

# THORNS

## 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

**Introduction:** Everyone at one time or other has a problem that just doesn't seem to want to go away. Paul had a problem that some say was poor eyesight, but whatever it was, he called it a "thorn in his flesh." Paul prayed and prayed for God to remove it but was told that he was to keep it and God would be with him. Paul's prayer is but an echo of the prayer Jesus prayed in the Garden on the night He was taken. Jesus and Paul got the same answer. The "thorn" was to remain but they would make it through. Angels came to Jesus' tomb and He was resurrected, He made it through. Grace came to Paul and he made it through.

We often wish that we could just give our problem to somebody else who never seemed to have a problem. If they had our problem and we had theirs, they would have the greater problem. How often have you prayed for God to give you relief from a "thorn" in your flesh?

### I. A THORN IS FRUSTRATING (v7)

1. As frustrating as a thorn can be, it is a comfort to be able to pray to God about it.
2. A "thorn" is something painful, destructive and "impaled" into the body somewhere.
3. Paul's "thorn" is thought to have been his eyes, but could have also been his circumstances.
4. Paul was convinced that he was useless unless the thorn was removed and often told God so.
5. Do YOU have a "thorn?" Have you asked God to remove that problem?
6. Paul was a powerful man with the Lord, yet his prayers were answered "NO!" His thorn was to remain.
7. Do YOU have a situation that you feel needs to be totally removed? Have you been telling God that?

### II. A REASON FOR THE THORN (vv8-9)

1. For fourteen (14) years Paul had asked God to remove the thorn and suddenly he stopped asking God to remove it. Why did he suddenly, finally stop?
2. For fourteen (14) years God had been trying to get a point across to Paul.
3. Perhaps YOU have been like Paul, busy for years telling God what He ought to do about your "thorn." Thus causing you to be unable to hear what God has been trying to tell you about your "thorn."
4. God finally made it clear to Paul that there was a REASON for the thorn. Paul had been wrong.
5. God wanted the "thorn" to stay there to keep Paul on his knees.
6. Perhaps God is leaving your "thorn" with you for the same reason.
7. God provides GRACE for our every need.
8. The strength of Jesus Christ can be seen ONLY in our weaknesses - when we have nowhere else to turn.
9. So, why thorns? To bring us to Jesus Christ for help.

### III. THE TRANSFORMATION FROM THE THORN (vv9-10)

1. Human weakness is immediately transformed into strength.
  - What is YOUR weakest area? Wouldn't it be wonderful if in its place came STRENGTH?
  - The "thorn" is to remind us of God's presence and provisions.
  - Satan will do his best to DISTORT all that God seeks to do in our lives, get us to blame God for that "thorn."

- Satan will do everything he can to draw us away from God and will use ANYTHING to accomplish his goal.
  - STOP praying for God to remove that thorn! Ask instead for God to show you how He can give you GRACE to live with that "thorn."
2. Human misery from that "thorn" can be transformed into happiness.
    - Paul finally became thankful for his "thorn." It kept him humble and on his knees and dependent on the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - Has joy left your life? Has your life been hard? Have trials been just too severe? Do you want a change? Of course you do.
    - Paul said, in effect: **"...All the time I had been trying to get God to take away my thorn, the Lord had been trying to get me to see that he was the one who had given it to me in the first place..."**

## CONCLUSION:

1. ***Psalm 106:15*** - What if God did take away your thorn? Could/would you remain concerned, prayerful? Or would your communication with God decrease?
2. Can you accept your "thorn" as Paul finally did? Something God has intentionally given you!
3. We can gripe, whine and complain about something in our life that is there constantly and disrupts the way we think we want to live, or we can turn that "thorn" over to the Lord and ask Him to guide us and enable us to live with that "thorn."