

7 **The child of God should not resist God's chastening rod.** The definition of the word *buffet* in 2 Corinthians 12:7 means, "to smite in the face." Paul allowed himself to be buffeted by God and thus to figuratively be slapped in the face. He actually *appreciated* God chastening him for the purpose of keeping him soberminded and contrite in living for the Master. Should we then resist the Father's chastening of us? Should we not rather submit to his chastening rod so that we also might be kept humble and thus useful in the work of Christ? (read Heb. 12:5-11).

8 **We learn the principle of submission.** Paul is to be admired because he accepted God's will, that the thorn would be with him for the rest of his earthly life. Imagine getting a literal thorn in your hand. After pulling on the thorn for hours you finally face the fact that you must live with that thorn in your body for the rest of your life! This was the nature of Paul's thorn in the flesh. God said, **"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness"** (2 Cor. 12:9). Paul had the submissive attitude of Jesus, the supreme example, as Jesus poured out his heart to God in prayer, saying, **"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt"** (Mt. 26:39). Likewise, as the song the church sings states, we should truly understand — *"Have Thine Own Way, Lord."*

9 **We should be willing to suffer on Christ's behalf.** Paul was **"troubled on every side"** (2 Cor. 4:8-11). Earlier he had written, **"We are fools for Christ's sake"** (1 Cor. 4:10). May we be willing to live godly and suffer on his behalf. The New Testament Christian, Epaphroditus, is an example of one who appreciated the importance of the cause of Christ. Paul wrote: **"for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life"** (Phil. 2:30). May we confess Christ with obedient lives as well as with our words (Mt. 10:32-33).

10 **The Christian's strength is in God through Christ.** Paul learned that when he was **"weak"** he could be made **"strong"** (2 Cor. 12:10). We also when weak should engage in prayer to God as did Paul and find our strength in Him.

11 **We should glory in anything that "forces" us to walk closer to God and Christ.** The great apostle gloried in that which directed his attention to a closer walk with God and Christ. He exclaimed: **"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me"** (2 Cor. 12:9).

Just so, brethren, if we wish to have a closer walk with God we are destined to learn the lesson that Paul learned. Paul learned that problems, necessities and persecutions are to drive us to our knees in prayer to God! May we all "grow up" spiritually on our knees.

12 **Saints should covet "the power of Christ" (2 Cor. 12:9).** Paul sought to be *Christ-powered* instead of self-powered.

Even though it was through the avenue of his painful thorn, (that is, the anxiety caused by it), he was glad to reach the **"power of Christ."** Should not the follower of Jesus Christ today covet and desire greatly the power of Christ, His truth, to propel him through this life with its snares on every side? (John 8:31-32; James 1:12). ■

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A Dozen Applications

of

Paul's Thorn In The Flesh



By

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