

The Most Excellent Way
Discipleship/Leadership Bible Study Homework

“The God of All Comfort”

HEART ATTITUDE: Trusting God, No Matter What

God is faithful. His strength is sufficient for any trial; His provisions for our lives are divinely planned. When we experience trials and hardships, our prideful self-sufficiency is weakened and we learn, yet again, that we must depend upon Him. The by-product of trusting in and receiving God's comfort is the comfort we are able to give others.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-11 (NIV)

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia: (1)
Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2)
Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, (3)
Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those
in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. (4)
For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives,
so also through Christ our comfort overflows. (5)
If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation;
if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you
patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. (6)
And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you
share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. (7)
We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships
we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure,
far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. (8)
Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened
that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. (9)
He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us.
On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, (10)
As you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our
behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. (11)*

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• **FOCUSING**

1. How do you normally react to hardship or suffering?

2. Do you sometimes blame God for your difficult circumstances? Why?

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- **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

3. How did Paul describe God? (1:3)

4. Why do you think Paul began his letter by praising God? (1:3)

5. What does God do when we are troubled? (1:4)

6. How does God involve Himself in our troubles? (1:4-5)

To often we think that when God comforts us, our hardships should go away. If that were the case, we would only turn to God for relief of our physical or emotional pain — not out of love for Him. We must understand that “comfort” can also mean receiving His strength, encouragement and hope to deal with our hardships. The more we suffer, the more comfort God gives us.

When you are feeling overwhelmed, allow God to comfort you. Remember that each and every trial you endure will help you comfort other people suffering similar hardships.

The “sufferings of Christ” are those afflictions we experience for doing Christ's ministry. Christ suffers with us when we are united in Him by faith.

7. What did Paul's distress produce for the Corinthians? (1:6)

8. In what way is patient endurance produced in Christians? (1:6)

Paul explained that he and his companions suffered a great deal for bringing "comfort and salvation" to the Corinthians. But as God comforted Paul, He would comfort the Corinthian believers also. They endured with God's strength.

9. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians about the hardships he had endured? (1:8)

10. Why did Paul despair? (1:8)

11. How did Paul's confidence in God enable him to rise above his despair? (1:8-10)

12. For what reason did Paul endure suffering? (1:9)

We often depend on our own skills and abilities when life seems easy, but when we feel unable to help ourselves, we turn to God. Being God-dependent is not defeat or weakness, but a realization of our own powerlessness without Him, and our need for His constant contact. God is our source of

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power and we receive His help by keeping in touch with Him. With this attitude, problems drive us to God rather than away from Him. We must trust God daily.

13. How did the Corinthians help Paul through his hardships? (1:11)

14. What was the gracious favor Paul anticipated? (1:11)

Paul requested prayer for himself and his companions as they worked to spread God's message of salvation. We must also pray for our pastor, teachers, and fellow labors in the ministry. Satan will challenge anyone making a real difference for God.

• **UNDERSTANDING**

15. How does God want us to help one another in difficult circumstances?

16. Has a Christian ever brought you comfort from God during a difficult time in your life? Who?

17. Who do you know who is experiencing hardship? Who?

18. How can you help others who are suffering?

19. Have you ever suffered for the Gospel? When?

20. How can you become more God-dependent instead of depending on yourself in times of hardship?

21. What can you do to learn patience and endurance from your trials?

• **DOING GOD'S WORD**

22. How can you help someone who is suffering to experience God's comfort?

23. How could you remind yourself to pray for addicts, alcoholics and their families who are suffering hardship?
