

(1) Why might someone think that what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 threatens our devotion to prayer for healing and rescue from dire circumstances? How would you respond to someone who said that this passage proves that we should simply acquiesce to whatever hardship we are experiencing?

(2) What significance is there in the fact that Paul's supernatural translation into the third heaven, far from ridding him of sin, actually stirred up pride in his heart?

(3) If someone today were to claim that they had experienced something similar to what Paul experienced, how would we evaluate the validity of their experience?

(4) Take a few minutes and let everyone share some personal experience of "weakness" that they have gone through in the past or are presently enduring. How are you responding to it? Can you identify ways in which the power and sufficiency of God's grace have supported you and enabled you to persevere? Has your weakness become a platform for the display of Christ's power? If so, how?

(5) Does anyone have a theory about what Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was? If so, defend your view from what we see in this passage and from what we know elsewhere in the NT about Paul's life and ministry.

(6) What is "triumphalism"? Can you give some examples of it in today's Christian world? What is the problem with triumphalism and what is the biblical alternative?