

# The Stewardship of Suffering:

Learning to See Thorns As God Sees Them  
2 Corinthians 12:7-10

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Main Idea: A thorn in the flesh is a bad thing, right? Actually, it is a matter of stewardship, according to 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. In this workshop we'll learn how to be faithful stewards of the painful realities of life by applying the promise of sufficient grace.



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### 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

#### I. The pain (7)

- A. The thorn was a gift from God.
- B. The thorn was intended to prevent pride.
- C. The thorn was a messenger of Satan.
- D. The thorn produced intense suffering.



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Caution: In a sense, my title could be misleading:

“Learning to See *Thorns* as God Sees Them” may seem to indicate that we all have a thorn as Paul did, which I don’t believe this text is teaching.



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## II. The pleading (8)

- A. Paul begged the Lord to remove it.
- B. Paul stopped begging the Lord to remove it.



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#### III. The promise (9a)

**A. My grace is enough.**

**B. My power is seen most clearly in your weakness.**



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#### IV. The power at work (9b-10)

- A. I will boast in my weakness.
- B. I am delighting in the difficulties of life.
- C. I am experiencing what Jesus promised.



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Implications for Biblical Counseling: Ask yourself these questions....

1. *What are you doing with your pain?*

Suggestion: Encourage counselees to get a good hymnbook and sing. While singing my way through the *Hymns of Grace*, I made a list of dozens and dozens of songs that have verses referring to present suffering and trials. We need these reminders.





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Implications for Biblical Counseling: Ask yourself these questions....

2. *What are you doing with Jesus' promise?*

Suggestion: Encourage counselees to memorize biblical promises that pertain to suffering (see series “Promises to Live By in the Crucible of Suffering,” ([www.wheelersburgbaptist.com](http://www.wheelersburgbaptist.com))).



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Implications for Biblical Counseling: Ask yourself these questions....

3. *What can you do to help others experience this promise?*

Suggestion: Encourage suffering counselees to value the local church (see series “A People to Live With in the Crucible of Suffering,” ([www.wheelersburgbaptist.com](http://www.wheelersburgbaptist.com)))



