

Devotionals for 21 Day Fast

OWN THE PURSUIT

DAY 8: Sunday, January 23rd — *Thorns*

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, in the Lord (2 Corinthians 12: 7-10)

God's power demonstrated

The Bible does not spin the flaws and weaknesses of its heroes. Abraham lied. Hosea's wife was a prostitute. Peter rebuked God! Noah got drunk. Jonah was a racist. Jacob lied. John Mark deserted Paul. Elijah burned out. Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal. Thomas doubted. Moses had a temper. Timothy had ulcers. Even David, one of God's beloved friends, committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband. Yet all these people teach us the same message: that every human being on earth, regardless of their gifts and strengths, is weak, vulnerable, and dependent on God and others.

The pressure to present an image of ourselves as strong and spiritually "together" hovers over most of us. We feel guilty for not measuring up, for not making the grade. We forget that all of us are human and frail.

The apostle Paul struggled with God not answering his prayers and removing his "thorn in the flesh." Nevertheless, he thanked God for his brokenness, knowing that without it, he would have been an arrogant, "conceited" apostle. He learned, as we all must, that Christ's power is made perfect only when we are weak.

Nearly all of will experience some form of suffering of varying magnitude throughout our lives. It leaves us asking why? Whether outwardly or inwardly. Whether extensively or momentarily. The fact is it jabs us in the heart. And the heart wants to know what to do. Paul provides some direction for the heart.

- i. Take courage (2Cor. 4 :16) recognize that situation is real but let it not over power you
- ii. Fix your eyes on what is unseen (2Cor. 4:18) do not be overcome by the seen, yet don't minimize the seen)
- iii. The unseen eternal glory far outweighs suffering (2Cor. 4:17).

Question to Consider

1. How might brokenness or weakness in your life today present an opportunity for God's power to be demonstrated?
2. Why should you take courage? (not lose heart)
3. Why should you not focus on the present situation?
4. According to 2Cor. 4:17 what is suffering accomplishing?

---PRAYER---

Father, the notion of admitting to myself and to others my weaknesses and failures is very difficult. Lord, I am weak. I am dependent on you. You are God, and I am not. Help me to embrace your work in me. And may I be able to say, like Paul, "when I am weak (broken), then I am strong." In Jesus' name, Amen.

(Source: <https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/> and Rev. Norman Clayton)

GO DEEPER

LIFE APPLICATION

*WHEN GOD WRITES A
SONG ON YOUR
HEART, IT BECOMES A
BEAUTIFUL MELODY
OF LIFE*

(SHERI ROSE SHEPHERD)

*It is when we are happy
in him that people are
attracted to the truth*

Devotional Text

2Corinthians 4: 16-18
2Corinthians 12:7-10
Isaiah 52:14; 53: 2-4
Philippians. 4:6-9

