

When I Am Weak

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

- God gives us SPIRITUAL experiences—which are not a basis of BOASTING. 12:1-6
- God gives us PAINFUL circumstances—to strip us of SELF-CENTEREDNESS. 12:7-8
- God gives us SUFFICIENT grace for our weaknesses—so that His STRENGTH might prevail. 12:9-10

FURTHER UP, FURTHER IN

1. Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-6. Why does Paul tell about this experience? What does he say about boasting in this experience? What attitude should spiritual experiences produce in us (see John 16:13-14; Col 2:18-19;)?
2. Have you ever known someone to claim spiritual authority based upon **a spiritual experience**? **What is Paul's attitude in 12:5-6** about this? Is it always wrong to do so? Why? What are some ways that we can do this as Christians? What are some phrases we might use when we do this?
3. Read 12:7-8. **What do we know about the "thorn in the flesh"?** What do we not know? What are some things in your life that you might **consider to be "thorns"?**
4. Did the thorn come from Satan or God? **How do you understand God's sovereignty over Satan's activity?** (See Job 2:1-10; 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Tim 1:20; Acts 2:23)
5. **What was the purpose of Paul's thorn according to verse 7?** (see also 2 Cor 1:9; 2 Cor 4:7) How do you think this purpose applies to all of our struggles, pains, and difficulties? (see Hosea 2:6-7; Romans 8:28-29)
6. Read 12:8-10. **What does Paul's pain drive him to in verse 8?** **How can our pain drive us there as well?** **How does Jesus respond to Paul's request?** Is this always how Jesus responds?
7. When have you seen Jesus remove a thorn from your life? When have you seen Jesus not remove a thorn from your life? How did you discern the difference in what Jesus was doing?
8. **What does it look like to embrace your weaknesses so that God's strength might shine through?** (see 12:8-10; Phil 4:11-13) In your life this week, what weakness do you need God to be strong in?

