OCBF
OAK CLIFF
BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Unlocked

Discovering Your New Strength

–2 Corinthians 12:7-10

INTRODUCTION

Most people love a good underdog story. The Bible is filled with stories like these, where the "hero" is a person with flaws and weaknesses who only accomplishes great things because of God. Moses was a stuttering shepherd who became the fearless deliverer of a nation, Sarah's barren womb became the ultimate canvas for God's promise, and Peter's bitter denial of Jesus transformed a broken failure into the bold rock of Pentecost—just to name a few. In 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Paul describes the reasons he could boast as a fearless hero, but he explains what keeps him humble. There is no place for arrogance in the kingdom of God.

Paul experienced great revelations from God, but he was given a "thorn in the flesh" to keep him from exalting himself. Although Paul did not reveal what the thorn was, he wrote that Satan was involved in it. Satan is not on God's team, but he runs the plays that God directs. Paul asked God to remove the thorn, but instead God used the thorn to help Paul's spirit by breaking his pride. God's refusal to fix the issue was a simultaneous promise to inhabit the weakness. God's grace is more than enough to compensate for our failings. His power can be even more greatly displayed through our frailty.

The kingdom of God flips everything in the world upside down. Where we see weakness, God sees strength. That is why we need to stop hiding our weaknesses and bring them to God. We should allow His grace to carry us through our circumstances rather than relying on ourselves. If we are going to boast, we must only boast in our failings and in the Lord's perfection. When we have nowhere to turn but God, then we are in the best position to be effective for His kingdom.

GETTING STARTED

1. What is your favorite underdog story, and why?

2. Can you think of examples where a weakness can actually be a strength?

LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. In what areas of your life are you most tempted to be self-sufficient and rely only on yourself?

2. What do you boast about? Does it bring glory to God or glory to you?

3. How have you seen God's grace in your life? What would it look like for you to trust in His grace more?

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. What is one weakness you need to bring to God? How can you allow Him to use your weakness to demonstrate His power this week?

2. What testimony can you share with someone this week to boast about God's power despite your weakness?

3. ***Want to dig deeper?*** Take a look at the following passages: 2 Corinthians 12:1-6; 2 Corinthians 10:17-18; Acts 9; Acts 16:9-10; Acts 18:9-10; Acts 22:17, 21; Acts 27:24; Revelation 1:8; Job 1-2, 42; Job 38:4; Job 42:5-6; Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 9:8; 1 Corinthians 1:27; 2 Corinthians 4:7-11; 2 Corinthians 11:22-30; Numbers 22:2-24:25; 1 Kings 22:19-23; Luke 22:1-32; Matthew 26:39-44; James 1:2-4.

RENEW YOUR MIND

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. – ***James 1:2-4***