

“God of All Comfort”

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"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Consider. Who is someone you can comfort with the comfort God has comforted you?

Father of Mercies and God of All Comfort

The Apostle Paul joyfully begins the main body of 2nd Corinthians with, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3). Let's discuss this verse in three parts.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Paul begins with the language of a heart which is full of joy and that bursts forth with gratitude (Ref. 1). Paul has a comfort which he recognizes comes from God (Ref. 2). Paul shows us that it is possible and proper to bless God when we, God's people, are experiencing affliction (2 Corinthians 1:3).

The Father of Mercies

Our heavenly Father is the originator, the source of mercy and compassion (Ref. 3). As our heavenly Father, it is God's nature to impart mercy and compassion to his children. The Greek word for *mercies* in 2 Corinthians 1:3 is *oiktirmos* (oyk-tir-mos'). The short definition is *pity, compassion, favor, grace, and mercy* (Ref. 4).

And the God of All Comfort

God is the source of all true consolation and comfort. God is the God of all comfort because it comes from him. There is no other real source of comfort but God; and "he is able abundantly and willingly to impart consolation to his people" (Ref. 1).

The Greek word for *comfort* in 2 Corinthians 1:3 is *paraklésis* (par-ak'-lay-sis), which means *coming along side, encouragement, consolation, and comfort* (Ref. 5).

"Comfort" is a great theme of 2 Corinthians. In the New American Standard Bible, the English words "comfort," "comforts," and "comforted" occur 10 times in 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 alone.

God Comforts Us So We Can Comfort Others

Let's discuss the next verse, 2 Corinthians 1:4, in three parts.

Who Comforts Us in All Our Affliction

As the God of all comfort, God *comes along side and encourages* us -- all believers in Christ -- in our affliction (2 Corinthians 1:4, John 14:16-17). The Greek word for *affliction* is *thlipsis* (thlip'-sis), which means *tribulation*, especially *internal pressure* that causes someone to feel confined (restricted, "without options") (Ref. 6). Paul and his co-writer, Timothy (2 Corinthians 1:1), openly tell us from their personal life experience that they had felt an ever-continuing comfort flowing from God.

So that We Will be Able to Comfort Those Who Are in Any Affliction

Paul and Timothy knew that God comforted them not just for their own benefit, but that God's comfort might flow forth through them to others (Ref. 2). In 2 Corinthians 1:4 Paul teaches us that as disciples and followers of Jesus, the affliction we experience is part of our "schooling" and training to sympathize with and comfort others (Ref. 7). Our own life's experience with affliction coupled with God's power flowing through us helps us not only to sympathize with others but also to speak a word in season to those who are weary (Isaiah 50:4). This is the very essence of the work of comforting others (Ref. 2).

With the Comfort with which We Ourselves Are Comforted by God

The best comfort that we as Christian believers can provide to others comes from God, not from the world. As believers in Jesus Christ, we can communicate uniquely to others the forgiveness, the acceptance, and the hope for eternal life that we have through faith in Christ (Ref. 1, Ephesians 2:8-9). Recall Jesus' final words of encouragement to his disciples. "These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Apply. Thank God for how he has comforted (*come along side, encouraged*) you in the afflictions you have experienced. Ask God to bring to your mind someone you can comfort (*come along side, encourage*) in their affliction. Follow through with them as God leads, for example, listening to them, sharing how God has comforted you, and praying for or with them.

References

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