

God of All Comfort

“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 may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God (2 Cor. 1:3-4).”

“For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead (2 Cor. 1:8-9).”

God will never allow anything to happen to you that you can't handle. True or False? Actually the answer is false. The way we know is from the text that the Apostle Paul wrote himself. Notice the language of verse eight and nine: we were so *“... utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death...”* Paul is saying that he could not handle it and despaired of finding hope of escaping the inevitable.

God will never allow anything that happens to us, even when it goes beyond our ability to handle it, without a divine purpose. Notice the end of verse nine where he states: *“But that was to make us rely (trust) not on ourselves but on God...”*. What is remarkable, is out of desperate circumstances Paul still saw the fingerprints of God utilizing some dire situation to deepen Paul's faith. This is especially true when we find ourselves overwhelmed by the conditions we face. When we cannot fix or escape the collateral damage of other people's actions (as Paul did in his journey) he was driven deeper into God's grace to learn how to deepen his trust in God. Most of our situations in life are not “life and death” but Paul's statement brings us to that precipice where even facing moments of such magnitude we can experience the grace of God.

God will never allow anything to happen to us that His grace is not sufficient. Paul does not use the word “grace” in verse eight and nine but it is certainly present. His comments in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 capture this thought precisely:

“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Cor. 12:9-10).”

Paul faced some difficult personal issues and limitations which he called a “thorn in his flesh and a messenger from Satan”. He pleaded with God to remove it from his life but God refused. God's declaration to Paul was that His grace was sufficient for him to live with those painful limitations and serve the Lord anyway. Paul recognized God has a more divine purpose for us than we do for him.



God does allow us to go through things so we can learn to comfort those around us. As we learn to accept comfort from God then he teaches us how to empathize and comfort others. One of our struggles is when we see failure in others we intuitively question their character. If the same scenario fell upon our own life it would be easy to blame circumstances. We need to learn to empathize and comfort people before we jump to conclusions about their struggles. We need to shed these ideas of spiritual plateaus that make us impervious to struggles and invulnerable to temptation. We must learn to empathize and comfort each other.

Sincerely,

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