the one who wants to destroy you.

1 Pet. 5:8-9 "*Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*"

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.

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Hey y'all, we are Steven and Jennifer Painter. We started out as some of those folks who saw a sad story on the news about a child who had been neglected or abused and said, "why did this have to happen? We would have gladly taken that child and loved him/her!" Yet we didn't make a move to actually BECOME that family because "it was never the right time" or "we don't know where to start". But really, when IS it the right time? Answer: now. How do we get started? Answer: just make the call! There are children NOW who need someone to bridge that gap. Contact McDowell DSS to learn more. 828-652-3355.