

The Blessing of the

Blackberry Bush

BY DONNELL ALLAN

One day when our son Jesse was a toddler, I was watching our children play in the yard.

Suddenly I realized that he was no longer with the others. One moment he was there, and the next he was gone. My heart pounded in panic. I called out for him as I frantically searched the yard.

Soon I heard his frightened cries, which I followed. I found Jesse in the yard next door, entangled in the middle of some blackberry vines. He struggled to escape, but each time he moved, thorns from the vines buried themselves deeper into his clothing and skin. He was frightened and in pain. It took me quite some time to remove each thorn and pull Jesse free.

It hurt me to see my little child suffer. But then I remembered the large pond located in the neighbor's yard. If the blackberries had not detained Jesse, he might have wandered into the pond and risked drowning.

I've since learned that God sometimes allows us to stumble into thorny places to protect us from more harmful situations. He

loves us and does what is best for us, even when it hurts terribly, because sometimes the pain is necessary for our physical safety or spiritual growth. When we turn to Him in our trials, He carefully pulls out the thorns and comforts our hearts.

Years after that incident with Jesse, I was touched when I came across this passage from Elder George Q. Cannon (1827–1901): “The Saints should always remember that God sees not as man sees; that he does not willingly afflict his children, and that if he requires them to endure present privation and trial, it is that they may escape greater tribulations which would otherwise inevitably overtake them. If He deprives them of any present blessing, it is that he may bestow upon them greater and more glorious ones by-and-by.”¹

My experience with my son—what I now call “the parable of the blackberries”—has brought comfort to me as I have watched my children endure trials and challenges. I am reminded that our trials and suffering have purpose and that the Lord always has our best interest in mind, even when allowing us to suffer temporarily among life's blackberry thorns. ■

NOTE

1. “Beneficial Results of Continued Obedience to the Teachings of God's Servants,” *Millennial Star*, Oct. 3, 1863, 634.