

How Will I Handle My Thorn?

Thorns come in different shapes and sizes



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Take your pick... none are pleasant!

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Sooner or later thorns will come to us all, the question is... how will I handle my thorn?

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Physical Emotional Mental Family Illness

How Will I Handle My Thorn?

Text **2 Corinthians 12:1-10**

October 9, 2016

How Will I Handle My Thorn?

□ Visions and revelations seen by Paul

↪ “I must needs glory, though it is not expedient; but **I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord---**.” **2 Corinthians 12:1-6**

How Will I Handle My Thorn?

□ Paul given a thorn in the flesh

↪ “And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, **there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me,** that I should not be exalted overmuch.”

2 Corinthians 12:7

How Will I Handle My Thorn?

□ Paul given a thorn in the flesh

↪ **Possibly caused others to despise him**

“I beseech you, brethren, become as I *am*, for I also *am become* as ye *are*. Ye did me no wrong; but ye know that because of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you the first time: and that which was a temptation to you in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but ye received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.”

(continued) Galatians 4:12-14

How Will I Handle My Thorn?

□ Paul given a thorn in the flesh

↪ **Possibly caused others to despise him**

“Where then is that gratulation of yourselves? for I bear you witness, that, if possible, ye would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.”

Galatians 4:12-14

How Will I Handle My Thorn?

□ Paul given a thorn in the flesh

↪ **Possibly caused others to despise him**

“For, His letters, they say, are weighty and strong; but **his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account.**” **2 Corinthians 10:10**

How Will I Handle My Thorn?

- Paul given a thorn to keep him from personal pride

☞ “**And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch**, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch.”
2 Corinthians 12:7

How Will I Handle My Thorn?

- Paul given a thorn to keep him from personal pride... and rely upon God

☞ “For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But **by the grace of God I am what I am**: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”
1 Corinthians 15:9-10

Paul’s Thorn In the Flesh

- Paul’s reaction...prayed that it might be taken away

☞ “Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.”
2 Corinthians 12:8

- ❖ Natural reaction... wanted to be rid of it
- ❖ Prayed three times that it might be removed

Paul’s Thorn In the Flesh

- Paul’s reaction

☞ Prayer answered ...but not as requested

“**And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness**. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”
2 Corinthians 12:9

Paul’s Thorn In the Flesh

- Paul’s acceptance of God’s answer

“And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for *my* power is made perfect in weakness. **Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**”
2 Corinthians 12:9

Paul’s Thorn In the Flesh

- Paul’s acceptance of God’s answer... for when I am weak, then am I strong

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: **for when I am weak, then am I strong.**” **2 Corinthians 12:10**

Paul's Thorn In the Flesh

- Paul's acceptance of God's answer...I have learned to be content

"Not that I speak in respect of want: **for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content.** I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. **I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.**"

Philippians 4:11-13

Paul's Thorn In the Flesh

- Paul's acceptance of God's answer... unlike Jonah when things didn't go like he wanted

"**But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.** And he prayed unto Jehovah, and said, I pray thee, O Jehovah, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I hastened to flee unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, and repentest thee of the evil." **Jonah 4:1-4**

Paul's Thorn In the Flesh

- Paul's acceptance of God's answer... unlike Jonah when things didn't go like he wanted

"Therefore now, O Jehovah, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. **And Jehovah said, Doest thou well to be angry?**" **Jonah 4:1-4**

Paul's Thorn In the Flesh

- Paul's acceptance of God's answer... unlike Asaph who struggled with acceptance of his position in life

"Surely God is good to Israel, *Even* to such as are pure in heart. **But as for me, my feet were almost gone; My steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the arrogant, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.**" **Psalms 73:1-3**

Paul's Thorn In the Flesh

- Our thorns in life can strengthen our faith and bring us honor when Christ returns

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

(continued) 1 Peter 1:6-9

Paul's Thorn In the Flesh

- Our thorns in life can strengthen our faith and bring us honor when Christ returns

"whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls." **1 Peter 1:6-9**

How Will I Handle My Thorn?

□ How will I handle my thorn?

- ↵ Pray that the thorn be taken away
 - ↵ Be assured that God has heard and answered my prayer
 - ↵ Accept that God knows and does what is best for me and will give me strength to handle my thorn
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