

# Learning from Paul's Thorn

(2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

In the verses above, Paul tells us something very personal about himself. He reveals how he was struggling with a problem. He calls it a "thorn in the flesh." This thorn was "tormenting" or "buffeting" him. The idea is that this thorn was bringing him misery, pain and suffering.

There are many practical lessons that we can learn from Paul's thorn.

## I. **Lesson #1: Sometimes we will get thorns.**

- A. God never promises anything different in His word.
  - 1. Even though he was an apostle and preacher, Paul still experienced suffering in his life.
  - 2. We are never told what exactly this thorn was. Anything suggested today is merely speculation.
  - 3. Whatever it was, it was making Paul's life miserable.
- B. We will have our thorns as well.

## II. **Lesson #2: Thorns should draw us closer to God.**

- A. That is what we find taking place with Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7-8).
  - 1. Notice how Paul didn't blame God for his thorn. Who did he blame? Satan!
  - 2. Instead of blaming God, Paul prayed to God and begged for His help.
- B. We need to do the same! See Psalm 46:1; 1 Peter 5:6-7; Philippians 4:6-7.

## III. **Lesson #3: Sometimes God will not remove our thorns away.**

- A. Notice the response Paul received to his prayer request (2 Corinthians 12:9a).
  - 1. God never promises to give us everything we want when we pray.
  - 2. When we pray, we must trust God no matter how He decides to respond.
    - a. Jesus did this (Matthew 26:39).
    - b. Solomon admonishes us to do this (Proverbs 3:5-7).
- B. We have to always remember that God loves us and knows what is best!

## IV. **Lesson #4: Thorns can actually help us!**

- A. Due to the privileges that came with being an apostle, it would have been easy for Paul to be puffed up with pride.
  - 1. God allowed the thorn to remain in order to keep Paul humble and force him to be dependent on Him (2 Corinthians 12:7).
  - 2. Paul understood and celebrated this (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). He could see the benefit of his thorn. He could see how God was using the thorn to help him spiritually.
- B. We need to always challenge ourselves to do the same with the thorns we have.

**Conclusion:** Do you have a thorn? Is it the thorn of sin? Come to God so He can remove it tonight.

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