
What's Your Story 2 Corinthians 11:22-33; 12:7-11 (NLT)

²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but I have served him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. ²⁴ Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. ²⁶ I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not.^[c] ²⁷ I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.

²⁸ Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak without my feeling that weakness? Who is led astray, and I do not burn with anger?

³⁰ If I must boast, I would rather boast about the things that show how weak I am. ³¹ God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, who is worthy of eternal praise, knows I am not lying. ³² When I was in Damascus, the governor under King Aretas kept guards at the city gates to catch me. ³³ I had to be lowered in a basket through a window in the city wall to escape from him.

2 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NLT)

⁷ even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. ⁸ Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. ⁹ Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. ¹⁰ That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. ¹¹ You have made me act like a fool. You ought to be writing commendations for me, for I am not at all inferior to these "super apostles," even though I am nothing at all.

Paul reveled in his weakness as an encouragement to the people.

"...God's grace is all we need." – Elder Jill Mays

How did Paul make it through?

- Paul prayed a lot.
- Paul sang a lot.

“Praise can get you a breakthrough like nothing else can.” – Elder Jill Mays

The same God who raised Jesus will someday raise us all.

“Without that history there is no testimony.” – Elder Jill Mays

“Keeping those secrets keep us sick.” – Elder Jill Mays

There is hope and you are not alone.

“We need to be in the word...focus on that still small voice.” – Elder Jill Mays

Five Parts to a Story

1. Characters – who is in your story
2. Setting – time and place
3. Conflict – What is the problem?
4. Theme – what is the message behind your story
5. Plot (exposition, rising action, climax)
 - Falling action – your reaction to the climax
 - Conclusion – all loose ends get tied up

One day Jesus is coming back!

“Could it be that God’s answer is in a therapist?” – Pastor Billy Johnson