

FACING DIFFICULTIES IN LIFE, 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10

I. DIFFICULTIES CANNOT TOUCH THE SOUL.

- A. We are more than dust. We have an inner self, 2 Cor.4:16; 2 Cor.7:1-2. * Paul had a thorn in the flesh, but that did not define him. He was able to rejoice. There was more to him than flesh.**
- B. The inner self is what keeps us alive. It enables us to think, reason, contemplate, feel, choose, etc. Psalm 139:13,14.**
- C. The inner self enables us to grow, to be renewed, 2 Cor.4:16; Rom.12:1-2.**
- D. The inner self makes us unique. An animal does not ask “why?” Psalm 42:5; Psa.8:3,4. Or, reason, contemplate, etc.**
- E. The inner self lives on and on after this life, Eccl.12:7, etc.**
- F. * Main thing: as long as we are faithful, the circumstances of life cannot touch the soul.**

II. WE MUST WALK BY FAITH NOT BY SIGHT, 2 COR.5:7.

- A. Life is simple, right. Hezekiah got sick, prayed, promised more time, 2 Kings 20:1ff; James 5:14,15. No, thousand times no. Life is complex, complicated, Job 14:1-2. We do ourselves, nor anyone else any good by pretending otherwise.**
- B. Here, an apostle of God, is sick. This thorn is “harassing” him. Literally, this is like a punch in the face, humiliating, etc.**
- C. Faithful Christians get sick, have accidents, lose jobs, 2 Tim.4:20; Phil.2:25-30. Jesus’ close friend, Lazarus, got sick and died, John 11. Life is complex.**
- D. In the days of miracles, why were some healed (Acts 28:8) and others were not (2 Tim.4:20)? Why were some rescued, others were not (Acts 12:1ff)?**
- E. Simple truth. We do not know, we are not supposed to know, we do not have the ability to know, Rom.11:30-33; Deut.29:29. Must walk by faith not by sight.**

III. PLACE THE BLAME WHERE THE BLAME BELONGS.

- A. Paul sees his thorn as “a messenger of Satan,” 2 Cor.12:7-10.**
- B. The blame for burdens, loss, illness, is in the hands of Satan, Acts 10:38; Luke 13:16; John 8:44; Romans 5:12.**
- C. My mother was very general or loose when it came to blame. If you were in the vicinity, you got a whippin. “If you had been here, you would have done it too.”**
- D. We have the habit of blaming God; and of blaming others, especially good people, etc.**

IV. VIEW THE THORNS AS A GIFT.

- A. Concerning the thorn, God said -no- but I will give you my grace so you’ll be able to endure and grow. 2 Cor.12:7-10.**
- B. Though Satan is the blame, God can use the thorn to help us grow. Burdens are life Christ is “knocking;” like a window of opportunity.**
- C. It’s a favor or opportunity to be humble, 2 Cor.12. It’s an opportunity to cooperate with Christ and allow Him to complete the work He began in us, Eph.2:10; 2 Cor.12. It’s also an opportunity to increase our desire for the home in heaven.**
- D. Perspective: it’s not what life takes from you, it’s what God gives you through the burden. See Philippians 1:29.**

V. UNDERSTAND PRAYER.

- A. Paul asked for the thorn to be removed 3 times. Why only 3? Who knows?**
- B. God said to him, an apostle, of all people. The God who can do anything seemingly did nothing.**
- C. Truth is, God does not change, Malachi 3:6; James 1:17 and He certainly does not need our advice or counsel. He’s not hard of hearing. Truth is, Paul moved to a different place spiritually, a greater perspective. Paul didn’t walk away when God said -**

no, he changed, 2 Cor.12:7-10. Truth is, prayer is not about what God can do for us, it's about what God does in us.