





Paul's Story

2 Corinthians 12:1-7, "I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. 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.




Paul's Story

2 Corinthians 12:1-7, "And I know that this man – whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows – was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell. I will boast about someone like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses.



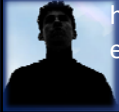
Paul's Story

2 Corinthians 12:1-7, "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, or because of these surpassingly great revelations."



### Paul's Story

- We can meet God on the mountain top. We can have incredible encounters with God, where He reveals himself to us, and shows us His heart.
- Paul takes a trip to the third heaven. God told him inexpressible things, in a surpassingly great revelation.
  - God shares with Paul the secrets of His heart, friend to friend. (T) God wants to encounter us intimately.



### Paul's Story

Not all the spiritual journey is a mountain top experience. Fortunately, God meets us in the valley.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10, "Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.



### Paul's Story

2 Corinthians 12:7-10, "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. 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."



### Paul's Story

- God has a plan for our lives. He wants to have close intimate relationship with us, and he wants us to co-labor with Him in establishing His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.
- Satan has a plan too. He wants to thwart God's plan. He seeks to deceive, condemn, accuse, and attack.
  - When Satan attacks we experience a valley; it's hard to see God there.



### Paul's Story

- In the valley we face a choice who we will believe. We can believe Satan's lies, and fall into temptation. Or we can believe the Lord, and accept the valley as a time of testing.
- If we choose to trust God, & accept the testing, it will deepen our character, intimacy and faith, and we'll have more capacity for God's favor & power to rest on us(Paul; you & I)



### Paul's Story

- How do you find God in the valley? How do you turn the valley into an encounter?
- *First, Praise in the valley.* Praise declares the reality of who God is. Our circumstances do not change the reality of who God is. The intensity of our praise needs to equal the size of the cloud hanging over our (personal valley)



### Paul's Story

- How do you find God in the valley? How do you turn the valley into an encounter?
- *Second, give thanks in the valley.* 1 Thess. 5:16-18, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (The joy of the Lord; Bill J - news)



### Paul's Story

- How do you find God in the valley? How do you turn the valley into an encounter?
- *Third, contend for the promises of God in the valley.* We contend for the promises of God, by using the promises of God. (whispers; renewal)

