

**for reflection & discussion:**(NT Wright, ST Boese, Others)

If you want to go deeper in home church make sure you magnify *your* struggles and sins (Personal and Social Holiness) in your discussion and see others as less worse (Matthew 7:5).

Paul says in 12:11, he has been forced into boasting so he has made sure he has boasted of all the wrong things in their cultures. Yet he does offer a “letter of recommendation”. This has been a theme throughout 2 Cor. (3:1, 4:2, 5:12, 6:4, 10:12, 18). It seems to be one of the main reason he was writing *this* letter.

1. What sort of recommendation does he ultimately say he really ought to offer?
2. In what ways does Paul say in 11-18 that he is not inferior to the “super-apostles”?
3. What does Paul communicate in 11-18 when he uses the image of family?
4. The issue of money comes up again. What implied accusations does he once against respond to with answers?

Paul faced a number of challenges and accusations from the teachers in Corinth. True gospel ministry, truly apostolic work, is powerful and effective—but will *almost certainly be misunderstood and attacked, including by those who ought to know better*. We must not ignore the armory of tricks that the satan has at his disposal.

5. As we work back over this chapter and the entire letter, what do we learn from Paul’s example about proper ways of handling such attacks?
6. How have you failed or misunderstood parts of true gospel ministry?
7. How have you see churches like Corinth and Galatia that have (Gal 5:15) bite and devour one another, claiming this is the way to holiness?
8. Final words?

**pray:** Intercede to others in situations where there is attack, misunderstanding and pain in the tasks of ministry.



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# TRUST

## (BUT VERIFY)

Assume the best, it's easy to assume false motives. In his work with and for the Corinthians, Paul takes on some bad motives assigned to him. NT Wright tells us that Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12, responds with deep vulnerability to his “true gospel ministry... being misunderstood and attacked, including by those who ought to know better”. How can we learn to assume the best to foster a better unity in the church?

### CONTEXT/BACKGROUNDER

### OUTLINE (Gutherie, Baker Exegetical Commentary)

- C. Paul Boasts Like a Fool to Stop the False Apostles 11:1-12:13
- 6. Epilogue to the “Fool’s Speech” 12:11-13
- D. Preparation for the Third Visit 12:14-13:10
- 1. Concerns Related to the Third Visit 12:14-21
  - a. To Spend and Be Spent 12:14-16a
  - b. The Integrity of Paul’s Mission 12:16b-18
  - c. A Misunderstanding 12:19
  - d. Further Concerns 12:20-21

## THROUGH THE VERSES

### 6. Epilogue to the "Fool's Speech" 12:11-13 12:11-13 Not the Least Inferior

- Final summary of Holy Foolery

<sup>11</sup> *I have become a fool. You yourselves forced me to do it, for I should have been commended by you. For I lack nothing in comparison to those "super-apostles," even though I am nothing.*

- He's compromised principles - by defending himself so strongly.

<sup>12</sup> *Indeed, the signs of an apostle were performed among you with great perseverance by signs and wonders and powerful deeds.*

- What are the signs of an apostle? Character, Charisma, Consistency
- "Signs and Wonders" is a phrase particularly connected with setting the Children of Israel freedom from political and literal bondage in Egypt.

<sup>13</sup> *For how were you treated worse than the other churches, except that I myself was not a burden to you? Forgive me this injustice!*

- Paul finishes the fool's speech, demonstrating absurdity by being absurd, with this phrase.

### Application Pause for the Cause

- They should have been for Paul, spoken well of him (commended) and defended his leadership.

12:14-21 *Pay Attention! I am ready to make this third trip to you.*

**12:14-21 Ready of Not Here I Come/To Spend and Be Spent 12:14-16a**

<sup>14</sup> *Look, for the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you, because I do not want your possessions, but you. For children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.* <sup>15</sup> *Now I will most gladly spend and be spent for your lives! If I love you more, am I to be loved less?*

<sup>16</sup> *But be that as it may, I have not burdened you.*

### The Integrity of Paul's Mission 12:16b-18

*Yet because I was a crafty person, I took you in by deceit! <sup>17</sup> I have not taken advantage of you through anyone I have sent to you, have I?*

<sup>18</sup> *I urged Titus to visit you, and I sent our brother along with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit? Did we not behave in the same way?*

### A Misunderstanding 12:19

<sup>19</sup> *Have you been thinking all this time that we have been defending ourselves to you? We are speaking in Christ before God, and everything we do, dear friends, is to build you up.*

### Further Concerns 12:20-21

<sup>20</sup> *For I am afraid that somehow when I come I will not find you what I wish, and you will find me not what you wish. I am afraid that somehow there may be quarreling, jealousy, intense anger, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder.* <sup>21</sup> *I am afraid that when I come again, my God may humiliate me before you, and I will grieve for many of those who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced.*

## TAKE THIS WITH YOU