

STRATEGIES FOR STRESSFUL TIMES

Ryland Walter | April 15-16, 2023

Week 2: Increasing Your Capacity For Pressure

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. 2 Corinthians 1:8 (NIV)

STRESS: _____ > _____

Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, ⁷ or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But 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 about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:6-10 (NIV)

THORN

- T - _____
- H - _____
- O - _____
- R - _____
- N - _____

Our capacity increases when we remember...

1. Thorns _____ hearts

...Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh... 2 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV)

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... Romans 8:1 (NIV)

2. Thorns _____ grace

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3. To _____ on God and put Him first

Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 2 Corinthians 1:9 (NIV)

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 (NIV)

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STRESS: PRESSURE > CAPACITY

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THORN

T - Temptation

H - Hardship

O - Opposition

R - Rejection

N - Need

Our capacity increases when we remember...

1. Thorns purify hearts

...Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh... 2 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV)

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... Romans 8:1 (NIV)

2. Thorns magnify grace

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INCREASING YOUR CAPACITY FOR PRESSURE Talk-it-Over Notes | April 15-16, 2023

REVIEW IT

We all deal with stress and pressure from some direction. While there are many things we can do to reduce the pressure, it will always be there at some level in this present world. The Apostle Paul faced a thorn in his life. While we don't know what that thorn may have been, we know what thorns we face. They come in forms of temptation, hardship, opposition, rejection and need. God's word gives us three things we can remember when we experience pressure that seems too great to endure. One, we can remember that thorns purify hearts. (If everything always goes right, our heart eventually goes wrong.) Two, we can remember that thorns magnify grace. (Some things can't be produced without pressure.) Three, we can remember to rely on God and put Him first. ("This happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.")

Spend some time in the word: Read 2 Corinthians chapter 4

TALK ABOUT IT

1. What stood out to you from that scripture reading?
2. What do you remember from the message? What stuck with you?
3. Can you think of someone who the thorns in their life has purified their heart and magnified the grace in their life?
4. "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33 — Why is it that order determines capacity? What are some other illustrations of this beyond the moving truck?

ACT ON IT

Consider how you can put God first in a new way this week. How could you put him first in your time, budget, marriage, work or relationship?

PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask how you can pray for a support one another this week and then close in prayer.