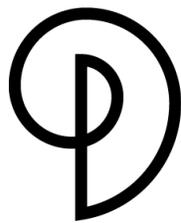


SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Called in Suffering

February 16 & 17, 2019

Fire is a familiar biblical metaphor for the shaping influence of hardship and suffering. And so is “wilderness”. The witness of both God’s Word and God’s people is that we sometimes discern our calling in the midst of a difficult situation over which we have no control – the loss of a loved one, a job transition, a serious illness. This perspective brings hope in difficult times, and bears witness to God’s power to work to bring light into even the darkest of situations.

SCRIPTURE TEXT : 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-10

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

This is an intriguing passage from Paul’s deep engagement with the church in Corinth. He explains the hardships of his life in the previous chapter and in chapter 12 is really working on another matter – how weakness is a gift. *The thorn in the flesh* is a challenge to Paul’s strength and self-sufficiency. Biblical scholars are not entirely certain as to what Paul’s ailment was. The bottom line, however, is not what the ailment is, but what it represents. It humbles Paul. This humility, this forced weakness, removes the basis for boasting. The key verse in the passage is 12:9 “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” That is – God’s power; God’s grace. The theological key in this passage is: who God calls are those who have suffered; those who don’t have it all together; those with no great reasons to be praised.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How has Paul’s “thorn” affected his life?
- Have you had a time in your life when you experienced this “forced weakness”? What was that like?
- How has God worked in and through you during a time of weakness?
- What will you do to further develop trust in God during times of weakness?
- Verse 9 says “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” How does this make you feel? Why?

APPLICATION: This week, take the time in a moment of weakness or suffering to remember that it is a gift and allows us to see God’s power and grace at work.

Additional Resource: The Stories We Live by Kathleen Cahalan*

*This sermon series is based on concepts from Cahalan’s book. This week’s sermon and study guide following along with Ch. 7.

CALLED

Called in Suffering
2 Corinthians 12:1-10



Today we'll be reminded that even when life is hard, even when we struggle, God is there and will help us with a strength and love that will never end.

CALLED TO TRUST

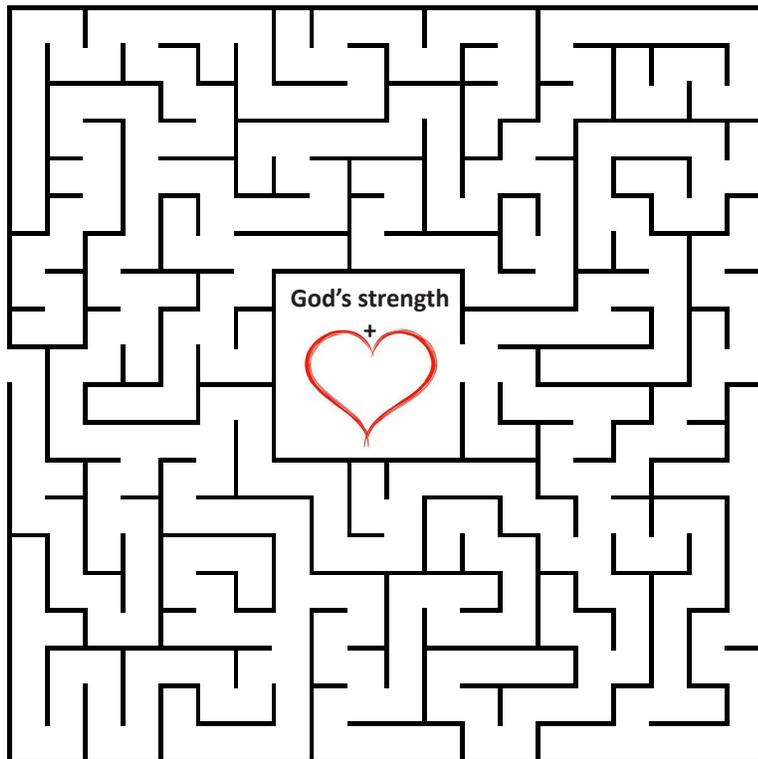
My **g**ra**ce** is **e**n**o**u**gh**
it's **ALL** you need

My **p**o**w**e**r** is **s**tr**o**n**g**e**s**t
when you are **w**e**a**k

—2 Corinthians 12:1-10

CALLED IN SUFFERING

We are all called but sometimes life is hard. Sometimes we struggle. Sometimes we're sad, confused, hurt, angry. Today we're reminded that in those times, God shows up. God is bigger, stronger and more powerful than anything we face in life. Follow the path toward God's strength in the maze below...



FOR THE RIDE HOME

PRESCHOOL

As the parents of young kids we know that life isn't always easy... for us or for them! Sometimes we struggle. Sometimes we suffer. The promise of today's text is that we're never alone. God is with us and is stronger than anything we can face. When we turn our suffering over to God, God meets us and carries us through. The best way to teach this is to model it for your kiddo. This week, be intentional about praying together as a family, giving your struggles over to God together and talking about how you see God working in your life.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Life is hard sometimes. We struggle. We get sad. We suffer. The promise we have is that we're never alone...especially during the hard times. Talk with your family about times that you've struggled. Pray together about those times, inviting God in. God promises to be there...and will carry you through.

PRAY TOGETHER...

Gracious God, thank you that you're always with us. Thank you that you're here to help us when we suffer. You know what's going on in our lives, and today we ask that you would please help us with _____. We love you. Thank you for loving us. Amen.