

**Reading:** 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

**Topic:** Growing Stronger  
Through Struggles

**INTRODUCTION:** The butterfly is a beautiful insect, admired by \_\_\_\_\_ and yet before it becomes this beautiful creature, it must \_\_\_\_\_ through an intense struggle.

## I. THE STRUGGLES OF LIFE:

### ***A. From Birth:***

1. Our human struggles begin at birth, the struggle to take the first \_\_\_\_\_, the challenge to face life outside the safety and security of mother's \_\_\_\_\_. Job 3:1-3
2. Most of our infant stage struggles deal with our security and comfort \_\_\_\_\_ as we have to depend on others for our survival – to \_\_\_\_\_ us, to dress us, to carry us, to clean us, etc.
3. As we begin to \_\_\_\_\_ physically, we learn how to do things for ourselves – to talk, to \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves and to feed ourselves, but now our struggles change to the battle of our human wills.

### ***B. From Dreams To Reality:***

1. Everyone dreams of a life without \_\_\_\_\_, a life with no sickness, no pain, no conflicts with other people, no \_\_\_\_\_, no sorrow, no crying, etc.
2. Since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, every human being born into this world \_\_\_\_\_ struggles and difficulties that challenge one's \_\_\_\_\_ to survive and grow in this world. Job 14:1
3. The fairy tale life that people \_\_\_\_\_ about where everyone lives "Happily ever after" does not exist in this world, so facing reality and building one's \_\_\_\_\_ is the only way to succeed.
4. Jesus made it very clear that in this \_\_\_\_\_, everyone will face some kind of difficulty and opposition so we must be \_\_\_\_\_ to face it and get through it. Jn. 16:33

## II. THE PURPOSE OF STRUGGLES:

### ***A. To Realize Our Need:***

1. When God led the children of Israel into the Promised Land, He gave them a land that was \_\_\_\_\_ and prosperous, but He also made them \_\_\_\_\_ and fight to take it.
2. God left some enemies around to test them and to \_\_\_\_\_ their abilities to be prepared for the times when other \_\_\_\_\_ nations would come to attack them. Judg. 3:1,2
3. God also allowed them to face enemies that were \_\_\_\_\_ and stronger than themselves, so that they would learn to \_\_\_\_\_ on their God and trust in Him rather than in their own strength. Josh. 10:11

### ***B. To Make Us Stronger:***

1. Body building and fitness have become popular \_\_\_\_\_ in the past several years as people seek to develop muscle \_\_\_\_\_ and strength for physical wellness and appearance.
2. The strength and muscles are only developed through \_\_\_\_\_ to the body – the effort required to push, to pull, to \_\_\_\_\_ and struggle, to run, jump and move, etc. I Cor. 9:26
3. The spiritual and natural struggles that God \_\_\_\_\_ us to experience are not to destroy us, but they are to \_\_\_\_\_ our spiritual muscles and develop our patience and trust in God. Is. 43:2
4. The struggles and trials that Job went through were extremely \_\_\_\_\_, but in the end, he was blessed by God and renewed in his strength to be an even \_\_\_\_\_ man than before. Job 23:8-11

5. The Word of God describes our process of struggles as the trial of our \_\_\_\_\_ that is a refining experience that develops us into something \_\_\_\_\_ for the Lord. I Pt. 1:6,7

### III. OUR RESPONSE TO THE STRUGGLES:

#### ***A. The Human Response:***

1. No one enjoys going through struggles and difficult things, and our human tendency is to \_\_\_\_\_ and ask why is this happening to me and did I do something \_\_\_\_\_? Jn. 9:1-3
2. As human beings, we always want an explanation for what is happening in our \_\_\_\_\_ and we may become frustrated when we don't have an \_\_\_\_\_ for why we are going through a struggle.

#### ***B. The Spiritual Response:***

1. When the Apostle Paul was going through a particular struggle, and he had \_\_\_\_\_ of them during his life and ministry, this was his response: 2 Cor. 12:7-10
  - a. He \_\_\_\_\_ to God for the struggle to end.
  - b. He prayed not once but \_\_\_\_\_ times when he didn't get an answer the first time.
  - c. He got an \_\_\_\_\_ from the Lord but it wasn't what his flesh wanted to hear.
  - d. He finally realized that God had permitted this struggle in his life to not just make him a \_\_\_\_\_ person, but to \_\_\_\_\_ him from the possibility of destruction.
  - e. He learned how to thank God for the difficulty and to \_\_\_\_\_ upon the strength that the Lord gave to him daily to continue living for God.

#### ***C. The Act of Trusting:***

1. As human beings, we tend to not \_\_\_\_\_ what we do not understand, and God understands that we have that issue, but He didn't ask us to understand everything, just to \_\_\_\_\_ Him. Pr. 3:5,6
2. The Lord's ways and His \_\_\_\_\_ are so far above ours, for He sees and knows the \_\_\_\_\_ and knows the end from the beginning. Is. 55:8,9
3. What we can be assured of it that though we cannot figure out all the \_\_\_\_\_ that God works, nor do we know all the time what He is doing, we know that He \_\_\_\_\_ us and He cares for us. Rom. 11:33,34
4. When we realize that God is still working on our behalf even through our \_\_\_\_\_, we can do what He asked us to do – not understand but to \_\_\_\_\_ all our cares upon Him because He cares! I Pt. 5:7

**CONCLUSION:** Nobody enjoys going through \_\_\_\_\_ in life, but like the beautiful butterfly, when the process is completed we are made beautiful to \_\_\_\_\_ for Jesus in this world.