

“From Thorns to Thankfulness”

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

4/10/22

Growth Guide For Individual Reflection

For Personal Review

Look back over the series. Reflect on the movement(s) God has made in your life over the past seven weeks. Thank Him for the conversions you've experienced and pray about the areas God is not finished with you yet. He isn't finished with any of us, so don't be hard on yourself!

- From Chaos to Creation – Adam and Eve
- From Insulation to Intimacy – Abraham and Sarah
- From Denial to Deliverance – Jacob
- From Rage to Redemptive Anger – Moses
- From Procrastination to Promise Keeping - Jonah
- From Religion to Relationship – Peter
- From Thorn to Thankfulness - Paul

Pick one of the above conversions that haven't happened yet. Brainstorm next steps. What can you do to move from where you are now to where God want you to be? Make a plan and follow through on that plan.

Of the seven characters above, who do you relate to the most right now and why?

If God moved in a noticeable way in your life consider sharing your experience on Sunday in church or being recorded earlier in the week so we can use your story on the Sunday after Easter.

Read 2 Corinthians 12:1, 7-10.

1. Think about all the thorns you've experienced and how God has used them in your life. Perhaps make a list and to the right of each thorn write out how God used them.
2. Look within, is there a thorn(s) that still exist that you'd like God to remove or change? How long has it/they have persisted? If it's been a while perhaps you should change how you pray about it/them. Instead of bemoaning your thorn or asking God to heal you, try asking God to use it/them. Seek the Lord and consider a way to use them to help others and see what happens to it/them.
3. Read these passages on pride. How have you seen these played out in real life?

“God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” James 4:6

“This is what the LORD says: “Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches...” Jeremiah 9:23

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18

“The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled)” Isaiah 2:12

Is there an area of pride that God wants to convert into humility in your life? What is pride in the Bible versus humility?

Do a word search and read a dozen verses on pride and a dozen verses on humility and find out what both are. My favorite definition of humility is: *Humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking about yourself less.*

4. What do you think about the statement: *“Your greatest ministry will arise out of your greatest wound?”* All the spiritual gifts assessment tools I’ve seen tell you to find your strengths and then find a ministry that fits them. Do you serve from your strengths or weaknesses?

If your wound is still deep and unredeemed pray about it. Ask God to give you a ministry that uses your wound for the good of others and His Kingdom. Share with Pastor Richard what God led you to and after you’ve been ministering for a while, share with him what God did in and through you.

5. Make a list of the things you are grateful in your life and share it with the Lord.
6. Make a list of all the things you are not thankful for and lift those up to God as well.

Again, pick one and ask the Lord to redeem it, turn it from being a thorn in your life to something for which you can be thankful. Don’t thank Him for the painful experience itself, often those are the result of sins committed against us, but for the fact that God turned it for good. (See Romans 8:28)

7. Are you a thorn in someone’s life or have you placed a thorn in someone’s life? If so, find a way to remove it and heal that wound.
8. If someone wounded you, forgive them. If you need to talk with them, make sure you approach them in humility and not pride. Don’t go to them in order to unload on them. That will only make matters worse. Seek reconciliation, not justice. *Mercy triumphs over judgement.* James 2:13