

Connect

When you are experiencing hardship, what do you often pray for?

Verses

"If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness." (2 Cor 11:30, ESV)

"1 I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. 3 And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. 5 On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses— 6 though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. 7 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. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor 12:1-10, ESV)

Study & Share

1. Consider God's goodness in your life. How has God been good to you? If you are a Christian, you have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Just think of God's goodness to you in your life. Is it producing humility? Or is it pride that's germinating and growing there? Are you thinking more and more about Christ or more and more about yourself?

2. Has God apparently employed a thorn in your flesh? Whether it is a real painful health issue, whether it is a painful relationship issue or a particular place in life where it is very hard financially. Has God apparently employed a thorn in your flesh to protect you from pride? If He has… (#3)

3. Have you become a 'squatter' at the throne of grace. Are you living at the throne of grace seeking mercy and help in time of need? Are you praying without ceasing? (Hebrews 4:16)

4. Are you meditating on the specific promises that can strengthen your hope? Our suffering should always take us to Christ in His suffering. What are some of the promises that can strengthen your hope? (Romans 8; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 1 Peter 1:13, Think of the promises that you can hold on to in order to foster your dependency upon Christ.)

5. Ask yourself, "How can this ongoing trial drawing me closer to Jesus" What Christlike character is He trying to form in me? Is He trying to help me be more compassionate, more humble, more joyful, more thankful? Is He trying to help me to grow in endurance in these difficult circumstances? So, how is this ongoing trial drawing you closer to Jesus, and what Christlike character quality is He seeking to form you?

6. In the midst of your suffering, how can I love and encourage others in their suffering?

Grow

Pray for each other to grow in your dependence on God Himself. Share prayer requests.