

## Paradox - Life Through Death

Icebreaker: Explain a time you've had a personal encounter with God.

*For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2 Cor. 4:6)*

- **Paradox of power: the greatest treasure is kept in the weakest safe** – “But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” (2 Cor. 4:7) - Where might one of your weaknesses lie? How might/has God's power be(en) displayed through that weakness?

*Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. (1 Cor. 1:26)*

¶ **Note: I might be broken but I'm unbreakable** – “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” (2 Cor. 4:8-9)

- **Paradox of ministry: the more it costs personally, the more others live spiritually** – “We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body...So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.” (2 Cor. 4:10, 12) - What attributes/events/friendships/etc of your life do you/do you not consider ministry?

¶ **Note: don't get buried because you're going to rise** – “It is written: 'I believed; therefore I have spoken.' With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in His presence.” (2 Cor. 4:13-14) – Where can you go to get a proper perspective and encouragement while doing the Lord's ministry?

- **Paradox of transformation: the more I lose life, the more I gain it** – “Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.” (2 Cor. 4:16) – Note one way/area of your life that has been transformed since becoming a Christ follower. What other ways/areas are you looking to be transformed?

¶ **Note: Go for it in the “spring” of life because “winter” is coming** – “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them.'” (Eccl. 12:1) - Despite your age, How can you still “go for it?” What can you still give? If younger, in what ways are you “going for it” and in what way are you not? What's keeping you from going all in?

- **Paradox of scales: my light trials are building a heavy reward** – “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” (2 Cor. 4:17) – How often do you consider eternity? What default emotion does the thought of eternity bring (fear, courage, peace, etc.)? What needs to change in order to see eternity like Paul sees it in 4:17?

*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Cor. 4:18)* - Look to heaven, the treasure! How can you commit to looking up at heaven (unseen) more this week and to encourage others to do the same?