

The God Who Is

The God of All Comfort

2 Corinthians 1:1-7

Background

2 Corinthians is a letter written by Paul to the church located in the city of Corinth (in modern day Greece). Paul helped found the church while on one of his missionary trips, and ministered there for a year and a half. He was about to return to Corinth to visit them, and so writes to prepare them. 2 Corinthians is the most personal and intimate of all of Paul's letters—his great care and concern for the believers in Corinth is very evident.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-7.

God is described three different ways in v.3. What are they?

Today we are going to be focusing in on one of these descriptions: the God of all comfort. What does it mean to “comfort” somebody?

WORD STUDY: Comfort (“parakaleo” in the original Greek language)

This word literally means, “to be called alongside.” It is the idea of someone being there with you, especially in times of need. In John 14-15, Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as the Comforter (“paraklete”), or “the one who walks alongside.” This was a new concept, for only in New Testament times has the Holy Spirit lived inside every believer, and so truly lives alongside us. In Hebrews 13:5 God said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” This promise has brought comfort to Christians for 2000 years now.

Sometimes the loneliness we feel from our suffering is the hardest part to cope with. How does it make you feel that God always “walks alongside” you?

In v.5, Paul writes “the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives.” In what ways did Jesus have to suffer?

What does it look like when Christ's sufferings flow over into our lives? How do we sometimes suffer like Christ did?

Will our suffering ever be too great for God to comfort us?

Is there any suffering that Jesus cannot relate to?

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2 Corinthians 1:1-7

Jump down to v.9. What does Paul say is the purpose of suffering?

Another way to translate v.7 might say “Just as we had fellowship in our sufferings, so also we have fellowship in our comfort.” How does sharing hardships with others and giving comfort to others increase the depth and intimacy of our fellowship with them?

Why is it sometimes hard to share our sufferings with others?

After God has comforted us, what are we then free to do (v.4)?

Questions for personal reflection:

1. Are you trying to carry a burden all by yourself? Pour your heart out to God and receive His comfort. Make sure and read the “Passages for further study”.

2. Is there some kind of suffering in your life that you need to share with another Christian in order to be further comforted?

3. Is there someone you know who is suffering? Pray and ask God to show how you can be a comfort to them today.

Passages For Further Study:

Psalm 42
Isaiah 53
John 14:16-15:27
Philippians 4:6-7
1 Peter 4:12-16

“There is a God we want, and there is a God who is—and they are not the same God.

The turning point of our lives is when we stop seeking the God we want and start seeking the God who is.”