

WEEK SIX:

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10

Reflect

Use one or both questions for private reflection and choose one to begin meaningful conversation in your Life Group.

R1 Think of a time you needed help but were reluctant to ask for it. What made asking for help difficult?

R2 Can you remember a time when you prayed for something to change, but it didn't change when or how you hoped? How did you respond?

Grow in the Word

These questions are designed to guide your personal study or center spiritual conversation in your Life Group. Move slowly, and don't feel pressure to cover every question.

The Thorn That Stayed

The apostle Paul had experienced extraordinary revelations from God, but he also endured a persistent and painful affliction that he called a "thorn in the flesh." Paul doesn't say exactly what the thorn was, but he explains its purpose: to keep him from becoming conceited. Three times he pleaded with the Lord to remove it.

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-8

G1 Why might Paul have needed this reminder of his weakness, especially considering his extraordinary spiritual experiences?

G2 Where are you most tempted to take undue pride in your own abilities or accomplishments?

G3 Paul repeatedly asks God to remove his thorn. How does his example challenge our assumptions about weakness, prayer, or spiritual maturity?

The Strength Found in Weakness

God responds to Paul's prayer, but not by removing the thorn. Instead, God promises that his grace is sufficient and his power is made perfect in weakness. Paul's response reveals a surprising change in his perspective.

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

G4 Compare Paul's request in verse 8 with God's response in verse 9. How is God's answer different from what Paul was asking for?

G5 Why is Paul now able to boast in the very thing he wanted removed?

G6 How might Paul's example change the way you think about and respond to your own weaknesses?

Practice Together

Paul reminds us that growing in Christ doesn't mean outgrowing our need for him. Even in our weakness, we can trust his grace and depend on his strength.

Ask God for ears to hear, and take a few moments to reflect:

P1 Where in your life are you facing something you cannot simply fix or overcome?

P2 What might depending on Christ look like in that situation this week?

Spend time praying for one another, asking God for relief and sustaining grace. Ask him to help you experience Christ's power in your weakness so that, like Paul, you can boast in it.

During the coming week, return to God's promise in verse 9 as you bring your needs to him in prayer.
