

MAIN POINT

It is good and right to ask God for healing, but we should also look for His purpose in the midst of our trials.

INTRODUCTION

What trial, whether of the mind or body or soul, have you repeatedly asked God to take from you?

In what ways have other believers helped you see your trials differently, particularly with more hope and optimism?

None of us asks the Lord for trials, especially not those that seem to drag on without end. However, God allows trials to enter our lives because He has a greater plan in mind. When we understand that God has our good in mind when He allows our trials—even those trials that never end—we will then learn to be content, even during life's most painful and difficult experiences.

DISCUSSION

> **READ 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10.**

When was a time in recent memory that God humbled you? How did you respond?

Paul wrote about a thorn he struggled with in this passage. With what kind of "thorn" are you currently struggling?

What role does God play with the thorns in our lives?

What does your prayer life look like when struggling with a thorn? What can you learn from this?

How has God used a thorn to teach you discipline, improve your character, or strengthen your faith?

How has your thorn taught you to rely less on your own strength and more on Christ's?

What personal weakness or hardship can you gladly boast in as a way of declaring the perfect strength of Christ?

In what ways has Christ, in His grace, taught you to see purpose in your thorn and find strength in your trials?

Based on these verses, how would you describe a "thorn" to someone who is unchurched?

Although thorns cause us pain, how should we respond to them based on today's passage?

What is the most difficult part about finding joy in your trials?

APPLICATION

How might your perspective change this week regarding an area where you have repeatedly asked God for relief but have not seen it? How might viewing the thorns in our lives with a purpose provide ways to be a witness for Christ to others?