

LESSON 12

A THORNY SITUATION

2 CORINTHIANS 12:1–10



1 What are some limitations of . . .

being young? _____

having children? _____

being single? _____

being retired? _____

your current financial situation? _____

2 What limitation would you get rid of if you could?



Read 2 Corinthians 12:1–10 and the following notes:

☐ 12:7, 8 ☐ 12:9 ☐ 12:10

3 Why did Paul receive a “thorn in [the] flesh” (12:7)?

4 Where did the thorn come from (12:7)?

5 What did God want Paul to learn from this weakness (12:9)?

6 How did Paul's attitude about his weakness change (12:8-10)?

Life wasn't any easier for the apostle Paul than it is for us. Rather than being excused from life's problems for his faith, Paul was called by Christ to live with a limitation that frustrated him. Over time, this "messenger from Satan" taught Paul to depend on God, making Paul even more useful to God than without it. He earnestly asked God to remove his weakness, yet God said no. Eventually Paul learned to welcome this "thorn" as a way for God to demonstrate his power through him. Who can't identify with Paul's plight? The weaknesses, hardships, insults, persecutions, and difficulties we live with are opportunities to rely on God and see him work in spite of our limitations.



7 List some of the feelings and thoughts that Paul might have had as he asked God to remove his "thorn."

8 Why should a person welcome a frustrating experience or weakness?

9 How can a person welcome frustrating experiences or weaknesses?

10 How does grace help a person with a frustrating problem?



11 What are some weaknesses or hardships that frustrate you?

12 How can God use these difficulties?

13 In what practical ways can you rely on God when you are limited by weaknesses and hardships?

14 How might you counsel someone who is frustrated by a weakness or difficulty?

15 How can you pray about your frustrating situations this week?



16 What can you do the next time you face a frustrating weakness or difficulty?

A What unique experience did Paul have (12:2–4)? What unique experience has drawn you closer to God?

B Why did Paul refrain from boasting about his walk with God (12:6)? What should you refrain from boasting about?

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