

2 Corinthians
2 Cor 12:1-10

1. **The “super apostles” must have gone on about their visions and revelations from God. This isn’t new, just watch any of the religious channels long enough and you will see it yourself. There is some weird stuff out there. From 12:1-6 what does Paul say about the things that God revealed to him?** He speaks of himself in the third person, speaking about a revelation that might have been either in, or out of the body. He had been privileged to be taken into God’s presence. It happened but Paul was not willing to boast about it. He’d rather boast about his weaknesses. Why? (2 Cor 4:7)

2. **From 12:7-10 what did God allow Satan to give Paul?** A “thorn” in his flesh.
 - a. **Can you define the term “thorn in the flesh?”** Greek writings from that time used the term “splinter, “sliver,” thorn” to describe a physical malady. It isn’t nailed down here but] seems to have been an ailment/

 - b. **Why does the text say that it was allowed?** To keep Paul from conceit due to having received the revelations.

 - c. **Look back in Acts 7:54-8:3, 26:24; Phil 3:1-6. What can you find out about Paul? Why might he have been tempted toward pride or conceit?** Paul seems to have been ambitious, zealous and self righteous.
 - **Act 7:54-8:3** He guarded the clothing of those who murdered Paul. Paul began to destroy the church. In 9:1 he was breathing out murderous threats and seeking to arrest and hold them for trial, even traveling to other cities and nations to do it (**Act 26:9-11**).
 - **Phil 3:1-6** He was very confident of his own righteousness if just examined based on human criteria.

 - d. **Is it always God’s will to heal an illness? Explain. (See Rom 8:22-25).** No, it appears that He does when it is within His will. But our bodies are still under the curse and we are yet awaiting their redemption. Look at Paul’s ministry, sometimes it was God’s will to heal miraculously through him and sometimes not (e.g., Phil 2). And Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine because of his “frequent illnesses,” (1 Tim 5:23).

3. **How did God answer Paul in verse 9?** His grace was sufficient for Paul. We each have a choice: we can rely on ourselves or place our selves in God’s hands.
 - a. **How is this answer applicable in our lives right now?** What do we face and upon what are we relying to cope? If we seek to face things on our own, the results are not pretty, nor can they be any source of God’s approval or reward (1 Cor 3:10-15, Gal 5:19-21).

 - b. **How is God’s power shown in us (2 Cor 4:7-18, 2 King 13:14)?** As we trust Him in our weakness, His power and presence are revealed. He works through “vessels of clay.” That is why Paul was glad to boast about his weaknesses. They revealed God’s power and glory as He worked through people. Paul always wanted the glory to be God’s.

- c. What about those who claim to have healing ministries, what's with that? Can any such thing be biblical? Explain! We'll call this a bonus question - a reward awaits the one who tackles and gets this.** Such "ministries" are based upon incredible presumption. Praying for healing is always right. But no one can dictate to God or claim to know His will regarding healing. Paul and Elisha, through whom God worked miracles themselves knew illness and death.

**HOMEWORK
2 Cor 12:11-21**

Read the text and answer the following questions:

- 1. What things were the marks of an apostle (12:11-12, Heb 2:1-4)?**
 - a. How can this be seen in Acts 2-5?**
 - b. Who and what was**

- 2. From 12:14-18 what does it seem that the false teachers were saying about Paul?**
 - a. How does Paul defend his ministry?**
 - b. How does he defend his coworkers?**

- 3. From 2 Cor 12:19-21 what statement does Paul make regarding his authority as an apostle?**
 - a. What was he afraid of finding in Corinth?**
 - b. What reason did he have for fearing this? (See also 1 Cor 1:10-17, 3:1-9)**

- 4. What was Paul's desire for the Corinthians in ministry (12:19)?**
 - a. Look up Heb 13:17 What can make life hard for Christian leaders?**
 - b. What common thread do you notice in 1 Cor 5:1-12, 2 Cor 2:6 and Heb 13:17? an apostle (Act 1)?**
 - Who could be an apostle?**
 - What was the criteria?**

