

I had raised them since they were puppies. They were my pride and joy. But to this day I don't know why the other side of the fence was so intriguing to my AKC registered boxers.

They had plenty of room to run in the yard. They had plenty of fresh water. They were fed with the best dog food available and when my wife wasn't looking, with that extra piece of steak or ham that was left over after a meal. They made more trips to the vet to check on their health than my entire family made to our family doctor. They always had someone who wanted to play with them and wrestle with them on the lawn. My son and I even built them a big doghouse with insulated walls and ceiling to keep them comfortable. It was a perfect life. They had it made. But, the other side of the fence kept calling to them.

It almost became a game (for the dogs.) I would come home, see where they had dug out, hunt all over the neighborhood, bring them back, repair the fence, fill the hole, and wait to see how they would manage to get out the next time. In desperation I resorted to putting up a hot wire, and would you believe it, the hot wire did the trick. Finally I had won the battle. My dogs were in the yard, they were safe, no longer could they dig out and go exploring. But, I underestimated the "call to freedom" that no doubt kept beckoning my dogs from the other side of the fence.

It was a Friday evening. I came home from work to find the hot wire had malfunctioned, the fence was broken, a hole had been dug deeply enough for my 110 pound male boxer to slip through which also accommodated the female quite handily, and my dogs were gone. After hours of searching, I realized not only were they gone, they were long gone. The freedom they so badly wanted was finally theirs.

Early Saturday at the first crack of light, we were all out searching again. By this time we had the story on the radio, the dogcatcher had been notified and even our neighbors were looking for my dogs. About 10:30 we spotted the male standing alone near a house about two miles from home, but the female was no where to be found. We kept searching. Then came the call! It was just after 12 noon and the caller said, "I've found your female, she's hurt, you need to get here quickly." Needless to say, I rushed to the scene but by the time I arrived I was too late, the female was dead. She had been crossing a highway and had been hit by a car. Her 24 hours of freedom ended badly for her. If only she had understood that the yard and the fence were there for her benefit. They weren't there to keep her from being free, or happy, or fulfilled. They were there for her safety and well being. She learned the hard way that freedom really isn't free at all, even for dogs.

Unfortunately, some people act the same way my dogs acted. They consider the "rules" God gives them to live by in the Bible to be fences, fences that keep them from having fun, or being fulfilled, or being free. Every chance they have they dig under the fences in search of freedom, only to find themselves lost in a world of drugs, alcoholism, sin-caused disease and other types of horrific problems over which they ultimately have no control. They find out the hard way that freedom really isn't free at all.

Perhaps that's what Jesus meant when he said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." No doubt we need to understand that Jesus really does want what's best for us,

that the “fences” he builds are for our safety, security, and protection. Perhaps if we would just take the time to consider the consequences of our actions before we “dig for freedom” we could actually learn from the dogs without acting like them.

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