

SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS

THE WOUNDS OF A GOOD SOLDIER

2 Corinthians 12:1-10 Jeff Schreve

What do we learn from Paul's thorn in the flesh?

1. Thorns are part of life.

A. They come to those who are human.

*"We are all human beings. Our life is short and full of trouble."
Job 14:1 ERV*

B. They come to those who are walking in disobedience to God.

C. They come to those who are walking in obedience to God.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God. 1 Peter 4:12-16

2. People respond to thorns in different ways.

A. Some people get bitter.

B. Some people give up.

*Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!
Job 2:9*

C. Some people unhappily endure.

D. Some people see the deeper meaning.

3. God has a purpose in your thorns.

A. He uses thorns to keep us humble.

And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself!
2 Corinthians 12:7

“GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” James 4:6

B. He uses thorns to keep us dependent on Him.

C. He uses thorns to pour out His grace and display His power.

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.
2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Father, for such a long time I have pleaded before You this, the deep desire of my heart: _____. Yet, the more I have clamored for Your help with this, the more remote You have seemed. I confess my demanding spirit in this matter. I've tried suggesting to You ways my prayer could be answered. To my shame, I have even bargained with You. Yet I know that trying to manipulate the Lord of the Universe is utter foolishness.

I want to trust You, Father. My spirit knows that these truths are forever trustworthy even when I feel nothing. That You are there... That You love me... That You alone know what is best for me... Perhaps all along, You have been waiting for me to give up self-effort. At last, I want You in my life even more than I want my thorn removed. So now, by an act of my will, I relinquish this to You. I will accept Your will, whatever that may be. To You, Lord God, who alone are worthy of worship, I bend the knee with thanksgiving that this too will work together for my good. I relinquish this to You. Amen.

Do you want God to take the thorn from you or display His power in you?