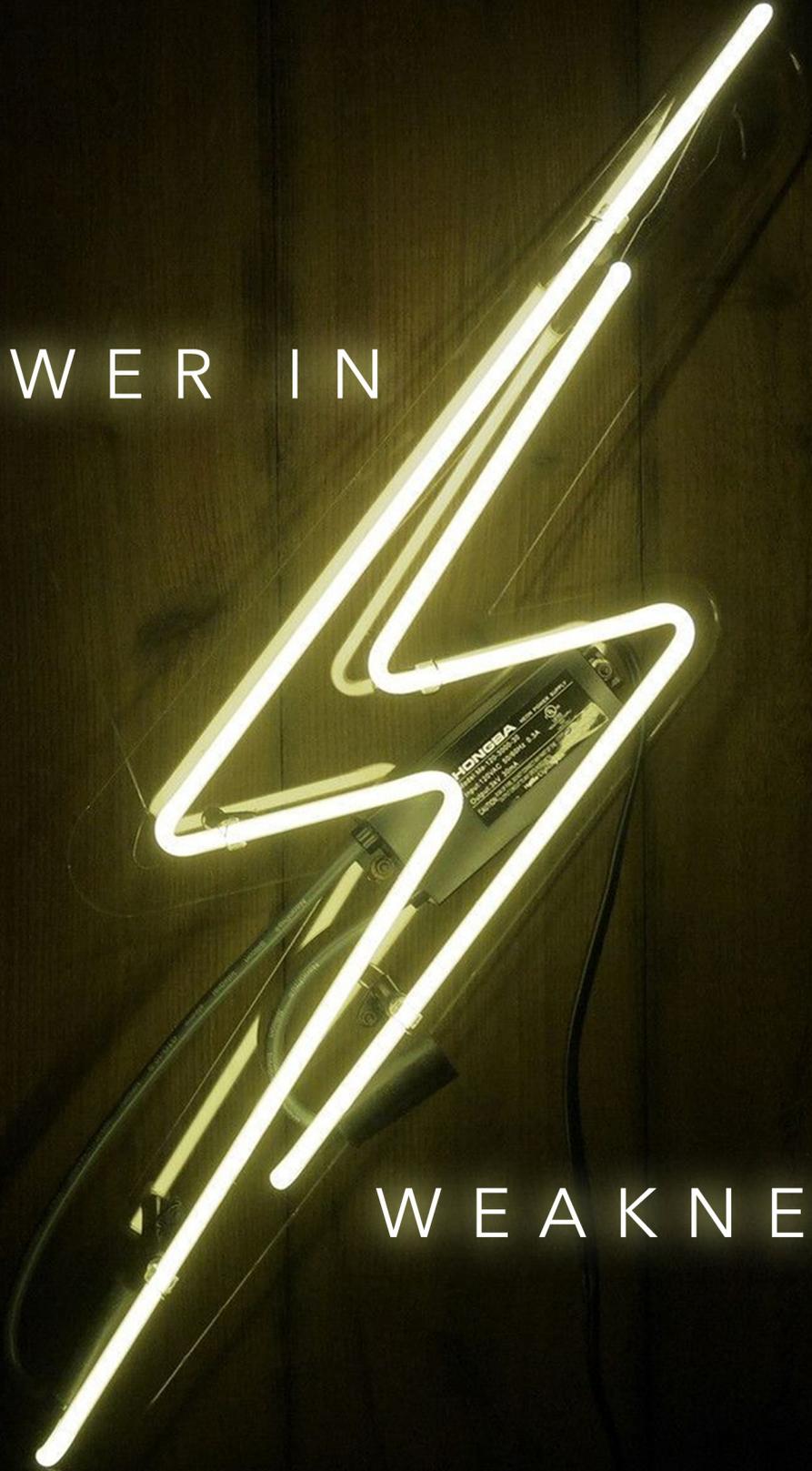


POWER IN



WEAKNESS

# focus.

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Spend the next few minutes helping your group focus their attention on God.

**sing** | together

**Broken Vessels (Amazing Grace)** by Hillsong Worship

**read** | together

**Psalm 31:1-5**

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

- [1] In you, O LORD, do I take refuge;  
let me never be put to shame;  
in your righteousness deliver me!
- [2] Incline your ear to me;  
rescue me speedily!  
Be a rock of refuge for me,  
a strong fortress to save me!
- [3] For you are my rock and my fortress;  
and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me;
- [4] you take me out of the net they have hidden for me,  
for you are my refuge.
- [5] Into your hand I commit my spirit;  
you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God. (ESV)

# read.

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Read the passage for today together as a group. Then ask each individual to reread the passage and mark anything God illuminates.

## **2 Corinthians 4:7-18**

[7] But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. [8] We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; [9] persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; [10] always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. [11] For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. [12] So death is at work in us, but life in you.

[13] Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, [14] knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. [15] For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

[16] So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. [17] For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, [18] as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. (ESV)

# discuss.

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Lead your group through the following discussion questions. Help them thoughtfully reflect and respond to God's direction.

**| 1 |** There is much to our passage today. Did God illuminate anything as we read?

**| 2 |** Clay jars were as common as Tupperware in first century Corinth, but they were far less durable. Paul compares us to jars of clay because like them we too are frail and fleeting.

Go back and read verse 6. What is the treasure that God deposits in us, His jars of clay? Why does He choose to place this treasure in us?

**| 3 |** Verses 8 & 9 reveal how God's power in us (fragile jars of clay) protects us from being crushed, despairing, forsaken, or destroyed. Notice though that it doesn't protect us from being pressed, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down.

What do these verses teach us about pain and suffering?

What hope are they meant to produce in us?

Have you ever walked through a season when God held you together in spite of being pressed, perplexed, persecuted, or struck down? Would you share that with us to encourage our faith?

**| 4 |** Verses 11-18 show us Paul's mindset in regards to his suffering and ours. For Paul, there was purpose in the pain and persecution, significance to the suffering.

What motivated Paul in the face of suffering and persecution?

**| 5 |** How does an eternal perspective help us in moments of struggle and persecution?

How can we cultivate an eternal perspective?

# pray.

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Direct your attention now to listening prayer. Follow the prompts below as you guide your group to hear and obey God.

**| 1 |** Spend some time thanking God for His power to hold you together when you're pressed, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down. Once you've done that privately, spend a moment corporately in prayer thanking God.

**| 2 |** If there are any individuals who feel particularly pressed, perplexed, persecuted, or struck down take a moment to huddle around them and pray.