

## THE GREATEST LESSONS IN LIFE ARE ALMOST ALWAYS TAUGHT IN THE CLASSROOM OF SUFFERING

*To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

**2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NIV)**

### WHERE DOES PAIN COME FROM?

*...there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.*

**2 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV)**

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

**John 10:10 (NIV)**

### WHERE IS THE TARGET?

*[The Lord] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*

**2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV)**

#### A. Our weakness

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.*

**Hebrews 12:1 (NLT)**

#### B. Our pride

*To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.*

**2 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV)**

*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.*

**James 4:6 (ESV)**

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

**1 John 1:9 (NIV)**

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*

**James 5:16 (NIV)**

### PAIN HAPPENS

*Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak?*

**2 Corinthians 11:24-29 (NIV)**

### THE PURPOSE OF PAIN

*Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

**2 Corinthians 12:8-10 (NIV)**

*Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith...*

**1 Peter 5:8-9 (NIV)**