

Life Group Lesson

Nothing More Beautiful • Week of September 13

If the Lord chose only perfect people, free of limitations, then we would not have the stories of Abraham, Sarah, Moses, David, Elijah, and a host of other heroes throughout Scripture. The truth is no one is perfect. God left heaven and came to earth in weakness, emptied Himself, and put aside divine privileges in order to save us from our sin. He understands our limitations because He willingly took upon Himself our human limitations. His love and strength work best in our limitations, if we trust Him. The apostle Paul said, “So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

The apostle Paul did not allow personal limitations to limit his commitment to preach the Good News of Christ. Once Paul was converted, he immediately began preaching about Christ. But many people were afraid of him. Others were enraged that this former ‘persecutor of the way’ was now preaching the very message he had opposed. But Paul was wired in such a way, that the greater the challenge the greater his resolve to preach Christ. What was his secret? Paul discovered time after time that Christ (the same risen Lord he met on the road to Damascus!) showed up in his weaknesses, trials, and imprisonment. Experiencing the personal presence of Christ was more important to Paul than freedom from pain and suffering. So he pressed on.

1. Paul recounts a personal story in **2 Corinthians 11:30-33** that we also read about in **Acts 9:22-26**. Compare both references. Often we can look back on challenges and see how the Lord showed up to help us. The personal experience of Christ’s presence fuels our faith for the next challenge. Have you seen Christ show up in your weaknesses? How did Christ’s strength *strengthen* your faith in Him?

Earthly limitations can be a door to heaven’s beauty. Our greatest need can be the very thing to bring us to faith in the Lord. Think about Abraham and Sarah—they would have never experienced the miracle of a baby boy in their old age had they not been barren. Think about Jacob –

his tendency to deceive others out of fear greatly limited Jacob until God wrestled him to the ground, threw his hip out of socket, and changed his name to Israel. Moses was eighty years old with a speech impediment, and God called him to bring an entire nation out of bondage into freedom. Think about the story of Naaman – a mighty Syrian general in the time of Elisha with a horrible limitation – Naaman suffered from the disease of leprosy (2 Kings 5).

2. These men and women would have never experienced the God of Israel had they not suffered from some limitation. Re-read Paul’s words in **2 Corinthians 12:8-10**. What limitations are you facing right now? Name them and pray—

*“My limits in this season of life are _____. But Lord, like your servant, the apostle Paul – I know that your grace is all I need. Your power works best in my weakness. Help me understand that **You** are all I need. I trust you to show up. Amen.*

- Working overtime
- Furloughed or laid off without financial resources
- Resentment, anxiety, isolation, rage, depression
- Scars from family or lack of family (poverty, abuse, abandonment)
- Active in recovery – having to limit people, places, and things
- Limitations in body – sight, hearing, too young, too old, cancer
- Relational – single, married
- Personality type
- Lack of experience or education
- Regret from a dream never realized, a goal never achieved
- Debt

Just remember, Christ is bigger than your biggest challenge. What if we really started believing that our God is a God of possibilities. Nothing is impossible with God. He may not answer our prayers the way we think He should answer – but He will answer every earnest prayer according to His purposes. He works all things out together for His glory if we trust Him. Do you believe the Lord cares about every detail of your life? If so (even if your faith is weak) tell the Lord you trust Him. Tell the Lord you love Him. Resolve now to press forward and entrust your greatest limitation, your most challenging weakness in His strong hands.

Close by reading together these words of Jeremiah—

“This is what the LORD says: ‘Don’t let the wise boast in their wisdom, or the powerful boast in their power, or the rich boast in their riches. But those who wish to boast should boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the LORD who demonstrates unfailing love and who brings justice and righteousness to the earth, and that I delight in these things.

I, the LORD, have spoken!” (Jeremiah 9:23-24)



Text: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Plain Truth:

God’s _____ works best in _____.

1. Jesus’ _____ is revealed in choosing _____ for our _____.
2. If _____ is the _____ state of mind, then _____ is the mind of Christ.

Write this down: My limits in this season of my life are _____

One Year Bible Readings

September 13: Isaiah 12:1-14:32, 2 Corinthians 13:1-14, Psalm 57:1-11, Prov. 23:9-11
September 14: Isaiah 15:1-18:7, Galatians 1:1-24, Psalm 58:1-11, Proverbs 23:12
September 15: Isaiah 19:1-21:17, Galatians 2:1-16, Psalm 59:1-17, Proverbs 23:13-14
September 16: Isaiah 22:1-24:23, Galatians 2:17-3:9, Psalm 60:1-12, Proverbs 23:15-16
September 17: Isaiah 25:1-28:13, Galatians 3:10-22, Psalm 61:1-8, Proverbs 23:17-18
September 18: Isaiah 28:14-30:11, Galatians 3:23-4:31, Psalm 62:1-12, Prov. 23:19-21
September 19: Isaiah 30:12-33:9, Galatians 5:1-12, Psalm 63:1-11, Proverbs 23:22

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