

NUTS IN THE SHELL



Nuts are the seeds of a tree. The nut is a delicate thing and must be protected. To keep the nut safe until it is time to sprout and grow a new tree, the nut has a protective shell. Depending upon the needs of the nut, the shell may be easily broken or very hard to break.

The shell covering the nut is amazing. It may be very hard to break from the outside but it breaks easily when the nut inside begins to grow. Some shells even

have to be burned in fire to crack open so that the nut can sprout. The tender nut is not harmed and, after a fire has cleared all the other plants, it has a clear area in which to grow.

What can we learn from God's creation of the nut in the shell?

This small miracle which we see on the ground around trees and in the grocery store can teach us much. God uses the nut within the shell to show us what we are like. Just as the nut is tender and easily damaged, we also need protection. The world is a dangerous place and if we did not have God's protection we would be easily destroyed. Just as many animals look for nuts to eat, Satan also goes around looking for people to destroy. The Bible teaches us this in 1st Peter 5:8, "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." Jesus lived a perfect life and then sacrificed that life on the cross to save us from our sins. If God did not protect us, we would not be able to win the battle against the devil and our sins would earn us eternal

punishment. We are too weak and tender to win the battle against sin.

God uses the shell of the nut to teach us how strong His protection is. Did you ever try to break open a nut with a hard shell only with your hands? You probably could not break the shell with your hands. This is like the strong protection that God gives us through Jesus His Son. The Bible teaches us in 2nd Thessalonians 3:3, "The Lord is faithful and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one (the devil)." When God protects us nothing can harm us as we learn in Hebrews 13:6, "So we say with confidence, the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" The protection of God is stronger than anything that tries to hurt us. The shell is like our armor against evil as the Bible teaches us in Ephesians 6:11, "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes."

Some nuts must be burned in fire so that the nut can sprout and grow a new tree. God uses these types of nuts to show us that sometimes we must go through bad times in order for our faith to grow. God never

stops loving and protecting us and He uses bad times to make us stronger. The Bible teaches us in Isaiah 48:10, "See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake I do this." God wants us to have eternal life. That is why Jesus came to save us from our sins. God wants us to resist sin and follow His teachings in the Bible. That is why God sometimes lets bad things happen - to make us realize our sin and how much we need to rely on God's mercy. God does this not because we are good and deserve His help. God helps us because He loves us even when we sin and He wants to make us turn to Him. He also wants our faith to grow like a strong tree that can withstand even a storm so that we will not turn away from Jesus our Savior. Just like exercising your muscles to make them stronger, bad times exercise our faith to make it stronger. When you exercise your muscles it can hurt and when your faith is being strengthened it can hurt. In the end, our muscles and our faith are healthier and stronger.

Some nuts such as the peanut have soft shells. Some nuts like the walnut have hard shells. Each nut has a shell perfectly made for its needs. If the peanut had a hard shell, it could not break out and grow. If the walnut had a soft shell, it would be destroyed before it could grow. God knows each of us and He knows just what our needs are. As Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:31-33, "So do not worry saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear? For the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well." God will take care of us whether our needs are great or small. We should be thinking about what God wants us to do according to the Bible. Like the soft shell or the hard shell, God will provide for our needs in exactly the right way.

God must love us very much to protect us so well!

