

LESSONS FROM THORNS

“Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!”

2 Corinthians 12:7

1. God honored Paul (2 Corinthians 12:1-6)
 - a. A vision of Christ (Acts 9:3-6)
 - b. A vision of Ananias (Acts 9:12)
 - c. A vision of Macedonia (Acts 18:9-10)
 - d. A vision of encouragement (Acts 23:11)
 - e. A vision of an angel (Acts 27:23)
 - f. A vision of a special revelation (Ephesians 3:1-6)
 - g. A vision (visit) of heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2-4)
2. God humbled Paul – (2 Corinthians 12:7-8)
 - a. A Thorn in the flesh
 - b. A messenger of Satan
 - c. A suffering experience
 - 1) Because of humanness
 - 2) Because of natural growth
 - 3) Because of disobedience (Hebrews 12:3ff)
 - 4) Because of a teaching tool (Romans 5:1-5)
 - d. A way of dealing with suffering
 - 1) Being bitter and blaming God
 - 2) Being a quitter and giving up
 - 3) Being able to grin and bear it
 - e. A way of God’s sovereignty
3. God helped Paul (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
 - a. Power made perfect (2 Corinthians 12:9)
 - b. Transformation vs substitution
 - c. Seeing affliction as gift of God
4. God helps you and I
 - a. Genetic resilience
 - b. Psychological factors
 - c. Past experiences
 - d. Support systems
 - e. Coping strategies
 - f. Cultural influences

(continued)

First Baptist Church of Hopewell

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5. God shows Paul practical lessons
 - a. Spiritual more important than physical
 - b. God can balance burden, blessings, sufferings and glory
 - c. Not all sickness caused by our sin
 - d. Sin of pride - worse than our physical sickness
 - e. Physical affliction does not stop Christian Service
 - f. I can always rest in God's Word