

We have been looking at the relative superlative conclusion from the apostle Paul given in **2CO 12:10**, **“Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”**

Four categories of Paul's thorn in the flesh are mentioned in verse 10.

People Testing

The first one is slandering or people testing. This can come in two categories. First, in personal love where the one you love can control your life and provide unhappiness, unless you function with the ten problem solving devices. You cannot go through life having everyone think well of you. You have to live your life as unto the Lord not as unto people.

The second category of people testing can come in personal hatred or resentment. Here again the object of your antagonism often has control of your life or happiness, unless you have advanced in the spiritual life and can utilize those ten problem-solving devices. God designed His plan so that your happiness will always reside in you and you are not dependent on people or things for your happiness. As a function of your royal priesthood, everything you need to have a wonderful and meaningful life comes from within. You are supposed to have personal control of your life from living in your personal sense of destiny, self-confidence from metabolized doctrine, and therefore, poise and command of self. Therefore, you bring your happiness to others, but do not lean on others or circumstances for your happiness.

People are easily led away from the predesigned plan of God (PPOG) and doctrine by their friendships, their love life, and even their hatred. 1CO 15:33 **“Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." Also see PRO 13:20, or HEB 12:15.** So unless you attain spiritual adulthood and continue to use the two power options and the three spiritual skills and the ten problem solving devices, people testing will control your life and your happiness. Without impersonal love, you become a slave to people.

The solution to people testing is found in the combination of personal love for God and impersonal love for all mankind. This is why discovering your personal sense of destiny is so important. Living in your personal sense of destiny is the prerequisite for solving all problems of human relationships such as people testing, also accompanied by system and thought testing. Virtue-love as a problem-solving device belongs primarily to the spiritual adult.

Without it, you are constantly surrendering the control of your life to others. When you become jealous, angry, bitter, vindictive, or implacable; when you are dissatisfied, antagonistic toward someone else, friend or stranger, lover or enemy; you surrender the control of your life to that person, having no control over your life and canceling all the characteristics of living in your personal sense of destiny.

People can only become a distraction to the fulfillment of God's personal sense of destiny for your life when human relationship becomes more important to you than Bible doctrine. False priorities exist when social life, business life, sexual life takes precedence over your personal sense of destiny.

2Co 12:10 “Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses,

Thought Testing

Here “Distresses” means necessities, or concern for needs, calamity, or as translated, distresses. It has to do with thought testing. Of course thought testing is probably the most personal private test that you take because no one knows your thoughts as you do. Thought testing occurs in all three stages of spiritual adulthood. You will always have the pressure of thought conflict in your soul. You will always have questions. If you are patient, you will eventually receive the answers. What you really are at any given time is based on what you think. All of us are constantly changing in our thinking. This can mean stability or instability in life. You are not always what you appear to be on the surface, mankind can hide thoughts and become masterful at the practice of hypocrisy. Therefore, the real you is the thought content of your soul. People use thoughts to justify

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The second category of people testing can come in personal hatred or resentment. Here again the object of your antagonism often has control of your life or happiness, unless you have advanced in the spiritual life and can utilize those ten problem-solving devices. God designed His plan so of disaster testing:

1. Personal disaster.
2. Historical or National disaster.

A personal disaster may be physical pain caused by injury, disease, handicap, or genetic weakness. It may be mental anguish, caused by loss of loved ones, reputation, success, no employment, money, or property. The privations of hunger, thirst, or exposure to heat or cold may be classified as personal disasters.

A historical disaster is a situation that brings grief to many people. Injustice may victimize many people. When a nation declines, the evils of crime, terrorism, and drug abuse inflict terrible suffering upon the entire society. Arrogance, revenge, greed, inordinate ambition, and power lust put group against group, nation against nation, ultimately unleashing the violence of war with all its suffering. How does the spiritually autonomous believer deal with a disaster that affects his entire nation? Even while the nation suffers under divine discipline, God never disregards the faithfulness of individual believers. Under the disaster test, the spiritually autonomous believer uses all the problem-solving devices of

spiritual adulthood. He directs his hope toward doctrine, his personal love toward God, his impersonal love toward mankind, and his acquired divine happiness toward himself. With these powerful divine assets he can not only survive the storm but also even enjoy it with total confidence in God's plan for his life. ***For more detailed information on this subject, get the tapes from this past week, Series: Philippians, tape # 0190-721-726.***