

The Stewardship of Suffering: Learning to See Thorns As God Sees Them 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Biblical Counseling Seminar at Wheelersburg Baptist Church
Helping Sufferers Find Hope Through Biblical Counseling
Pastor Brad Brandt
Monday evening, December 1, 2025

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.

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.**

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.

II. The pleading (8)

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

III. The promise (9a)

A. My grace is enough.

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

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.

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.

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).

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).