

1 | God allows us to go through suffering.

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7

Paul was a leader in the early church, and he took that leadership seriously. He admitted that he might be *unskilled in speaking*, but he was not less in knowledge than other teachers (2 Corinthians 11:6). But even Paul was not immune from pride, and he shared that a *thorn in the flesh*, which God would not take away, kept him humble. Do you feel like it would be easier to follow God if you didn't face a particular challenge or suffering? Share your experience.

2 | God's power is made perfect in our weakness.

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." . . . 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

Paul earnestly asked God, more than once, to take this thorn away from him. He was focusing on how much easier it would be for him if it were taken away. But he realized that his pain had a purpose: to show that God's power works best and is made complete in our weakness. How have you seen God's grace and power at work in your life?

3 | God's grace is sufficient.

. . . Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

Paul realized that whatever he could or could not do, God's grace was sufficient for him. Paul didn't need to show off his own strength to prove himself to the church in Corinth or to anyone who doubted his ability and calling as an apostle of Christ. Instead, he constantly shared how God's grace and power were made even more evident through his weaknesses. What does 2 Corinthians 12:10 say about when we are strong?

APPLICATION

- Is there an area in your life where you need to depend on yourself less and on God's grace more? How can you receive and rely on God's grace in that area?
- Are you striving to show others your own strength instead of displaying how God's power is evident in your weakness? What's one thing you will do differently starting this week?
- To whom can you share about God's sufficient grace and unlimited power? What can you tell them to encourage them, in spite of what they are going through?