

## WHEN IS A BLESSING NOT A BLESSING?

**S**nakes can be a problem in any garden. Adam and Eve learned that a long time ago. Most of the rest of us at least understood it as soon as we saw our first snake. If it didn't hurt us, it made us hurt ourselves as we scrambled to get out of its way! Even apart from "that old serpent, which is the Devil (Rev. 20:2)" which the Bible speaks of, snakes seem to be just naturally recognized as the enemy.

In my back yard, I had solved the raccoon and cat problem by putting netting around the edge of my koi pond and the heron problem when I put an awning over it. This was done after I had lost fish to raccoons, cats, and herons. I hadn't thought to worry about snakes. Not in our metropolis. But there he was! Big as life. Well, at least five and a half or six feet long. He (I assume it was a he) had crawled through the holes in the net and into the water and, joy of joys, he couldn't believe his sneaky eyes! There was a veritable feast of fish, each eight or ten inches long with no way to get away from him. Colorful, too! That was the bonus. Seldom had he found such a beautiful banquet, with the table already set. He had swallowed a couple before he remembered that the fish were a lot wider than he was. However, with his hinged reptile jaw, he easily swallowed them. The small holes in the mesh were another matter. Before it was over, he had entangled himself

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thoroughly, with no hope of escape. He was already near self-induced death before I took him off life support and threw him into the creek. His blessings were just more than he could handle!

One thing we should pray for, but seldom remember to do, is that God will not give us more than we can handle because it often happens that when we are given too much, it can become our spiritual death rather than a true blessing. If the rich man in Luke 12:13-21 had not received so many blessings that he was able to say, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease; eat, drink and be merry", he may have placed more emphasis on God and spiritual things. Christ said of him that "he laid up treasure for himself and was not rich toward God."

A woman who missed a plane in Dallas headed for Houston felt she was being treated harshly until the news came in that it had been hit by lightning over Dawson with a loss of all life aboard. We are not able to truly assess whether what happens to us is truly best for us now. Our faith can help us accept it. What we can be assured of is that if we love God and with commitment seek His will, all things will work together for our good. Rom. 8:28. In Gen. 45:8 it took tons of faith for Joseph to see that the jealousy of his brothers, being sold as a slave, and being imprisoned because of false accusations were all blessings in the final picture. What seemed bad, proved to be good, just as sometimes what seems good can turn out to be bad. "It was not you but God who did it," he believed. And so should we.

*Doglo Goodspeed*