



Spiritual Maturity Disorientation

As you grow spiritually, occupational hazards develop. Your goal is to mature by learning and believing a maximum amount of *epignosis* Bible doctrine from which your edification complex of the soul is constructed. You don't work for it, you receive it by grace as your thinking is renovated as your thinking reflects more and more that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:16.

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2, NASB)

"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16, NASB)

However, when you mature spiritually you have not arrived. You can still become a reversionistic believer through prolonged negative volition to Bible doctrine. These are the very worst type of believers – vicious and evil whose purpose has become to slime through life. They are frozen souls with frozen faces.

The hazard the believer faces with their edification complex of the soul constructed is the same that Paul faced in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 when he received a "thorn in the flesh" that caused him to pray three times for the ailment to be removed. God's answer was simple; "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."

Disorientation to God's Grace

Paul had an ailment of some kind that was causing some serious pain and discomfort. 2 Cor. 12:7. So intense was the pressure that for a moment Paul was disoriented. He prayed for God to make it stop hurting. This is disorientation to the grace of God. A literal translation of 2 Corinthians 12:7 is, "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel from the source of that he might punch me, that I be not arrogant."

"Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!" (2 Corinthians 12:7, NASB)

In 2 Corinthians 12:8, "concerning this" is the preposition ὑπέρ (huper) plus the genitive of οὗτος (houtos) and is translated, on behalf of this. On behalf of the thorn in the flesh. On behalf of the way he hurt. "I implored" is the aorist active indicative of παρακαλέω (parakaleō) and means from the immediate source of myself. The iterative aorist means this is the beginning of the occurrence. On behalf of this, I began to beg. The active voice means that Paul himself begins the action to temporarily sever the grace concept. The indicative mood indicates the reality of the fact that Paul was making strange noises like a baby.

"Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me." (2 Corinthians 12:8, NASB)

"Three times" means that three times in less than an hour. Paul, a mature believer, was completely disoriented from the grace of God and begged God. "That it might leave me" is ἵνα (hina) plus the subjunctive introducing a purpose clause with the aorist active subjunctive of ἀφίστημι (aphistēmi) and means to shear off from or standoff from him. It means that it might go now, but it's going is potential.



On behalf of this thorn in my flesh, I began to beg the Lord three times that it might stand off from me. But after 2 Corinthians 12:8, Paul's temporary disorientation ends.

Reorientation to God's Grace

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, "And He has said to me" is the perfect active indicative of ἐρέω (ereō) and means to utter, speak, to say. The perfect tense has past connotations with present results. Jesus Christ was not literally speaking to Paul. Paul was now realizing that God's answer to his prayers was not to remove the suffering, but for him to apply the grace resources that he already had in his soul and with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to handle the suffering.

"And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." (2 Corinthians 12:9, NASB)

You don't beg God to make it stop hurting! Why do you think you have Bible doctrine? Suffering is brought to you so you will grow spiritually and rely more and more on God's grace resources that you already have, but haven't used them to the maximum.

"My grace" ἡ χάρις μου (charis mou) is the grace that belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the spiritual maturity of the edification complex of the soul. Christ never turned back, never. When Jesus Christ talks through Bible doctrine about His own personal grace, He is talking about spiritual maturity! You do not live in spiritual maturity until you have erected a completed edification complex of the soul.

"Is sufficient" is the present active indicative of ἀρκέω (arkeō) and is followed by a dative case. When the object of *arkeō* is in the accusative case, it means "sufficient" but when the object of the verb is in the dative case it means "contentment!" God's grace in spiritual maturity is more than sufficient, it's continual contentment! A literal translation is, "And he had communicated to me, My grace produces contentment for you!"

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, "For" is the illative use of γάρ (gar) and means to express grounds or a reason for the existence of God's grace available to the mature believer. Philippians 4:11-12 is another passage on God's grace available in spiritual maturity.

"Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need." (Philippians 4:11-12, NASB)

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, "power" is ἡ δύναμις (dunamis) and means the inherent power. God's omnipotent power is available to meet the needs of every believer. You must first develop the spiritual capacity to fully use this power. "Is perfected" is the present passive indicative of τελέω (teleō) and means to be completed, to carry out to maturity, to pay dues, to fulfill. It never refers to perfection, except in the sense of Jesus Christ. The passive voice means that it will limit whatever it is going to mean. Literally, it means for the power of God is carried out or fulfilled and conveys the idea of getting the maximum use of the power.

"In weakness" ἐν (en) plus the instrumental of ἀσθένεια (astheneia) and means to be totally helpless by means of weakness. Literally, "For the power of God is carried out or fulfilled by means of helplessness." You realize how weak the flesh is, the old sin nature, your human ability, and your human talent. It's no good!



We now have a new sentence. How can you tell? Whenever you have two adverbs together, you have started something new. You have a superlative adverb followed by a comparative adverb. This is strong - time to shout and dance! “Most gladly” is the superlative adverb of ἡδέως (hēdeōs) and means gladly, with pleasure. “Rather” is the comparative adverb of μᾶλλον (mallon) and means with the greatest of pleasure or to a higher degree I will boast.

The principle here is that when a believer reaches spiritual maturity, they can feel they have arrived, so they may begin to boast. However, there is only one person they should be boasting about and that is the celebrityship of Jesus Christ. He is the only celebrity!

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, “I will rather boast” is the future middle indicative of καυχάομαι (kauchaomai) and means to boast, to exult, to rejoice. Spiritual maturity has a place for boasting which honors the only true celebrity, Jesus Christ. “About my weaknesses” is ἀσθένεια (astheneia) and means in the sphere of my helplessness.

“So that the power of Christ” is δύναμις (dunamis) and is referring to the function of the divine power able to be utilized by a spiritually mature believer! To properly use this power of the Holy Spirit, the mature believer must have the capacity from the building structure (edification complex) of *epignosis* Bible doctrine in their soul!

“May dwell” is the aorist active subjunctive of ἐπισκηνώω (episkēnoō) and means to pitch a tent or habitation on, to take possession of. It was used in a technical way for the Shekinah Glory dwelling in the Tabernacle. The Shekinah Glory is the glory of the deity of Jesus Christ. It was a military term as well and meant to quarter, to bivouac. Literally, that the power of the Christ may be bivouacked on me. Why is Paul crying out when the Shekinah Glory of Christ is quartered (indwelt) in the body of Paul as He is in all Church Age believers!

A corrected translation of 2 Corinthians 12:9 is, “And he had communicated to me my grace produces contentment for you. For the power of God is carried out (fulfilled) by means of helplessness. With the greatest of pleasure to a higher degree I will boast in the weaknesses that the power of Christ may be bivouacked on me.”

The Function of the Mature Spiritual Life

In 2 Corinthians 12:10, “Therefore” is διό (dio) and is a compound that includes a Greek preposition plus a relative pronoun. It comes to mean “because of which” and refers to the spiritual life of the mature believer making maximum use of God's grace resources in times of great adversity and pressure.

“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.” (2 Corinthians 12:10, NASB)

“I am well content” is the present active indicative of εὐδοκέω (eudokeō) and means well-pleased, to do willingly, content. This is in contrast to praying, “Lord, please make stop it hurting me.” This is simply thinking divine viewpoint in high pressure situations.

In 2 Corinthians 12:10, “with weaknesses” is ἀσθένεια (astheneia) and means weaknesses. This is the stimulation of grace orientation in the spiritual life where the believer is focused on who and what Jesus Christ is and not what and what they are. “With insults” is ὕβρις (hubris) and means to be a victim of arrogance, to be a victim of insolence, to be insulted. This is maintaining a relaxed mental attitude in the face of insults and slander that directly challenge your relaxed mental attitude.

“In distresses” is ἀνάγκη (anagkē) and is referring to needs, to necessities in life, pressures. This is the



stimulation of the mastery of the details of life in the mature believer's spiritual life. "In persecutions" is διωγμός (diōgmos) and refers to persecutions especially from religion and legalism, non-doctrinal types, and other less spiritually mature believers. This is the challenge of the believer's capacity for unconditional mental attitude *agapao* love in the spiritual life.

In 2 Corinthians 12:10, "with difficulties" is στενοχωρία (stenochōria) and means in dire calamity, extreme affliction, in anguish, in intense suffering! This is the challenge of the mature believer's inner happiness in the spiritual life! A translation of 2 Corinthians 12:10 is, "Because of which (the spiritual life of the mature believer) I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in pressures from needs, in persecutions, in anguishes on behalf of Christ."

"For when" is the conjunction of ὅταν (hotan) and should say "on the occasion of when I am weak." "I am weak" is ἀσθενέω (astheneō) and means helpless, to be feeble, deficient to meet anything in life. "Then" is τότε (tote) and means at that time and only that time. "I am strong" is the present active indicative of δυνατός (dunatos) and means I keep on being strong. This is a word for general dynamics. This power resides in the edification complex of the soul. The translation of 2 Corinthians 12:10b is, "For on the occasion when I am helpless at that time (and only at that time) I keep on being strong."

2 Corinthians 12:10 expresses the spiritually mature believer in the spiritual life. Therefore, Paul can boast under maximum pressure because of the dynamics of the spiritual life and his complete dependence of God's grace resources. Paul is totally helpless about the thorn in the flesh, but God is providing maximum power and Jesus Christ is the celebrity!

Conclusions

Here is the demonstration of the power and strength of the maximum use of the enabling power of the Holy Spirit in the mature believer's spiritual life. The spiritually mature believer when faced with a very tough high-pressure situation where they are totally helpless, becomes totally dependent on the divine power of the Holy Spirit and in their application of the *epignosis* Bible doctrine to the situation.

Grace dynamics are fulfilled in the absolute helplessness of the mature believer. A mature believer is helpless and knows they cannot deal with the situation with human viewpoint or human capabilities. They have no illusions about themselves. They depend on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit in the tough situations and remain calm and in a state of contentment. They know and have the faith to trust in the power of God to handle the situation. They have learned to stand back and wait on the deliverance of the Lord.

There is no test that a mature believer cannot handle. The test may hurt badly. It can cause the believer to take a false step or a true step. There is no greater power resident in the life of the believer than the power of God functioning under His grace resources in time of maximum suffering. 1 Cor. 10:13.

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13, NASB)

Even Calvary was taken in stride by the Lord Jesus Christ. Every provision was made for you in time even in a nation under apostasy to bear up under the most awful conditions! Luke 22 through Luke 24; Heb. 12; 2 Cor. 12:9.

"And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." (2 Corinthians 12:9, NASB)



The very grace of Jesus Christ that took Him through the Cross is at your disposal. The Holy Spirit empowers your life under maximum pressure as He did for Stephen in Acts 7:54-56.

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”” (Acts 7:54-56, NASB)

Jesus Christ troubleshoots the mature believer and encourages them under maximum pressure. Phil. 2:1.

“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,” (Philippians 2:1, NASB)

Jesus Christ was tested in all points. Heb. 4:15.

“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15, NASB)