



All We Need

BIBLE STUDY

It's one of those days. One more straw and your back will surely break. It's tempting to give in to tears and frustration, but the apostle Paul offers another approach, Rejoice! Suffering is a gift! Wait. What?

Let's begin with Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:1-10.

1. Summarize this section of Paul's letter to the Corinthian church.

What does he want the Corinthians to know and understand?

Paul provides an example of how a person should not find his or her identity and confidence in personal achievements.

2. How was Paul suffering? And why?

- Nature of it: *it was real, and not imaginary. It does not seem likely that it was remorse over his pre-conversion persecution of the saints or an unbeliever. It was an infirmity, a weakness, a handicap. It was physical and it was painful.*
- Purpose: *to ensure his humility in the face of great gifts & abilities*
- Source: *a messenger of Satan... but notice the word "given." He considers it a gift.*
Job 1:17, 21... The Chaldeans did it, but Job says "the Lord gave and has taken away."
- Result: *It drove him to prayer.*

3. In verse 8 we are told that Paul prayed about his infirmity.

⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

Which phrases or words in the verse convey these traits?

- Paul prayed definitely... *"take it away from me"*
- Paul prayed earnestly... *he "pleaded"*
- Paul prayed persistently... *he prayed 3 times*

4. Paul's prayer was answered in the greatest possible way, by revelation of the Lord Himself! Study verse 9 carefully and notice that with the revelation of Himself, the Lord gave the promise of His sufficiency.

⁹ 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.

Which phrases or words in the verse indicate these attributes of God's sufficiency? It was...

- a *powerful* sufficiency: *my power & my grace*
- a *personal* sufficiency: *He/me/my/you – all the personal pronouns*
- a *present* sufficiency: *“my grace is”*
- a *plentiful* sufficiency: *it is “enough” (sufficient)*
- a *practical* sufficiency: *it became operational in Paul's weaknesses*

5. Paul tells us “His grace is sufficient” for us.

What is grace? How does God define it?

- John 3:16 *withholds his wrath and offers us a path to heaven*
- John 15:1-7 *We cannot survive without the vine.*
- Ephesians 2:8-9 *saves us when we cannot*

6. What encouragement do you find in Paul's letter to the Corinthians about God's grace? Is it enough for you?

God will not always remove the thorn, but his grace will be all we need, thorn or no thorn.

When a huge crisis comes into our lives, we often find the gumption to face it bravely and with grace. It's sometimes the “little” things in our lives that offer the biggest challenges. Do you have trouble maintaining your calm in the face of daily interruptions, misunderstandings, conflicts and messes?



Paul reminds us that Christ's power can really only show itself when we are at our weakest. It's a game changer, seeing the trifecta of a broken dishwasher, vomiting child, and near-impossible work deadline as a gift. We really can't handle it all, but we have someone who can.

7. When is it the hardest to trust God? What circumstances have made it difficult for you to maintain your confidence in Him?

8. What are 2 truths about suffering?

- Job 5:7 *suffering is a common experience for all human kind*
- Philippians 1:29 *suffering is a common experience for all Christians*

9. What did King Hezekiah have to say about this suffering?

- Isaiah 38:15-17 *¹⁷ Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.*

10. What does 1 Peter 1:6-9 say about the trials we face?

Our faith is the most valuable thing. Trials and suffering are there to give our faith a chance to shine and/or be strengthened as God works in our lives, so that the end result is to the praise, glory and honor of Christ.

11. Do you trust God completely? Are you sure of His Love? Do you believe he will keep all his promises? How should that belief affect your everyday life?

- Psalm 9:10
- Psalm 73:28
- 2 Samuel 22:31
- 2 Corinthians 9:8

Discussion and/or Break Out Section:

(Choose as many as you have time for or would like to discuss.)

12. *We all want to move forward in our Christian walk*, making steady progress on a smooth path. But sometimes the hill is steep, and our footing begins to slip. Do you sometimes feel like you're taking two steps forward and one step back? What helps you start moving forward again?

13. *How well do you know yourself?* Can you tell when you're in danger of despairing, feeling overwhelmed or having an angry outburst, or does it sneak up on you? What does James 1:23-25 recommend for self-examination? *Listen, look, compare & DO!*
What does Proverbs 19:11 urge the wise to do?

14. *When our prayers go unanswered*, or our worst fears are realized, one of our first reactions is to ask, "Doesn't God love me anymore?" "Didn't I do it right?" "Am I a bad Christian?"

Remember what 1 Peter 1:6-9 says about these trials we face.

How do you counter these feelings? How do you answer others when they question God's faithfulness?

15. *God promises much to those who trust in Him.* Here are several verses that deal with trusting God. Allow them to strengthen your confidence in your Savior.

- Psalm 18:2
- Psalm 31:14
- Psalm 34:22 ... *When David pretended to be insane for Abimelek. Even when our issues are "self-inflicted," God still rescues his servants.*
- Psalm 37:5
- Nahum 1:7

Are there other passage you regularly turn to for reassurance and comfort?

16. Think of times throughout the Bible when God's grace shone in the midst of weakness. Here are a few examples to get you started. *Discuss one or two.*

- Abraham and Sarah
- Moses
- Joshua
- Gideon
- Ruth
- Leah *Gen 29:31...*
- Elijah
- Elisha & Naaman
- Jeremiah *1:6...and more*

17. *Abide.* Jesus calls us to "abide" in Him (John 15:4), and the closeness of that kind of relationship can be a comfort to our lonely hearts on a many a difficult day. However, John mentions another kind of abiding. What does 1 John 2:24 urge?

With an abiding faith, we are assured victorious lives. How would you define victory? What does Revelation 21:7 say?

Wrapping it up:

18. What are some things you could do to help remind yourself that God's grace is truly enough to get you through any situation?

19. What “big picture” thought can you tuck away for that trial-filled day (or year)?

Take a look at Paul’s versions of “Don’t sweat the small stuff.”

- **Philippians 3:4-8** *If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.*

⁷But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

- **Philippians 4:11-13** *¹¹I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

20. Let’s also remember *when* God’s grace and power really shine through?

- **2 Corinthians 3:5** *Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.*
- **2 Corinthians 12:5b** *but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses*
- **2 Corinthians 12:9b** *Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.*

21. Ephesians 2:14 declares that Jesus Christ is our peace. What is one of his well-known titles from the Scriptures, found in Isaiah 9:6?

22. Does peace mean freedom from conflict? No! Jesus declares that this world is full of troubles. Then why are we able to have peace, even in the midst of trials?

Read **John 16:33** *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

Or **1 John 5:4-5** *⁴for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

23. Our Savior was very familiar with suffering. What comfort do these verses provide amid your own suffering?

Isaiah 53:4-5 *Interesting note you might like to share: Matthew 8:17 quotes Isaiah. "He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases." It is in the context of Jesus' healing if you look at the full chapter of Matthew 8. So it would seem that even when he was healing and doing miracles, he was taking their "suffering" and infirmities upon himself as well; not just our sins.*

Hebrews 12:2-3

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come to you now and acknowledge my weakness. You are the fine, I am a branch and apart from you, I can do nothing. Please remind me to cling to you and to remember that your grace is all I need. In good times and bad, I need you.

Thank you for your overwhelming grace,

Amen