

## Life Group Homework

For the week of May 6, 2018

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### MY STORY

- 1) What was your takeaway from last week's study?
- 2) How did you experience the Holy Spirit this week?

### QUICK REVIEW

- 3) Upon reviewing your notes from Sunday's teaching, what caught your attention?

### DIGGING DEEPER

Ephesians 1:15-23(NLT)

<sup>15</sup> Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, <sup>16</sup> I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, <sup>17</sup> asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. <sup>18</sup> I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.

<sup>19</sup> I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power <sup>20</sup> that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.

<sup>21</sup> Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. <sup>22</sup> God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. <sup>23</sup> And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

- 4) What does Paul pray for the Ephesians?
- 5) How would growing in our knowledge of God be helpful on a daily basis?
- 6) What does the phrase "confident hope" mean, and how does it apply to you?
- 7) What is the power Paul is referring to in Verse 19, and from last week, how do we experience it in our lives?
- 8) One of the key thoughts is that God's power provides me strength; how does that thought make you feel?

### TAKING IT HOME

This week Pastor Craig talked about choosing to depend on Christ. This is our response: choose to live in grace and let it empower our lives. Next, we will unpack a couple of thoughts about the Apostle Paul learning to walk in the Spirit of God.

2 Corinthians 12:6-10 (NLT)

<sup>6</sup> If I wanted to boast, I would be no fool in doing so, because I would be telling the truth. But I won't do it, because I don't want anyone to give me credit beyond what they can see in my life or hear in my message, <sup>7</sup> even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So, to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud.

<sup>8</sup> Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. <sup>9</sup> Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

<sup>10</sup> That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

One of the key thoughts Pastor Craig brought up was that Paul was asking God for independence from His power and plan. On a cursory reading of this passage, the impression could be gleaned that God is just being mean to Paul. However, it is the opposite because God was helping Paul recognize his dependence and need to rest in God's power and grace.

- 9) What was God's response to Paul after his requests to have the thorn in his flesh taken away?
- 10) What was Paul's response regarding his weakness, and what can we learn from him?
- 11) How is God's grace shown in weakness?
- 12) Can you relate in some way to Paul's struggle? If so how, and what do you do with it?

## CHAIR TIME TOOL

Read Ephesians Chapter One and think about the list of things God has chosen you for.

- Chosen for Grace
- Chosen to Belong
- Chosen for Revelation
- Chosen to point to Jesus
- Chosen to receive the Spirit of God

13) What do these mean to you?

## FAMILY RESOURCES

Read 2 Corinthians 12:6-10 with your kids and then answer the following questions together:

- 1) Share a struggle that you are currently dealing with or that you have dealt with in the past. Have you prayed and asked God to take it away?
- 2) What happened? What did you learn from your struggle? (Parents: this is a great opportunity to explain to your kids that God does not cause struggles or bad things to happen to us. But, He does allow them if He knows that they will produce good things in our lives. Read James 1:17 with your kids and then focus the discussion on how the family member has grown as a result of the hardship.)
- 3) How can you take what you have learned from your weaknesses, struggles and hardships to encourage someone else?

Take turns sharing prayer requests and end in prayer.



May 6, 2018 | PASTOR CRAIG SWEENEY

**One BIG THOUGHT: My God wants me to experience STRENGTH.**

*Ephesians 1:13, 15–23 (NLT)*

- **The Simple TRUTH - Jesus is ALL POWERFUL! I'm not!**
- **God is independent...I am dependent.**
- **Choosing to be dependent on Christ**

*2 Corinthians 12:1-10 (NIV)* (Paul's thorn in the flesh)

### The PROBLEM:

"<sup>7</sup>Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me."

- GRACE = mercy, empowering

### Paul's RESPONSE to the problem:

"<sup>8</sup>Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me."

### God's RESPONSE:

"<sup>9</sup>But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

### Paul's RESOLVE: Chose to acknowledge his dependence on God

"<sup>9a</sup>Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. <sup>10</sup>That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

### Dependence:

- Acknowledge my weakness. (vs.9)
- Look to God to supply His strength through the Holy Spirit. (vs.9)
- Expect/Trust/Engage my faith in Christ to supply my strength. (vs.9)

### What we learn:

1. It's a process of discovery, not an event where I learn it all at once.
2. The GOAL: My heart being more dependent on Christ, not less.
3. My life would speak more about God's impact than it does about my accomplishments.

### CHALLENGE:

1. What do you need to declare DEPENDENCE on God for?
2. It's TIME to Engage your faith/trust/expectation in the GENEROUS GOD.