

Paul wrote his second letter to the church in Corinth in an effort to show continued guidance and direction to a body of believers who were poorly walking out their faith in obedience. Throughout this second letter Paul commends the church's steps toward health, but also deals with their struggles, prayerfully, and painfully at times, exhorting them to walk well with Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

The God of all Comfort

I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

MY EXPERIENCE...

YOUR EXPERIENCE...

Giving and receiving comfort can be an interesting exchange. Experiencing hard circumstances that necessitate comfort is painful and unpleasant to navigate. Furthermore, often because of our pride, it can be awkward (at best) to receive the comfort we may actually need, choosing stoicism or independence instead. And then there's the challenge of simply knowing how to graciously and tenderly come alongside someone to offer honest and authentic comfort to another who may be desperate for it.

II. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

SHARE of a time or circumstance when you were in serious need of comfort.

HOW have you specifically experienced genuine comfort from another person in your life?

WHAT is one way that you tried to extend comfort but failed?

DESCRIBE a time when you experienced a difficult situation that actually equipped you to come alongside another person in comfort because of it.

2 Corinthians

Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

1:1-11

The God of all Comfort

OBSERVATION

How does Paul address himself and his audience as the letter opens?

What do you notice about his greeting in vs. 1-2?

In vs. 3-4 how does Paul describe God, what He does, and for what purpose?

According to vs. 5, what does Paul say we share with Christ and for what reason?

As you read this opening passage, what words are most repeated?

In vs. 8-9 what does Paul say he wants his audience to be aware of?

What did God do for Paul in vs. 10 and what does he say He *will* do?

What imperative (command) do you see in vs. 11?

INTERPRETATION

Why is it important to remember Paul's audience of this letter, and even how he refers to them in vs. 1?

What "afflictions" (vs. 6) had Paul experienced that allowed him to better comfort others in his life? See 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 for insight.

What does it mean to be comforted in affliction?

How does Paul say these afflictions/sufferings/trials are all purposed so that comfort can be given and received? Why are these trials of various kinds necessary? Consider what Paul says later in 2 Corinthians 6:6-9 for insight.

Why are the circumstances Paul endured in vs. 8-9 sometimes necessary to teach us lessons like that revealed in vs. 10?

How does God actually give us reasons for faith in Him (as opposed to "blind faith") from this passage and in our own lives?

What is the connection between the imperative to pray many giving thanks, in vs. 11?

APPLICATION

How does this passage inform your view of afflictions or circumstances of suffering you might experience?

How does it influence you and your availability to comfort others and the discipline of prayer?