

WEAKNESS KEEPS US DEPENDENT ON CHRIST'S GRACE AND POWER

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

FAITH BUILDERS

Introduction – Self Exaltation

Charles Swindoll: “Ours is the age of the self-made person who is more than adequate. Not only do we want to appear as though we have our lives together, but we want it to appear that we have put our own lives together better than most. The word “adequate” originally comes from Latin and means “make level to” or “being equal to a requirement.”

The common colloquialism “I’m equal to the task” would be a good way to put it in today’s idiom. But the idea of more than adequate brings with it a touch of conceit, doesn’t it? “Not only can I do it, but I can do it better than most. I’m self-sufficient.”

I. It Is Better to Boast in Our Weaknesses (:1-6)

A. (:1) Boasting is necessary but not profitable

“Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.”

B. (:2-4) Recollection of the Incredible Experience

C. (:5-6) Continued Apologies for Necessity of Boasting

I. It Is Better to Boast in Our Weaknesses (:1-6)

MacArthur states:

The true measure of a man of God does not lie in his claims of visions and experiences with God, or the force of his personality, the size of his ministry, his educational degrees, or any other human criteria. A true man of God is marked by how much he has suffered in the war against the kingdom of darkness, how concerned he is for people, how humble he is, and how accurately he handles the supernatural revelation found in God's Word (**2 Tim. 2:15**). Like Paul, such men patiently endure the suffering and humiliation of this life, knowing that such *"momentary, light affliction is producing ... an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison"* (**2 Cor. 4:17**).

II. Thorns in the Flesh Expose Our Weaknesses (7-8)

A. Paul's Thorn in the Flesh (:7)

- A. Privilege of the Revelations
- B. Protection Against Pride
- C. Pain

II. Thorns in the Flesh Expose Our Weaknesses (7-8)

What is the Thorn?

1. Physical thorn in his flesh
2. A physical ailment with Paul such as his eyes or his speech
3. A Physical ailment such as migraines, malaria, epilepsy, gallstones, gout, or an intestinal disorder
4. A messenger that reminds Paul of his past
5. A specific demonic false prophet or group of false prophets

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- 1) Majority of its uses in the New Testament (including every other occurrence in Paul's writings), "angelos" (messenger) refers to angels.
- 2) "Torment" always refers to harsh treatment from someone (Matt. 26:67; Mark 14:65; 1 Cor. 4:11; 1 Peter 2:20).
- 3) The Old Testament sometimes refers metaphorically to opponents as "thorns" (e.g., Num. 33:55; Josh. 23:13; Judg. 2:3; Ezek. 28:24).
- 4) "Leave" in verse 8 is always used in the New Testament to speak of someone departing. (cf. 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 1 Tim. 4:1).
- 5) Severest suffering came from his concern for the church (11:28-29).

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A. Privilege of the Revelations

B. Protection Against Pride

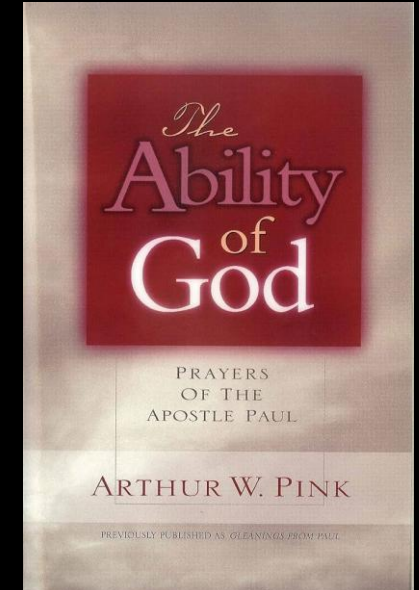
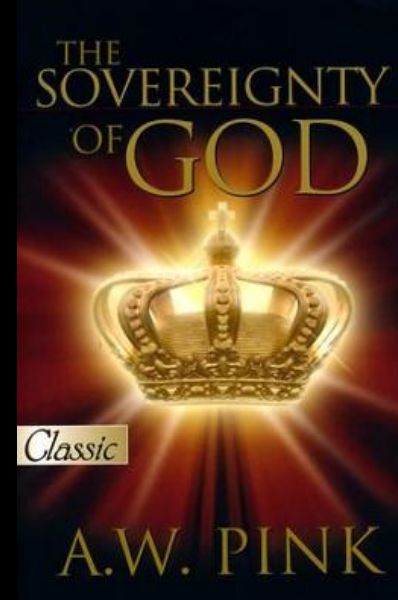
- Why is pride a sin?
 - It elevates self above God
 - It leads to other sins
 - It prevents humility and repentance
 - It is an obstacle to receiving God's grace

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A. Paul's Thorn in the Flesh (:7)

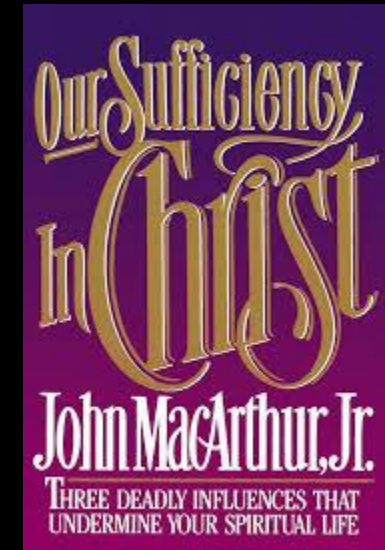
- A. Privilege of the Revelations
- B. Protection Against Pride
- C. Pain

B. Prayer for Deliverance (:8)



III. God's Grace Is Sufficient for Our Weaknesses (:9-10)

- A. Biggest life lesson = Embracing the Sufficiency of God's Grace and Power (:9)
- B. We Need to Practice Contentment in All Circumstances (:10)



What a friend we have in Jesus

- 1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!
- 2 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
- 3 Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake
you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield
you;
you will find a solace there.

Applications

- 1) Do not be proud in your achievements, but be humble knowing that the Lord is the one who provides you everything you have.
- 2) Do not seek after experiences – such as visions or revelations
- 3) Gods word is sufficient for every life circumstance
- 4) Pray often, but in trials pray more
- 5) Believe and live out that “Gods grace is sufficient for you.”
- 6) Trust and rest in his word knowing what God is doing in your life is for your good.
- 7) Be content in every circumstance you encounter

