

21 DAYS OF PRAYER

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave 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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Big Idea

The Bible teaches that Satan's strategy is to distort everything that is good and oppose everything that is effective. To protect Paul from arrogance because of the revelations God had given him, God gave him a 'thorn' that would serve to keep him humble! Paul understood that though his prayer was not answered like he wanted, the result was to experience the all-sufficient grace of God. He also was blessed through his weakness to see the power of God in action in him. Paul realized how much better intimacy with the Heavenly Father was a better gift than answered prayer!

Discussion Questions

- What impacted you most about today's video teaching?
- Do you agree or disagree with this statement: "Thorns are not powerful, just annoying." Why or why not?
- Read John 15:5. How do Jesus' words confirm Paul's teaching?
- How is 'dependence' a negative word in our culture? In light of our key passage and John 15:5, how does God view our dependence?
- Think of some reasons why intimacy with God would/could be a better outcome than answered prayer.

Prayer Focus

Think about this statement: Is your life worth Satan's attacking? Ask God to reveal any areas of your life that you are withholding from Him. Confess any areas where you may be hindering intimacy with the Father.

Next Step

To grow in intimacy requires daily time in God's word. If you do not have a regular bible study plan, get one this week and get started. In addition to your own bible study, join a life group and increase the amount of time you spend in focused study.