

**Read: 2 Corinthians 12:7b-10**

## Boast in Weakness?

### **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

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. 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.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

It is time for the annual family reunion game of tug-of-war. All the cousins under the age of five are on side “A” of the rope while all of the strong grade school through high school-aged cousins are on side “B”. It is pretty obvious which side will win. But wait...an army of strong uncles suddenly picks up the rope on the young children’s side. Can you say game changer?! The little cousins cheered as they won, thanks to the strength of their uncles.

So it is with God and us. He’s like a strong uncle who grabs the rope for us who are weak and little. Normally we try to hide our weaknesses. It’s embarrassing to admit you’re not a great speller, can’t make free-throw shots, and talk before you think. The apostle Paul admitted his weaknesses. But he has some rather interesting words for us in today’s reading. He tells us to *boast* about our weakness. In our devotions this week, we see God turning the definitions of the world upside down.

List some things the world would tell us to boast about. Some lists might include athletic ability, winning an art contest, or getting straight A’s. What does Paul encourage us to delight in? He tells us to enjoy weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecution, difficulties. What?! That’s upside down!

We’re not exactly sure what Paul’s weakness was. He describes it in verse 7 as a “thorn in the flesh.” Ever get a deep sliver in a finger that hurts horribly? It’s kind of like that. When Paul asked God to take his “thorn in the flesh” away, God heard his prayer but didn’t remove it. He could have but found a way to use Paul’s weakness. It would constantly remind Paul that he was just a weak human and entirely dependent on God’s grace (undeserved love). By experiencing weakness, Paul would need to rely on God’s greatness and power to carry out his work.

Can you boast in a weakness? It doesn’t mean we jump up and down with joy because we have trouble in life. Boasting in our weaknesses means even as we experience troubles, those are the very moments we can joyfully rely entirely on God’s grace and power—like the younger

cousins depending entirely on their uncles to win the tug-of-war game. For when I am weak, then I am strong with Christ's power!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- List one thing you need help to do because you are too small or weak.
- Give an example of one thing Jesus did for us because we are too weak to do it ourselves.

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Name two things that you like to boast about. But according to today's devotion, what does God want us to boast about?
- What can you remind yourself in times of sadness or weakness to stay focused on God?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- In an upside-down way, how did Paul's weakness glorify God?
- Name one weakness/trouble that is hurting you right now. Discuss with your family how it can bring you closer to and make you more dependent on God.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Lord, use our weaknesses, troubles, and sadnesses in life to keep our eyes fixed on your grace and power. Amen.