

Jumping Fences



From an interview with Elder Daryl H. Garn of the Seventy, currently serving in the Asia Area Presidency; by Callie Buys

Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord (Colossians 3:20).

As a young boy living on a small farm in Fielding, Utah, I always wanted a horse. When I was old enough to take care of one, my dad bought me a big black horse, and I named him Smokey.

I loved Smokey and took care of him the best I could. One morning when I went out to feed him, he was not in his corral. I hunted around and found him in the haystack, which was fenced off from the corral. He had been making a mess—trampling on the hay and ruining it. All the gates were closed; Smokey had obviously

jumped over the fence. His manger had hay in it, so there was no reason for him to go into the haystack.

A few days later Smokey was gone again. This time I found him out in the pasture. Soon he started jumping out of both the corral and the pasture. I had to ride my bike all over town looking for him. Sometimes Dad and I drove for miles before finding him and bringing him back.

Dad decided to buy some hobbles for Smokey. Hobbles are like handcuffs for horses to keep them from running away. “That will fix old Smokey,” Dad said.

It didn’t even slow him down. Jumping fences became a game to him, and he wasn’t much fun anymore. He was wild. I couldn’t catch him, and I couldn’t ride him

Elder and Sister Garn with their family



very much. Finally Dad said, “We’ll teach old Smokey a lesson.” We tied a heavy log-chain to Smokey’s hobbles so that wherever he went he would have to drag an eight-foot (2.5-m) log-chain between his legs. We thought surely this would stop him.

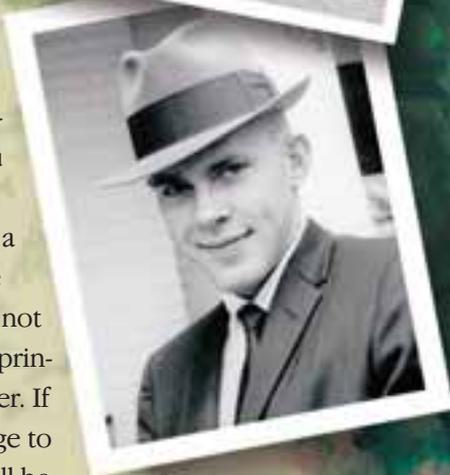
But that night Smokey tried to jump the fence again. The chain caught and tripped him. He fell into the fence and got cut up in the barbed wire. We got him out and called the veterinarian, who came and patched him up.

My home teacher, whom I called Uncle Claude, was a real horseman. He had an idea for Smokey, so he traded a gray horse to me for Smokey. Uncle Claude raced chariots, and he thought that if he could team Smokey with a horse that was a good chariot racer, he could break Smokey’s bad habits and they could win some races. So Uncle Claude hooked Smokey up to the chariot, and they practiced a few times. Smokey seemed to be doing just fine—until the race. All of a sudden he veered off to the right and tried to jump over the fence that ran alongside the track. It almost killed Uncle Claude, and Smokey hurt himself so badly that he had to be put to sleep.

I’ve thought about my old horse many times since then. He had no good reason to jump over the fence that first time he got into the haystack. He was like some young people who decide that they want to be disobedient. Once we jump that first fence, it becomes easier to jump other fences—breaking the commandments and

the principles of the gospel—and before long we can destroy our lives through disobedience.

It is important to honor your father and mother and to be obedient to what they ask you to do. Their rules are often the first fence. It’s a sad day in a person’s life when he or she decides not to obey parents, gospel principles, or Heavenly Father. If you decide at a young age to be obedient, your life will be so much happier. ●



From top: Playing basketball in college; About age 17; Riding his horse at about age 18