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PRAYER

Thank you, God, for giving us all we need to live out in your purposes, and that there is no trial or circumstance that we might face that takes you by surprise! We love you, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WARM UP

(OPTIONAL)

If you were to go on an adventure in the bush country for a week, apart from clothing, food and water, what is one thing that you would need to take with you?

NOTES

WORD

¹ I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. ² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. ³ And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—⁴ and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. ⁵ On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses—⁶ though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. ⁷ 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. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

[2 Corinthians 12:1-10 \(ESV\)](#)

GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = never, 10 = always), how do you rate your ability to prepare for hard times? Why do you rate yourself this way?
2. “His power is made perfect in weakness.” What does this mean to you? How does this verse apply to you, if you have Christ as the centre of your life?
3. Paul speaks of himself in the third person in verses 2-5, so as not to boast by talking about what God did in him, or to imply that these things were attained by his own effort. When you have done something well, how hard or easy is it for you to *not* take the credit? Do you struggle when you are not acknowledged for work you’ve done well?

4. There is a proverbial “thorn” that was given to Paul in the flesh, and three times he pleaded for it to be removed, only to have God tell him that his grace was sufficient for him. Have you struggled with a thorn in your flesh? Do you struggle now? Would you like prayer?
5. Was there a recent trial you faced where you struggled to make it through? What was it like? Would you say that you are out of the trial now or would you like God’s help at the centre to help you through it?

PRAYER LIST