

NAR Error #5 using 2 Corinthians 12 (Paul's Thorn)

1. Paul Petitioned, he did not Command as in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (thorn in the flesh)

If anyone had the "authority" to command physical reality, it was the Apostle Paul. He raised the dead and saw extraordinary miracles through his ministry. Yet, when dealing with his own personal suffering, he did not decree, declare, or command the thorn to leave. He begged and pleaded with God. His posture was one of humble petition, not sovereign commanding.

2. God Explicitly Said "No"

The NAR/Word of Faith logic chain claims that God's answer to healing is always an automatic "yes" if you have enough faith and say the right words. But here, Jesus directly tells Paul, "No, I am not taking it away." God had a spiritual purpose for Paul's physical limitation: keeping him humble and putting Christ's power on display through human weakness.

3. The Burden Shifts Back to Christ

In NAR theology, if you are sick or suffering, it is viewed as a spiritual failure, you aren't operating in your "kingly authority." But Paul flips this entirely. He doesn't view his weakness as a lack of faith; he views it as the exact canvas **where Christ's power is made perfect**.

How NAR Speakers Try to Twist This Verse

Because this verse so clearly contradicts their theology, NAR and Word of Faith teachers often try to explain it away. They will frequently claim that Paul's thorn wasn't physical sickness or a bodily ailment, but rather "*persecution*" from people.

However, biblical scholars point out that the Greek word for "flesh" (**sarx**) almost always refers to the physical body, and Paul regularly mentions his physical ailments elsewhere (such as his poor eyesight in Galatians 4:15 and 6:11).

But even if it were just persecution, the theological point remains identical: Paul could not command his circumstances to change, and God's will was for him to endure the hardship, not decree it away.

If the Apostles had taught that believers possessed the inherent power of the Word to speak away sickness, the following situations would make absolutely no sense. Instead, these verses show that the earliest Christians got sick, stayed sick, and required normal medical or providential care. The following verses aren't used to justify sickness or say sickness isn't a big thing, but to provoke thinking.

1. Epaphroditus: Sick to the Point of Death

In Philippians 2:25-27, Paul writes about his close friend and fellow ministry worker, Epaphroditus:

"...he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was sick. Indeed he was sick and almost died. But God had mercy on him..."

Paul was a powerhouse apostle, yet he did not "decree and declare" Epaphroditus into instant health. Epaphroditus lingered in sickness to the very brink of death. Paul didn't blame a lack of faith or a failure to speak the Word; he simply credited Epaphroditus's eventual recovery to God's sovereign mercy, not human authority.

2. Trophimus: Left Behind Because of Sickness

In 2 Timothy 4:20, Paul adds a casual note at the end of his letter that completely upends NAR theology:

"Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus."

Think about the implications of this verse. Paul was nearing the end of his life and writing his final letter. If Paul believed that healing was an automatic right that could be spoken into existence, leaving a brother-in-arms abandoned in a city because he was too sick to travel would be a massive spiritual failure. Paul didn't command him to be healed; he simply left him to recover.

3. Timothy: Frequent Stomach Illnesses

In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul gives some famous practical advice to his spiritual son, Timothy:

“Stop drinking only water and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.”

Timothy was a major leader in the early Church, hand-picked by Paul. Yet he suffered from chronic, "frequent" illnesses. Paul's apostolic remedy was not, "Speak to your stomach and release the Jesus inside you." His remedy was practical, common-sense medicinal advice for the ancient world (using wine to purify water and ease digestion).

4. Gaius: A Prayer for Good Health

In 3 John 1:2, the Apostle John writes to his dear friend Gaius:

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”

John explicitly separates physical health from spiritual health. Gaius's soul was thriving, yet John still had to pray (petition God) that his physical health would catch up. In NAR theology, if your spirit is well, your body must automatically align when you speak it. John's letter shows that a person can be a spiritual giant and still have a frail physical body.

The Stepping away from the tree to see the Forest Picture

When you read the letters written to the early Church, the narrative isn't about believers walking around like supernatural gods commanding the physical realm. The narrative is about endurance, suffering, trusting God in weakness, and looking forward to the ultimate resurrection. Sickness was an expected, normal part of living in a broken world, one that drove believers to depend on God's grace, not their own spoken decrees.

It can be incredibly freeing to see how grounded the New Testament is. How does it feel to contrast the heavy burden of that speaker's "logic chain" with the practical reality of how Paul and Timothy lived?