

Summer Reading

WEEK
10

Introduction:

All summer long, we're reading and studying the books of First and Second Corinthians. How can these ancient texts speak to us today?

Scripture:

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 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. 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.

– 2 Corinthians 12:7—10

Discussion Questions:

1. Are you more of a Tigger or an Eeyore these days? Is that just your personality, or is it a choice you're making (or not making)?
2. Stephen & Charles both quoted Hemingway: "The world breaks everyone, and afterward some are strong at the broken places." Where have you seen that play out in your own life — a time brokenness actually made you stronger?
3. Paul begged God three times to remove his "thorn in the flesh," and God basically said no. Have you ever prayed hard for something to be taken away, and instead God just gave you the strength to carry it? What was that like?
4. There is a difference between having a bad circumstance and letting that circumstance become your whole worldview. Is there anything in your life right now that's started to feel bigger than it actually is?
5. Paul says he learned to be "content" in hardship — not just gritting his teeth through it, but actually finding peace in it. Does that feel realistic to you, or does it feel like a bar too high to reach?
6. God's mercy is described as "new every morning" — you can't stockpile it, but you also can't run out of it. Does that change how you think about your bad days, or your bad decisions?
7. Part of faith is learning to embrace the moment you're actually in, instead of running from it or dreading what's next. Is that easy or hard for you, and why?

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8. Communion is a reminder that you're not alone and it's not all on you. When's the last time you actually let yourself believe that — that you don't have to have all the answers?