

# STAYING HUMBLE IN THE SUPERNATURAL

OPEN HEART | LIVING IN CHRIST WITH NOTHING TO HIDE

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## VISIONS & REVELATIONS

The False “super-apostles” were boasting about vision and revelations to captivate the Corinthians. We are not to boast in these.

- True ministry is measured by how well we build up the Body of Christ and not by how many ecstatic experiences we can claim!

“But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them. A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church... Well, my brothers and sisters, let’s summarize. When you meet together... everything that is done must strengthen all of you.”

1 CORINTHIANS 14:3-4, 26

## NOT HOW HIGH, BUT HOW STRAIGHT

### PAUL’S HEAVENLY REVELATION

- He doesn’t know how it happened. He is permitted to tell us nothing. It just happened.
- It happened 14 years prior and Paul never mentioned it. He was there for 1 ½ years teaching. It wasn’t necessary until the rivals showed up claiming their highlight reels.

## SEE OUR LIFE, HEAR OUR MESSAGE

The Apostle Paul said it plainly, “I don’t want anyone to give me credit beyond what they can see in my life or hear in my message, even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God.”

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7

## NAILED DOWN BY A THORN

### What in the world is a ‘thorn in the flesh?’

- The word is only used once in the NT. In Greek outside the NT it means ‘stake’- used for impaling. In the OT it refers to ‘opposition’ or something painful and annoying. (A Real Pain in the Neck!)
- In Paul’s flesh- suggestions range from a bodily ailment, depression or anxiety, temptation, Judaizers, disfigurement, disease etc... we don’t know! But why don’t we know?

## So, what do we know about Paul's 'stake in the flesh?'

1. It was given to him by God to nail him down.
2. It was given in response to his wonderful visions and revelations.
3. It was inescapable even through prayer in the will of God.
4. He did not want it and asked to have it removed.
5. He believed that it opposed him in his gospel ministry.
6. It was a torment to him. (Christ's suffering)
7. Satan was permitted by God to give it to him. (Satan always brings hardship to the people of God, but God has different purposes.)

## 2 LESSONS FOR US

**1. Our pride is damaging to the spread of the gospel. We are most useful to God when we boast in His grace and power than in our own strengths.**

*"God permits Satan to strike the apostle, but God turns the stricken Paul into an even greater instrument of his power. A proud, arrogant Paul would have only hindered the gospel's advance. A humiliated, frail Paul, lead as a captive in God's triumph, has accelerated the gospel's progress so that the fragrance of knowing God spreads everywhere (see 2:14)."*

DAVID E. GARLAND  
*The New American Commentary*

**2. When a painful annoyance has become inescapable, it is time for us to reconcile it with God's grace and power in our lives! Can we say with Paul, "When I am weak, then I am strong?"**

*"Times come in our lives when we must learn to accept what is inescapable and then listen for what God is saying to us through it. We might find that we are mistaken about what we think is best for us and for God's work."*

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