

People to pray for:

A True New Testament Minister: II Corinthians 11:16-12:6

Paul's conversion is probably the most significant conversion *ever*. God wants you to *rightly know Paul*. His testimony is told and retold more than any other testimony in the New Testament.

Galatians 1&2 contain 38 mentions of "I" 20 mentions of "me" or "my". This is by design of the Holy Spirit.

II Corinthians is something close to an autobiography of Paul's life and ministry. Since Paul is the most important minister since Christ Himself, he is also the most attacked minister since Christ. Paul lived in the jaws of death: I Corinthians 15:31b, Acts 9:15,16; 20:23.

1. **The more we know Paul rightly**, *the more we will hate boasting.*
2. **The more we know Paul rightly**, *the more willing we will be to be lost sight of in our service for the Lord.*
3. **The more we know Paul rightly**, *the more we will individualize Christian people and be one with them.*

People to visit if you knew time was soon to run out:

Regaining the focus of II Cor. 11

11:1 is sarcasm: *indeed you are putting up with me--* how large-hearted of you, how tolerant you are actually putting up with *me*.

11:6 I have comparatively "rude speech" or "unskilled speech [NASB]". The persuasive polish that they apparently have, *I don't, I plead guilty to this deficiency* [as you Corinthians measure deficiency]. Comp. 11:21

11:7 the gospel is free "it was the free gift to the world, and as far as it depended on Paul its absolute freeness would not be obscured by the merest suspicio." Amazingly, He was slandered for not charging high fees since he knew it was not the message he pretended it to be!

11:12 They hate my billing policy. Its hard to counterfeit. See NASB.

11:16 Realize this is a costume I'm putting on; I'm acting a fool for your sake--since you like this style--I'll act the part though I hate it. The resumes you like are filled with foolishness: 11:17-19 NASB.

I. We will hate the boasting of those who peddle bondage:11:22

A. “For freedom did Christ set us free”: How sad to watch people in our own assemblies grievously brought under bondage—with malice: 11:19,20

B. That which is flesh is flesh and no more.

1. Three questions regarding ancestry.

2. **Hebrew** [on both sides, father and mother],
Israelite, people of the promises.
Abraham, far back as you could go.

3. Don't forget the Holy Spirit's estimate of Rahab: James 2:23-**25!**

C. Even by sub-Christian criteria [are they servants of Christ? no, but we will momentarily accept their claim--"I speak as an insane fool"]
Paul exceeds them.

1. The stylized brag-sheet was a fairly common format, especially one by Augustus Caesar inscribed on many monuments: He was careful *to include numbers* to his boasted feats.

2. True ministers are willing, actually consider it an honor, to experience “the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.” Hirelings—NO.

3. What kind of character does this brag sheet reflect?

a. How could he _____?¹

b. Why would he _____?

II. We will be willing to be lost sight of in our service for the Lord.

1 At the writing of 2 Corinthians he had only experienced one of the five imprisonments mentioned in the book of Acts. So there were even more imprisonments than the ones we know about in Acts.

A. All this [11:22-32] had to practically pried out of Paul because he loathed _____.

Shouldn't those of us who have experienced little real hardship for the Gospel of Christ be at least less self-concerned, and less attached to our material abundance and pleasures?

B. The glory of God is what matters: II Corinthians 10:17.

Note I Corinthians 4:7, 3:4-7. Philippians 2:17

III. The more we will individualize Christian people and be one with them: 11:29.

A. Christian love is gentle and bears patiently with the weak.

1. Aren't there many angles of vulnerability that constitute weakness in nearly any Christian?

Romans 14,15: The weakling may be early for ever service and sit on the front row underlining inspiring passages in his Cambridge KJV.

I Corinthians 10:13ff: The weakling may be inadequately on a crowded beach perusing his Zondervan NIV.

Proverbs 9:4,5: entrance qualification to God's wisdom banquet!

B. Christian love is both grieved and angered when others, especially Christians, are made to stumble and drawn into sin.

Paul was one with other Christians in their ups and downs--are we?