

Home Group Helps

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Comfort in Affliction

God's Sovereign Purposes in Our Afflictions:

1. To glorify God

2 Cor. 4:7 – But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves

2. To suffer for Christ so as to follow in His steps

2 Cor. 1:5 – For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ

1 Peter 2:19-21 – ²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps

- “But to the noncommitted believer, who goes with the flow of culture, who risks nothing for Christ (and therefore does not share in Christ's sufferings) there is no application and no comfort offered here.” – Kent Hughes

3. To cause you to focus on heaven instead of earth

2 Cor. 4:17-18 – For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Kings 6:15-17 - And the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

4. To show you where your loyalties really lie

Genesis 22:11-13 – “for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me”

5. To correct your sin and teach you obedience

Ps. 119:71 – It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Thy statutes.

1 Peter 4:14-16 – ¹⁵ By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler

6. To teach you humility

2 Cor. 12:7-10 – And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me– to keep me from exalting myself!

⁸ Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.”

7. To realize God's compassion

Is. 49:13-16a – Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people, and will have compassion on His afflicted. . .”Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. ¹⁶ “Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands”

8. To make you more useful

James 1:2-4 – Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- “Affliction is essential. What we conclude here is that affliction was the key to Paul's effectiveness in ministry, and affliction is the key to effective ministry today.” – Kent Hughes

9. To enable you to comfort others

2 Cor. 1:4 – who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Luke 22:31-32 – ³¹ “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; ³² but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

2 Cor. 11:29-30 – Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? ³⁰ If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness.

10. To test the validity of our faith

2 Cor. 1:9 - We had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead

Deut. 8:2 – And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

1 Peter 4:19 – Let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.