

Pray Together

Use the first few minutes of your time together to lead your group in a focused prayer time.

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

Read Together

Second Corinthians 11:22-12:10 is referred to by many Bible scholars as “The Fool’s Speech”. Presented as “a daring countercultural exercise,” Paul boasts in a way that runs counter to the emphases in his opponents’ rhetoric, specifically boasting about his trials. It is in these boasts of weakness that we find the heart of this passage: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

This strange message of grace is quite controversial to our 21st Century North American culture. Messages like “I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses” and “when I am weak, then I am strong”, sound too much like a celebration of feebleness for most Americans. We live in a society committed to remedying our weaknesses, overcoming our flaws, and being better today than yesterday.

And yet, Christ’s promises are not bound by cultural expectations. “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness,” The power of Christ still sustains and strengthens disciples who lean into His grace.

Discuss Together

Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.

- Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Identify the most significant questions you need to answer to better understand its message.
- The Triune God is always the main character of Scripture. What does 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 teach us about God?
- Knowing what 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 teaches us about God, what does the passage teach us about humanity?



- In his book *The Problem of Pain*, C.S. Lewis helps us gain a divine perspective on why suffering is part of the province of God. “We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” How has God used your suffering, your weakness, or your brokenness to rouse you to His power and grace?
- Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-8. In these verses, Paul describes his “thorn in the flesh”. Rather than attempting to diagnose “the thorn”, identify as many details about “the thorn” as possible. How will these details of weakness inform how you view your present afflictions?
- Three times Paul pleaded with the Lord that his “thorn in the flesh” should leave him. Christ’s reply to Paul’s prayer is the climax not only of this passage and “The Fool’s Speech”, but in some ways the entire letter of 2 Corinthians: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9) Share how God’s grace has been more sufficient than deliverance from your weaknesses? How has God’s power been made perfect in your weakness?
- Christ replies to Paul’s prayer, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9) Read verse 9b-10. Discuss how the Lordship of Jesus Christ is presented in Paul’s response. What burdens are you carrying today? How might the Lordship of Jesus Christ be manifested in your weakness?

Do Life Together

These questions are designed to be asked in a smaller group of 2-4 people. The smaller setting will provide better opportunity for authentic responses. In your smaller group time, take notes to help others remain accountable to their answers. Grow together!

- How is God calling you to “grow up” in Christ this week?
- How can Jesus redeem this area? How has Jesus proven that in Scripture?
- Who will keep you accountable to this commitment this week?

Pray Together

Pray through 2 Corinthians 12:9b-10. Ask that the Holy Spirit will help you submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ as you experience weakness, suffering, and brokenness.

