

# Weak yet Strong

## 2 Corinthians 12:1-13

**Read: 2 Corinthians 4:7; 12:1-13; 1 Corinthians 2:1; John 3:30.**

1. See 2 Cor. 10:1, 10; 11:6-7 for some of the ways that the Corinthians criticised Paul. Were they being unfair? Why/why not?

2. Have you ever been criticised? What effect did it have on you? What is your **first** reaction to being criticised?

3. In 2 Cor. 11:16ff Paul starts “boasting” (see especially 16-21). Do you think this was a wise move by him? What misgivings do you think he had? What were Paul’s boasts? (see 11:22-12:10).

4. Why do you think that Paul reveals a supernatural experience he had 14 years before (see 12:1-5)? Take time reading through these verses, with particular focus on the following phrases:

- ~ “I know a man” – why does Paul write in the third person (see v7)
- ~ “fourteen years ago” – what might this tell us?
- ~ “caught up to the third heaven” - why this terminology?

5. Read 2 Cor. 12:6-10. Take time reading through these verses, with particular focus on the following phrases:

- ~ “Thorn in the flesh” – what might this refer to?
- ~ “a messenger from Satan” – what might this tell us?
- ~ “Three times I pleaded with the Lord...” – does this bring a measure of consolation. If so, why? See also 2 Tim. 4:20. Remember that relief can come in two ways: by removing the burden or by strengthening the shoulder! Thoughts?
- ~ “My grace is sufficient for you” – share with the group how God’s grace has been sufficient for you personally.
- ~ “for my power is made perfect in weakness” – in NLT “My power works best in weakness.” In which ways have you experienced this?

6. Share with your group the ways that you have said “I can’t serve God because...” Do you continue to struggle over feelings of either unworthiness or inadequacy? Why?

7. The Bible and Christian history reveal many men and women who were “weak” yet became strong through God’s power. Who are your (i) biblical heroes? (ii) Christian heroes? What was it about their stories that inspire you?