



## **PART ONE INTRODUCTION**

WHY GOD? Most of us have asked God this question when we are pricked by “thorny issues” in our life. A thorn in the flesh is any affliction in our lives that, if we aren’t careful, can defeat us with a good dose of self-pity and embitter us toward God. It can be an illness, a relationship or situation that we have no control over. We know that the Lord can remove it from us but yet there it remains, causing us pain. But the important thing to know about our thorns is that Satan desires to use them to defeat us, while God is determined to use them for our good and His glory.

As we study God’s Word, let us begin to see His perspective and understand that our handicap or weakness can be used to serve a Godly purpose in our lives.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What thorn is sticking in your side right now? What did you try to do to overcome it?
  
2. The apostle Paul is probably the most famous example of someone who was stuck with a thorn in the flesh. Paul knew right where the thorn had come from. He referred to it as a *messenger of Satan*. And though Paul never tells us what his thorn was, it must be a serious problem to Paul because he said, “Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me” ([2 Corinthians 12:8](#)). God didn’t answer his prayer with a miraculous healing, but rather assured Paul that, “My grace is sufficient for you.”
  - a. Define what a thorn is NOT?
  
  - b. Three times Paul pleaded with God to take the thorn away from him but it remained. Why did the Lord give Paul the thorn? Why does God also allow these thorns in our lives? (Refer to Romans 5:3-5 and James 1:2-4)
  
3. Read 2 Corinthians 12:2-10. Do an inductive bible study (observations, interpretation and application)? You can use the following as a guide.
  - i. Posture your heart. Spend some time in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to be your teacher. Open your heart to the Lord to speak to you.
  
  - ii. Read the passage aloud
  
  - iii. Ask some context questions of the passage:
    - What sort of writing is this? (a letter, a poem, a narrative etc?)
    - Are there any clues about the circumstances under which it was written?

- What has happened so far in this particular book of the Bible?
- iv. Some observation questions of the passage:
- Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the passage?
  - What is the main point or points?
  - What surprises are there?
  - What are the keywords? What words or ideas are repeated?
- v. Some leading questions of the text:
- How does this passage relate to other parts of the book?
  - How does the passage relate to Jesus?
  - What does this teach us about God?
  - How could we sum up the meaning of this passage in our own words?
- vi. Some application questions of the passage:
- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
  - Is there some attitude I need to change?
  - How does this passage call on me to change the way I live?
4. Have you given in to your thorn to the point where it has made you bitter and defeated? How can you reclaim that ground for Christ's glory?

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

**God allows the thorn in our lives, to produce character.** Discover the character God is trying to build in us through the thorn and yield to God in that area. God is more concerned with our character than our comfort. The goal is maturity and completeness in Christ

Reflect on the thorn in your life. Instead of asking "WHY GOD", ask the Lord:

- What do you require from me?
- What do I need to change?

## CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

*"So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." ~ 2 Cor 12:7-9a (ESV)*