



MESSAGE: Words To Live By | 2 Corinthians 12:7–10
SPEAKER: Jim Johnson | **DATE:** June 13 & 14, 2020

Have you ever wrestled with unanswered prayer?

Have you ever wrestled with God’s seemingly inconsistent answers to prayer?

Help for the struggle can be found in Paul’s thorn in the flesh experience (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

Paul was given a thorn in the flesh

Paul’s thorn was something or someone that was a source of a debilitating discomfort or pain

Paul’s thorn came from God and the evil one (2 Corinthians 12:7)

Thorns also come from the usual suspects — the world, other people, and one’s own poor decisions

Paul’s natural inclination is to ask God to remove the thorn

He’s conscientious about asking in the right way (2 Corinthians 12:8)

Then, he’s disappointed when God answers the wrong way (from Paul’s perspective) (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Why doesn’t God take thorns away?

The preset limits of creation

Side bar: Medical science is not working in competition against God, but in collaboration with God

Inherent conflicts of interest

God has our best interest in mind—character trumps comfort

Paul discovers the best answer to his prayer is not for God to remove the thorn, but to give him the grace to live through the thorn

**God's grace will give him the strength he needs to survive and thrive in the midst of his circumstances
(2 Corinthians 12:9; Isaiah 40:31)**

When Paul understood that his human weakness created an opportunity to experience God's power at its best, it changed how he viewed his thorn (2 Corinthians 12:10 NLT)

Let your thorns remind you of your human weaknesses and prompt you to look to God's grace for the strength you need to fulfill your God-given purpose

Name and claim your thorn

If you haven't already, ask God to remove your thorn

If he doesn't, open your heart to his grace to give you the strength to live through your thorn with hope and expectation