



### **Discussion Guide**

**August 12, 2018**

### **Contrast: Bragging Rights**

#### **Introduction:**

As we study portions of II Corinthians 11 and 12, we see Paul choosing to brag about something very unexpected. He brags about his hardships and the pain in his life. He doesn't leave us in the dark though. He explains himself. In his weakest moments, when pain is present, and life is tough, that is when he sees the power of God in his life and where he sees the grace of God being sufficient for all his needs.

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Bragging can get you into a lot of trouble. The saying goes, "Pride comes before the fall." Does anybody in the group have a story to share of time that their boasting got them into some hot water?
2. As mentioned in the introduction, Paul chose to brag about some interesting things. Take a moment to look over 2 Corinthians 11 and 12. What things did Paul brag or boast about? Why does he choose to boast about these things?
3. Paul had experienced a great deal of pain. One reason that some people struggle to embrace God is they question why he would allow people to go through so much pain. Why does the pain Paul has experienced not INCREASE his doubt but rather, lead him to a seemingly deeper walk of faith?
4. In times of immense pain or loss, people struggle to find answers. Quite often any answers that are offered from friends or loved ones feel empty or even hurtful. Whereas Paul's discussion of God's power being on display in our weakness and pain doesn't answer or take away our pain. How might II Cor. 12:9 provide us comfort?
5. In II Corinthians 12:10 Paul says that he delights in the hardships he is enduring. Like Matt mentioned in his message, Paul isn't delighting in pain, he is delighting that God can bring hope and purpose through our pain and delighting in a God who gives grace in our weaknesses. That response doesn't come naturally. How can we grow to respond more like Paul when we go through painful and difficult things?

**Moving Forward:**

*Take a moment and allow anyone in your group to share areas in their life that they are experiencing pain or feeling like they don't have what it takes. Whether the issues are big or small encourage everyone to take a moment to think about the hardships they are encountering. Pray for each other that God's grace is not only sufficient in this circumstance but that His power will be on full display.*