



MIND
session page

Strong Weakness

2 Corinthians 12:2-10 | Session 10.26

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Start by asking:

- When was the last time you felt really vulnerable?
- How do you typically feel and act when you're feeling vulnerable and why?
- Why do you think vulnerability is such a threatening concept?
- How far are people willing to go in order to appear invulnerable and how far is too far?
- For what reasons might we typically brag or boast about our accomplishments, and how does that boasting cause disconnection in our relationships with others?

Content

Read 2 Corinthians 12:2-10, and watch the Bible Background Video. Ask:

- What kinds of things does Paul “brag” about and in what ways do Paul’s credentials likely differ from those who oppose him?
- Why is this experience that can't be shared “worth boasting about” and how might this give Paul credibility among other believers?
- Why does Paul say he's "choosing not to boast," and how do you feel about the way he goes about his "not-boasting?"
- What do you think was Paul’s “thorn in the flesh and why did God give it to him?
- What kinds of things keep intelligent and charismatic leaders like Paul humble?
- From what you remember of Paul’s story, how was God’s power revealed through Paul’s weaknesses and trials?

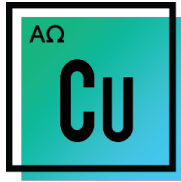
Closure

Continue by asking:

- What thing or things often make you feel vulnerable and powerless?
- How have you seen God work through that weakness in the past?
- At what points have you seen the truth in what Paul says – that God’s grace is all we need, that God strength shines strongest when we are weakest?
- Why do vulnerability and brokenness bring us closer to God and one another?
- How might you choose to embrace and/or share your vulnerability this week, and allow it to bring you closer to God and other believers?
- What can we do to help others overcome their own vulnerabilities?

Close with prayer.

Writer: Jon Parks



CURRENT

session page

Strong Weakness

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Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Thoroughly review all the referenced resources for this session in advance.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)

Context

Start by sharing the "Gaston: Best Moments" video and asking:

- If Gaston was a modern day character, who do you think he would be and why?
- What comes to mind when you hear someone boast of their accomplishments and why?
- What kinds of things do you tend to boast about and why?
- Why does it seem easier to talk about the things that make us feel successful versus those that make us vulnerable?
- How do you think this video would have gone if it was filmed at your church on a Sunday morning?

Content

Read 2 Corinthians 12:2-10, and watch the Bible Background Video. Ask:

- What comes to mind when you hear Paul talking about someone having an experience that cannot be shared?
- In what ways is it a sign of strength or of weakness when people boast?
- Why do you think God is concerned with keeping Paul from getting "too elated?"
- When you hear someone bare their soul and say what makes them vulnerable and weak what do you think of them?
- How do you respond to Nikki's statement that "when we let our humanity show, we connect with God, and we connect with other human beings also?"

Closure

Share this video of family members sharing how their loved ones with Alzheimer's have been helped and ask:

- What was the hardest thing you have ever had to do for a family member?
- What do you most fear about admitting you or someone you love needs help?
- If you have had to have this discussion of saying you need help, what did happen?
- What does society say about those who admit their vulnerabilities or weaknesses, especially in these times?
- Think about our own lives....what makes us vulnerable and how hard is it to admit to that?
- How might we find strength in admitting our own vulnerabilities, and how might we help others do so as well?

Encourage the group to think about what situations make them feel vulnerable as you listen to When Memory Fades. Close in prayer.

Writers: Crystal Shepherd and Steve McClain



Strong Weakness

2 Corinthians 12:2-10 | Session 10.26

Before the Session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Materials needed: slips of paper and pens; a whiteboard or butcher paper; and markers.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)

Context

Read 2 Corinthians 12:2-10, and watch the Bible Background Video.

This is a guided group reflection on personal resources and how they are applied.

Reflection

Start by telling the group: *Often we think individualistically in our culture. This reflection is designed to help us discover what our collective resources might be to offer to the world.*

Invite the group to think about and verbalize the things they possess by creating a list of resources on poster paper as people share according to the following areas:

- **TIME** – How much free time might you have during a given month to offer someone in need?
- **MONEY** – If we were collecting an offering today for a specific important need, what amount would you be able to contribute? Share two amounts: What you would be able to give, without any sacrifice? What you would be able to give if you sacrifice a bit? (NOTE: for this category, have people write their answers anonymously on slips of paper, ask one person to add the numbers, and put the total on the poster.)
- **MATERIAL RESOURCES** – What is in your house that you could give to someone who has less than you do?
- **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS** – What do you know and what can you do that can be offered to someone in need?
- **MISC.** Is there anything else that doesn't necessarily go into any of the previous categories that you can share with others?

Invite the group to consider the poster, and make observations or share any insights that come to mind, then ask:

- What needs you are aware of in our community that our group could consider meeting?

Write these on another poster, inviting individuals to consider answering one or more of the needs. (NOTE: Be careful not to create an atmosphere of "should." If a specific action plan surfaces and it seems like the group wants to engage it, go with it. If not, you do not have to press.) Continue by asking:

- What does our choice of addressable concerns reveal about our faith?
- In what ways might the ability to meet someone else's needs be an opportunity?
- How might we, as individuals, be led by our enthusiasm about what God is doing to want to join in?

Close with group prayer

Writer: Joy Yee



MEDIA
session page

Strong Weakness

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Before the Session

- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Listen together to [Larry Norman's "Nightmare 97"](#) and ask:

- What was the strangest part of this song and why?
- What other songs have you heard that described strange visions and in what ways have such songs affected us?
- When have you or someone you known had an especially vivid dream that affected you in some way?
- Why do you think that having such "visions" are such a persistent feature of the human experience?

Content

Read 2 Corinthians 12:2-10, and watch the Bible Background Video. Ask:

- In what way is having a vision that you can't talk about something over which one might "boast?"
- How do we usually respond when someone tells us that they know something they can't tell us about and why?
- What do you think is Paul's main "thorn in the flesh," as he understands it?
- What other "thorns" do you think Paul might have had, even though he might not have admitted to them?
- What do you think of Paul's statement that "I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me" and why?
- How do you feel about the statement that "One cannot be human, therefore, without being filled with chronic anxiety." and why?

Closure

Share together the classic "If I Only Had a Brain" video and ask:

- Why do you think this song has remained so popular for so long?
- What do you think the song reveals about us?
- What are some of the things you feel you lack that keep you from being the person you want to be?
- What do you think other people might say if asked that same question about you and why?
- How might we become more open to sharing our weaknesses with others?
- What can we do for people who are struggling to overcome their weakness whether or not they are aware of it?

Close in prayer.

Writer: Jon Self



Strong Weakness

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Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Have available a well-shuffled and prepared deck of cards (See Context).
- Listen to the FaithElement podcast for this session.

Intro

Watch together the Aladdin Final Scene and ask:

- How many times have you watched this scene and what about it most stands out?
- What was Jafar's biggest weakness and how does Aladdin take advantage of it?
- What other famous people were weaker than they appeared at first and how might that have kept them from getting everything they wanted?
- What do you think other people see as your biggest weakness and why?

Context

Have at least one deck of cards available for the session, minus the kings and queens, and shuffle thoroughly. Form teams of three people each, if possible, and deal six cards to each team, telling the players not to look at them.

Explain to the group:

The goal of this game is to have the lowest possible score. Right now, every team has a score of zero. When we're ready, I'll count down from three and each team has the option to reveal a card. When your team is out of cards, or after you have chosen to not play a card, your team will have to stick with the score they have. You cannot play a card unless everyone on your team agrees to play it that turn. Here's how the cards are scored:

- **All red cards subtract from your total.**
- **All black cards add to your total.**
- **Aces are worth one.**
- **Jacks reset your team's score to zero.**

After making sure that everyone understands the rules, distribute the cards and begin the game. Give teams a minute or two to make their decisions before counting down for each draw. After all the cards have been drawn, or all the teams have settled on their score, declare a winner (or, more likely, a tie) and ask:

- What was the hardest part of playing this game and why?
- What was your team's strategy and how did you come up with it?
- Why do you think the game ended as it did and what can we learn from that?
- At what other points in life is being the "least" the best thing to be and why?
- Why do you think we give less value to some people than others?

Content

Read 2 Corinthians 12:2-10, and watch the Bible Background Video. Ask:

- How do you feel about Paul's story about the person who had a vision and why?
- What do such stories reveal to us about the nature of faith, especially back in the early days of the Church?
- What do you think Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was and why?
- Assuming that Paul had some sort of embarrassing weakness, why would he tell it to these people?
- How do you think Paul's appeals to God affected his view of his relationship with God?
- What does it mean to say "whenever I am weak, then I am strong?"

Closure

Show the Black Panther king ceremony and continue by asking:

- What makes this scene the most memorable and why?
- How might showing such vulnerability have made for better kings?
- How might "letting our guard down" sometimes make us better people?
- What advantages do you have in life that might someday hold you back, and how can you overcome such things?
- What would you say is your biggest weakness and how can you get past it?
- What can we do to encourage other people who struggle through their own limitations especially the ones they can't see in themselves?

Close this session in prayer

Writer: Don Breeden



MIX
session page

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Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

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- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context (From the Current Session Page)

Start by sharing the "[Gaston: Best Moments](#)" video and asking:

- If Gaston was a modern day character, who do you think he would be and why?
- What comes to mind when you hear someone boast of their accomplishments and why?
- What kinds of things do you tend to boast about and why?
- Why does it seem easier to talk about the things that make us feel successful versus those that make us vulnerable?
- How do you think this video would have gone if it was filmed at your church on a Sunday morning?

Content (From the Mind Session Page)

Read 2 Corinthians 12:2-10, and watch the Bible Background Video. Ask:

- What kinds of things does Paul “brag” about and in what ways do Paul’s credentials likely differ from those who oppose him?
- Why is this experience that can't be shared “worth boasting about” and how might this give Paul credibility among other believers?
- Why does Paul say he's "choosing not to boast," and how do you feel about the way he goes about his "not-boasting?"
- What do you think was Paul’s “thorn in the flesh and why did God give it to him?
- What kinds of things keep intelligent and charismatic leaders like Paul humble?
- From what you remember of Paul’s story, how was God’s power revealed through Paul’s weaknesses and trials?

Closure (From the Media Session Page)

Share together the classic "If I Only Had a Brain" video and ask:

- Why do you think this song has remained so popular for so long?
- What do you think the song reveals about us?
- What are some of the things you feel you lack that keep you from being the person you want to be?
- What do you think other people might say if asked that same question about you and why?
- How might we become more open to sharing our weaknesses with others?
- What can we do for people who are struggling to overcome their weakness whether or not they are aware of it?

Close in prayer.