



More Ways God Works Through Our Weaknesses

2 Corinthians 12:1-10
June 26, 2022

The Big Idea: Rational people usually avoid hardship when given a choice. Sometimes we have no choice. Trouble comes our way, we **beg** the Lord to take it away, and we wait for His answer. He may choose to remove the “thorn”, but He may very well use the weakness to display His **power** and **glory** in our lives.

2 Corinthians 12:1-10 (ESV)

12 I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to *visions and revelations* of the Lord. ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was *caught up to the third heaven*—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. ³And I know that this man was caught up **into paradise**—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—⁴and *he heard things that cannot be told*, which man may not utter. ⁵On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses—⁶though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me.

⁷So *to keep me from becoming conceited* because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, **a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan** to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸Three *times I pleaded with the Lord* about this, that it should leave me. ⁹But he said to me, “*My **grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.***”

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

3 Reasons We Should Accept Our Weaknesses

- Weakness is good because without it we never experience the fullness of God’s **power**.
- Weakness is good because without it **mercy** remains a mystery.
- Weakness is good because it compels us to look beyond ourselves for answers and in doing so magnifies the **sufficiency** of God’s grace.

7 Lessons from Paul About Your “Visions & Thorns”

- Life-changing, supernatural, spiritual experiences are **rare** and should never be thought of as normative or **essential**.
- Paul never **promotes** his experience as something all Christians should pursue and experience. Never chase after someone else’s experience. Never promote your own!
- The thorn was no **accident**. God’s hand is evident at every turn.
- “Thorns” can, at the same time, be sent by **God** for His purposes and hijacked by **Satan** for his purposes. We must choose what we will respond to.
- “Weaknesses” are nothing to be **ashamed** of. Acknowledge them, trust the Lord with them, and receive His **power** in them.
- It is perfectly acceptable to beg God to take away your “thorn”. How He chooses to answer you is up to Him. If He decides the answer is “no” you will be given two things: **grace** to endure and God’s **power** in your life.
- Remember that thorns – weaknesses are not sins, or even temptations to sin. They are a part of God’s original **design** for our lives or something He chooses to bring into our lives at a later time which will cause us to cry out to Him and **depend** on Him.

“Trials come to prove us and to improve us.”

Augustine



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*** This week in my woodworking class I heard a young man who is fully aware of some of the differences between the average boy and himself, who is extremely bright, but sometimes awkward – I heard him say with confidence to another boy – “I’m not stupid, I’m just different.”

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?

"In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee they deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design,
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."