

“The Benefit of the Devil”***2 Corinthians 12:7-10*****Introduction**

Whenever a teacher in school gave you a test, they never had much to say during the test. The teacher had nothing to say because the test was designed to show what you knew based on what the teacher taught you. Often, God uses Satan to bring difficulties into our lives to test us and deepen our experiences with God. What we sometimes fail to realize, though, is that the devil is not just the devil—he is God’s devil. So while God is awesome and holy in nature, He can use evil to bring about good, as demonstrated in Paul’s experience. God allows you, much like Paul, to be needled by thorns to keep us dependent on Him and to address actual and potential sins. Like Paul, we must endure tests from God in the form of satanic thorns. But like the master teacher He is, God has already gone before us and given us the provision we need to deal with these thorns.

Because of the gift of sufficiency and empowerment of grace, God has already equipped us—just as he did Paul—to drive us in the right direction when confronted with thorns. Therefore, whatever is needling you, God gives you all that you need to handle it and deal with it until He decides to remove it if he removes it at all. When we shift our mindset to what provision we have in Christ, we drive ourselves to prayer, praise and peace in our circumstances. God never allows us to have pain without purpose. Thus, when God allows Satan to attack you, it is an opportunity to grow in your dependence on and trust in Jesus; thus, the devil becomes a benefit to you!

Getting Started

1. Have you ever received a painful hangnail or paper cut? How did it feel?
2. Are you more attentive to your hand and finger once you have a hangnail or paper cut? Why?

Let’s Get Personal

1. When has God allowed Satan to bring a thorn in your life?
2. How would you describe your perspective of the thorns in your life prior to this message?
3. In light of this message, how do you now view the thorns in your life, past or present?

Take the Next Step

1. Do you know someone who is being needled by a thorn? How can you demonstrate God’s gift, sufficiency, and empowerment of grace to them?
 2. What satanic thorns can you commit to prayer this week for yourself or others?
 3. What is your go-to praise song when you feel the needling of your thorn?
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4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Psalm 119:67, 71, 75; Isaiah 40:29-31; John 11:4-6; Philippians 4:10-13; James 1:5; 1 John 1:5-10.

Renew Your Mind

*“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’
Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses,
so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”*

2 Corinthians 12:9
