



**LC STUDY GUIDE**  
**"UnBroken"**

The Passage: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10  
May 14 – May 27

**How to use the LC Study Guide**

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve "the other."

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method (not necessarily on the themes of that particular sermon). In summary, this method stresses "Observation" (what the reader can see from the text), "Interpretation" (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and "Application" (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour or two of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It's the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the LC Team

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**Introduction**

This past Sunday we concluded our "Unbroken" series and wrapped up teaching from select passages from the book of 2 Corinthians. Themes have included new creation, reconciliation, and how Jesus changes everything. Today we want to look at a passage that may be familiar to some of us and consider how the Lord works in our frailty, in our brokenness, and often in our pain.

## 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

<sup>1</sup> I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. <sup>2</sup> I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. <sup>3</sup> And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— <sup>4</sup> was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell. <sup>5</sup> I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. <sup>6</sup> Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, <sup>7</sup> or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. <sup>8</sup> Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. <sup>9</sup> But 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. <sup>10</sup> That 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.

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**O** – Chapter 12 opens with a fascinating account of “someone” (who no one doubts is Paul himself) who is somehow caught up to the “third heaven.” Scripture doesn’t say much else about this which makes the ground ripe for poor interpretation and unhelpful teaching. Keeping our “hats of observation” on, what can we see and imagine in these first 4 verses?

**I** – If Paul himself refuses to speculate on what this “third heaven” experience means, why does he mention it? (Verses 5-7 give us some perspective.)  
*(God’s glory and personal suffering are among the repeated themes of Paul’s ministry. Here he experienced something utterly amazing but he knows he can not fall into conceit and is painfully aware of his “thorn in the flesh” that keeps him humble and reliant on the Lord.)*

**I** – A Roman general or emperor, parading through the cheering crowds after a great triumphal procession, would often have a servant in the chariot with him, whose job it was to whisper in his ear, ‘Remember, you too are mortal.’ The ancients recognized that it was dangerous to become too elated and that one could become guilty of what they called ‘hubris,’ arrogant pride. Paul, too, has something that whispers like that in his ear: ‘a thorn in my flesh.’ Using your discretion in what and how much you choose to share, what have you experienced that could have led to your conceit? How have the “thorns” in your life affected you? What have these victories and pains taught you?

**A** – Verse 9 gives the Lord’s answer, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Describe how you have experienced or witnessed someone live out this truth in action.

**A** – The idea of delighting in weakness can only begin to make sense when living with confidence in the nearness and the power of God at work in your life. What practical steps can we take to experience this paradoxical yet Scripture-given promise of God?

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- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
- b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
- e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.