

2 Corinthians 7

God's Comfort: **2 Cor 1:3-7** How do we receive that comfort?

Paul explains how he received it in this chapter.

- I. We should know God's comfort through our Christian friends. 7:1-6
- II. We should know God's comfort through the obedience of other believers. 7:7-12
- III. We should know God's comfort through our teachers and those that we teach. 7:13-16

We should see both Godly sorrow and godly comfort being used by God to grow is in our faith.

- I. We should know God's comfort through our Christian friends. 7:1-6
 - A. 7:1 The promises Paul refers to are the ones listed in 6:16-18.
 - B. 7:4 **comfort** *paraklēsis* also "encouragement" or "consolation". This word or its relatives come up repeatedly in this chapter.
 - C. 7:2-5 Paul came Macedonia on his way from Ephesus to Corinth.
 1. **Outside were conflicts** Macedonia was a place where Paul had endured intense persecution in the past. Those outside conflicts were no doubt still there, with the potential to be renewed.
 2. **Inside were fears** Paul might have been worried that about the future of the work in Ephesus, which he had just left. He certainly was worried as to how things were going in Corinth. These letters to that church show us why.
 - D. 7:6 **God ... comforts the downcast** If we never knew those times of being brought low by our circumstances, we would never know the depth of God's comfort in the midst of them. There are very few lessons we can learn from a continuously easy life.

All the miserable are thus encouraged, because they are miserable, to look to that God who proclaims himself as the comforter. (Charles Hodge)
 - E. But when Paul's friend Titus arrived, God used Titus to comfort Paul.
 - F. We were meant to function in conjunction with others. Warren Wiersbe puts it like this: "Lonely Christian are often defeated Christians."
 1. When God first created Adam, we read: "It is not good that man should be alone." (Gen 2:18) That point applies to the Christian life and ministry as well.
 2. Therefore Jesus sent his disciples out "in pairs". (Luke 10:1)

3. We were made to serve the Lord together. This is one of the most important aspects of having Christian friendships and being committed to the life of the Christian community.

Galatians 6:2 NKJV Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Hebrews 10:24-25 NKJV ²⁴And let us **consider one another** in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting [also "encouraging" or "comforting"] one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 Peter 4:10-11 NKJV ¹⁰As each one has received a gift, **minister it to one another**, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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II. We should know God's comfort through the obedience of other believers. 7:7-12

A. 7:8 **If I made you sorry with my letter I do not regret it.** Paul's earlier communication with the Corinthian church involved a bunch of much-needed correction. We get a taste of it just by reading 1 Corinthians. There was division, sexual immorality and court cases between believers.

B. The great thing is that on the whole the church responded. They took the steps Paul recommended and Paul was getting huge comfort from that fact.

C. Paul explains the Corinthians behavior by contrasting two types of sorrow or sadness. He expresses them in 7:9-10 in the form of "**sorrow according to God**" or **godly sorrow** and **the sorrow of the world**.

1. The **sorrow of the world** is the kind of sorrow we see in Judas. This is the sorrow that produces death.

Matt 27:3-5 NKJV ³Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, ⁴saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood."

And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" ⁵Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

2. **Godly sorrow** is the kind of sorrow we see in Peter. After denying the Lord, Peter "went out and wept bitterly." (Matt. 26:75) But he held on and was later encouraged and restored by Jesus after Jesus rose from the dead. Afterward, Peter was a changed man. He died for his commitment to Christ rather than full of regret like Judas. Peter's sorrow turned out to be a good thing for him in the end.

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III. We should know God's comfort through our teachers and those that we teach. 7:13-16

A. Titus received a warm welcome from the church in Corinth. It seems they didn't welcome Timothy the same way in the past.

1 Cor. 4:17 NKJV *For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.*

1 Cor. 16:10-11 NRSV ¹⁰*If Timothy comes, see that he has nothing to fear among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord just as I am; ¹¹therefore let no one despise him. Send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I am expecting him with the brothers.*

B. The relationship between teachers and those being taught can be deep and emotionally taxing. Moses was often extremely grieved at the rebellion of the people of Israel. Jeremiah had a long ministry as God's messenger to the people of Judah, but their resistance to him and his message was so great that it caused him to be known as "the weeping prophet." Think also of how Jesus grieved over the resistance of the city of Jerusalem.

Matt 23:37-39 NRSV ³⁷*"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁸See, your house is left to you, desolate. ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"*

C. The Corinthians, who had responded badly to Paul and Timothy in the recent past, were now beginning to show a change. They were obedient. They received Titus with "fear and trembling". This was appropriate. It is really the proper response. Compare what Paul says to the Thessalonians:

1 Thess. 2:13 NKJV ¹³*For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

D. As we see with the Corinthians, Paul and Titus, a right response to God's word also leads to a right relationship with God's messengers. That way God's comfort can flow easily back and forth.

1 Thess. 5:11-13 NKJV ¹¹*Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. ¹²And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.*

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Final Passages:

1. **Godly Sorrow: 2 Cor 7:9-10** This shows us how we should respond whenever it is clear that we have fallen short. Own the shortcoming and move in the right direction.
2. **Godly Comfort: 2 Cor 1:3-7** God comforts us through various means: Christian friends, the obedience of other believers, through our teachers and those that we teach. In each case, He comforts us with the goal that we will be able to comfort others as a result.