

WHEN IT'S NOT GOING AWAY

How to Get Through What You're Going Through: Part 2

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2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NLT)

⁷ ...I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud.

⁸ Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. ⁹ Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. ¹⁰ That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

What is a "THORN"?

Something pointed, sharp, as a stake, the point of a hook, a thorn, prickle. Something which causes severe pain or constant irritation. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament)

A CONSTANT IRRITATION THAT'S NOT GOING AWAY.

What Was Paul's Thorn?

- PHYSICAL (Ga 4:13-15) "*I was sick when I was with you...you would have taken out your own eyes*"
- VOCATIONAL (1 Co 9:11-14) "*is it too much to reap material things from you?...the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel*"
- FINANCIAL (Php 4:12) "*I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*"
- EMOTIONAL (2 Co 1:8) "*we despaired of life itself*"
- RELATIONAL (2 Tim 1:15 / 2 Tim 4:14) "*everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.*" "*Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm*"

HOW TO THRIVE WITH YOUR THORN

1. RECOGNIZE GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MY THORN.

I was given a thorn...

"That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good. God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son..." (Romans 8:28–29, The Message)

- **GOD USES MY THORN TO DEVELOP ME.**
to keep me from becoming proud
- **GOD USES MY THORN TO DIRECT ME.**
Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away.
- **GOD USES MY THORN TO DEEPEN ME.**
My grace is all you need.

2. REJOICE IN GOD'S PROVISION FOR MY THORN.

So now I am glad...

"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation." (Romans 5:3–4, NLT)

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8, NIV84)

3. RELY ON GOD'S POWER FOR ME.

Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away

"...vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases. But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer." (Luke 5:15–16, NLT)

My power works best in weakness. So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me

For when I am weak, then I am strong.

4. RECYCLE GOD'S PARDON FOR ME.

So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses...

“For I live in eager expectation and hope that I will never do anything that will cause me to be ashamed of myself but that I will always be ready to speak out boldly for Christ while I am going through all these trials here, just as I have in the past; and that I will always be an honor to Christ, whether I live or whether I must die. For to me, living means opportunities for Christ, and dying—well, that’s better yet! But if living will give me more opportunities to win people to Christ, then I really don’t know which is better, to live or die!” (Philippians 1:20–22, The Living Bible)

ACTION:
POST YOUR “THORN STORY” ONLINE