



## Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

### The Power of Weakness October 7th, 2018

(2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

<sup>7</sup> To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. <sup>8</sup> Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. <sup>9</sup> But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. <sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

1. Analyze yourself. How open are you to sharing your weaknesses and struggles with other people? Why do you feel that way about it? If you had to share your weaknesses with another person, who do you think you’d feel most comfortable sharing that information with?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-4. How do these verses help us better understand what Paul says in 12:7?

Why would Paul “becoming conceited” have been detrimental both to Paul, and to his ministry?

3. Ultimately, we don’t know what Paul’s thorn in the flesh was. In his inspired Word, God may have intended to keep it vague on purpose. What purpose does it serve for our personal application that we don’t know what Paul’s thorn in the flesh was specifically, other than that it was probably a painful, nagging ailment that left him feeling powerless and hampered his abilities to do his work?
4. In his sermon, Pastor Schreiner said there are three different ways to react to weaknesses and struggles in our lives. The “bootstraps mentality,” AKA—“*I’ve got enough power to take care of this myself.*” The “ditch of hopelessness,” AKA—“*I have no power at all.*” And “God’s road to follow,” AKA—“*I’m not powerful enough, but my God is.*” Which does Paul follow here? Which do you usually gravitate towards in the way that you react to weakness or struggle?
5. Paul “boasting” about his weaknesses seems a little strange to us. What does he mean? Why would Paul “boast” about his weaknesses and celebrate them? Why could we also “boast” about our weaknesses then?
6. **Agree/Disagree:** To boast in your weaknesses and trust in God for your strength means that we shouldn’t seek help from counselors, doctors, etc. Defend your answer.
7. **Discuss:** Ultimately, our faith gives us two great sources of power. Our connection to Christ, and the ability to bring our prayers to the God who reigns over the universe. Which do you find better comforts you in a day to day basis? How might a focus on the other also help you be comforted every day?