

What Is Your Thorn in the Flesh?

As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. **—Psalm 103:13-14**

What is your thorn in the flesh? Is it a frailty? It may be a physical problem. It may be an emotional problem. It may be a personal weakness.

It may be a fault: a defect, or imperfection—one that feels embarrassing and humbling. You may have prayed about it a thousand times. You may have asked people to lay their hands on you and to pray that this imperfection would disappear. I myself have done this.

It may be a friend. Sometimes a dear friend can be a real thorn in the flesh. Perhaps he is difficult. You want to be with him, but afterward you feel frustrated or all the worse for being in his company. It may be a love-hate relationship. You feel you can't be without this person, but the relationship is always edgy, prickly. You feel that even discussing it would be spontaneous combustion!

It may be an enemy. This person seems to live to make you look bad! But it may be that your enemy—who keeps you on your toes (not to mention your knees)—is raised up by God to keep you sharp and careful.

Could your thorn in the flesh be that you have known failure? It may have been financial failure, a failed marriage, or a job loss. Or, when facing temptation, you failed, and the whole scenario haunts you daily.

Perhaps someone has lied about you. You cannot defend yourself. People believe the lie. You long with all your being

to be vindicated. But God withholds vindication. This could be your thorn in the flesh.

Don't despise your thorn, whatever it is. Don't resent it. It exists by God's sovereign pleasure. It is for your good. It is the best thing that ever happened to you next to your conversion and anointing. It is only a matter of time before you will appreciate it.

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