

WHEN YOU HAVE HAD A GREAT EXPERIENCE, EXPECT PROBLEMS BUT REMEMBER 2 CORINTHIANS 12
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2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee."
Paul had many sensational experiences, but he was reluctant to speak of the greatest. He wrote, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)... How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter' (2 Cor. 12:24).

Even when he gave his testimony, Paul was more or less in a state of shock. Christians would like to know the details of that remarkable event. Did Paul see the Savior? Did he walk the streets of heaven and converse with glorified saints? Evidently he was instructed not to divulge what had been seen and heard.

Afterward he realized that if he became conceited, his mission to the Gentiles might be in jeopardy. He wrote, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Cor. 12:7). Success is often the harbinger of problems, but humility is the mother of hope.

God's Favor... A Definite Problem

Only strong persons can overcome the danger created by success. Even blind people recognize an inflated ego, a detestable conceit, and the feeling of "being holier than thou." The Lord was wise when He placed a small child among His over-confident disciples and urged them to become childlike. Christian leaders should be aware of the dangers created by pride. When a member of a church lapses into sin, people may criticize. When a minister is guilty of horrendous sin, the damage done may never be repaired.

God's Forethought... A Desperate Prayer

Throughout the history of the church, scholars have speculated concerning the nature of Paul's "thorn in the flesh." Some of the earliest church leaders thought it to be a severe earache, or deafness, but the consensus is that Paul suffered from very poor eyesight which caused continuing problems. His difficulties became so se-

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vere that he had no time to boast about the revelations given in paradise. When his problems continued, he desperately prayed for help, and when answers were not forthcoming, he repeated his request. The Lord always answers prayer, but sometimes says, "No." When the apostle sought an explanation, God replied, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Christians should always remember God is too wise to make mistakes and too loving to be unkind.

God's Faithfulness... A Delightful Promise

"The other evening I was riding home after a heavy day's work. I felt very weary and sore depressed, when swiftly and suddenly that text came to me: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' I reached home and looked it up in the original, and at last it came to me in this way,
'My
Lord,' and
grace is sufficient for thee.' And I said, 'I should think it is,
burst out laughing. I never fully understood what the holy laughter of Abraham was until then. It seemed to make unbelief so absurd. It was

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as though some little fish, being so thirsty, was troubled about

drinking

the river dry. and Father Thames said: 'Drink away, little fish, my stream is sufficient for thee.' Or it seemed that after seven years of plenty. a mouse feared it might die of famine, and Joseph might say, 'Cheer up, little mouse, my granaries are sufficient for thee.' Little faith will bring your souls to heaven; but great faith will bring

heaven

to your souls." Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Writing to the Corinthians Paul said, "There bath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). When Paul's burdens seemed to be heavy, he leaned more upon the everlasting arms of God's unfailing kindness. Annie Johnson Hint wrote:

His grace is great enough to meet the great things:
The crashing waves that overwhelm the soul,
The roaring winds that leave us stunned and breathless,
The sudden storms beyond our life's control.
His grace is great enough to meet the small things:
The little pin-prick troubles that annoy,
The insect worries, buzzing and persistent,
The squeaking wheels that grate upon our joy.

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