

The Greatest Fringe Benefit

The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. —**Psalm 121:5-8**

Loneliness Has a Purpose

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. —**Luke 5:16**

The Perfection of Love

But when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. —**1 Corinthians 13:10**

The Sheer Grace of God

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. —**Ephesians 2:8-9**

Learn to Accept Yourself

O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you. **–Psalm 84:12**

“A Thorn Just For You”

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. **–2 Corinthians 12:7**

A thorn in the flesh is not the same for every person. But if you are a Christian worth your salt, you probably have a thorn in the flesh. What may be your may not be mine. What may be mine may not be yours. For some it is a handicap or disability. For some it could be unhappy employment—or even lack of employment. It could be an enemy. It could be coping with unhappy living conditions. It could be a sexual misgiving. The list is endless.

The “thorn” may be recognizable to you but unseen by others. God may afflict you with some sort of impediment—by which you may feel He has stripped you of all self-esteem—but this could be utterly unrecognizable to anybody else. Why? Because this “thorn” is for you more than it is for them. Or it may be for them indirectly. It may be so embarrassing and humbling to you that it will make you a different person, such that others will not have an inflated opinion of you. But it is mainly for you—to keep you humble. Certainly it may end up being for

others in the sense that they unwittingly do not extol you as they might otherwise have done. This is why Paul's thorn kept him from being conceited; it kept others from exalting him beyond that which was warranted. But Paul's thorn was mainly for him, and yours is mainly for you.

It is one that is not likely to go away very soon, if ever. You will ask, "Do I have to bear this forever?" Maybe not, but you could. You are probably, though, going to have it for a while. Paul said, "I prayed three times that it might go away." It's like a prison sentence. It may be a life sentence, or it may be a short period of time. Paul's thorn apparently remained. In other words, it will stay with you as long as you need it.

Excerpted from *The Thorn in the Flesh* (Charisma House, 2004).

Why We All Have a Thorn In Our Flesh

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When God Tells Us Why

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. **—1 Corinthians 13:12**

Severe Mercy

Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. **-Proverbs 3:12**

Love Is Being Satisfied

Love ... does not envy ... **-1 Corinthians 13:4**