

Small Group Leaders 12/10/2006

This Weeks Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 13:11 (NASB)

Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Personal Daily Reading Schedule:

- Day 1 - 2 Corinthians 9:1-15
- Day 2 - 2 Corinthians 10:1-18
- Day 3 - 2 Corinthians 11:1-33
- Day 4 - 2 Corinthians 12:1-21
- Day 5 - 2 Corinthians 13:1-14

Small Group Study: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

⁷To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But 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. ¹⁰That 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.

1. These words of Paul are encouragement and wisdom for each of us. The grace of God is sufficient for me! In my weakness, He is strong and His power is upon me! What do these words mean to you and how do they change your perspective of life?

It helps me rest in my abilities or lack there of. I know that when I am called to minister it is only through Christ that I can do anything. It is his power at work to touch lives and I do not need to be eloquent in speech or persuasive in my style. I just need to be in His presence and resting on His power.

2. How has God kept you weak so that He might be strong in your life?

On more than one occasion, when I am gaining confidence in my abilities, God has caused chaos around me to force me to depend upon Him and His power and bring me to my knees in prayer. Specifically, at InnVision just a few weeks ago I experienced the worst Bible Study group time ever. Men in the group argued among themselves and debated doctrinal issues and I struggled to keep order and focus. I walked away very frustrated and confused but God helped me turn to Him for help and after much time in prayer, God completely took over my heart mind and mission and all is well and the group is going as strong as ever. God wanted to keep me humble and dependent on His presence.

3. The Bible is filled with ordinary people who do extraordinary things in Christ. Why do you think God chooses weak, unprepared, ordinary people to do His work?

Pride is one of the most common sins among men. Success and wisdom breed pride. God has chosen to use ordinary men so that His power is revealed. Acts 4:8-13 is a great example of how Peter and John carried by the Holy Spirit spoke boldly and astonished the Sanhedrin because "they were unschooled, ordinary men" (verse 13). When ordinary people submit to God and do the things that only God can do, people know it is from God.

Peter was a fisherman but God used him as one of the greatest evangelist to ever live. Moses was not eloquent in speech, yet he led the Israel nation out of captivity and to the Promised Land. David was just a small boy, yet he defeated the giant.

4. How have you seen God work through weak and ordinary people around you?

One of the great lessons of my life has come from working at the homeless shelter. Years ago I met a good friend by the name of Greg Hernandez. Greg came into our InnVision Bible study group at the shelter fresh out of prison where he had become a Christian. As a former gang member, Greg was sentenced to life in prison for two counts of murder. In prison he was once stabbed in a fight but lived to tell about it. Later, he was diagnosed with cancer but God intervened and spared his life and he was healed and later paroled after serving 25 years. An uneducated man, Greg was on fire for the Lord and the grace shown to him. Greg became a street evangelist right here in San Jose. Greg came to my home group and became friends with my family and even spent Christmas and New Years with us a couple years. I had the honor of baptizing Greg to fulfill his commitment to following Christ. I witnessed this man give everything he had to those in need. Living in his car, Greg would go out in the cold and rain and walk the creek beds and under bridges of downtown San Jose and witness to people and help them as he could. He brought countless street people into our bible study and many gave their lives to Christ as a result of Greg's humble love for the Lord. Greg claimed these verses in Hebrew 13:5-6 and he lived it in completeness, "be content with what you have, because God has said, never will I leave you or forsake you. So we say with confidence, the Lord is my helper so I will not be afraid, what can man do to me." (Hebrews 13:5-6). Greg was in his own words, "the worst of sinners." Yet God loved him and used him in a great way. I have not seen Greg for well over a year now. I continue to pray that he is well and being used by God but I know no matter what, he is in the Lord's hands.