KNOW THE GOD OF COMFORT

Devotion by: **Gert du Plessis** *(contact details appear elsewhere on the website).*
All Scripture references are taken from the King James translation, unless otherwise stated.
The breakdown of the Scripture passages is highlighted in Blue.

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Devotional Scripture reference: 2 Corinthians 1:3-11

2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

2 Corinthians 1:4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

2 Corinthians 1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

2 Corinthians 1:7 And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.

2 Corinthians 1:8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

2 Corinthians 1:9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

2 Corinthians 1:10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

2 Corinthians 1:11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

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Today, I would like to share a very special piece with you that the Lord shared with me.

- How can a human, who is only flesh and blood, offer the right words and encouragement for a person going through a deep crisis?
- How can one provide deep support for such a person?

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To answer these questions, I want to share 2 Corinthians 1:3 –11 with you. Let us see what Paul means by what he wrote here.

2 Corinthians 1:8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us

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in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

He speaks out of a position where they were in a great battle in Asia. It was such a tremendous struggle that they did not hope for their own lives. They thought it was the end of their lives as he says in verse nine:

2 Corinthians 1:9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

Paul clearly knew that his time had not come, but even if his oppressors had gone so far as to kill him, he had already trusted God well in advance. He did not only trust God as Saviour from his problems, but he also trusted that God would raise him from the dead. He had long hoped that God would save him from great mortal danger.

2 Corinthians 1:10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

His hope was placed entirely in God.

1. PRAYERS SUPPORT THE SAINTS

2 Corinthians 1:11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

The prayers of the saints supported his hope in God.

To many people requesting me to pray for them, I say:
You need to remember one thing. There is a rank order of authority.
If the people with the highest authority do not pray for you, such as a husband for his wife and wife for her husband, and that place is not in order, my prayers are of no use. This is because I come from lower position to support your prayers.

Here Paul makes it very clear that, had he not hoped in God, the prayers of the saints would not have helped them.

2 Corinthians 1:11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

These people in Asia held onto faith and hope, despite the terrible tribulation they endured, even unto death. The prayers of the saints sustained their hope and faith, uplifting and strengthening them, causing their hope in God to grow even stronger.

1.1 What do we learn from this?

The first thing is that *my* hope in God should never cease.
I cannot cast *my* faith aside and expect the prayers of the saints to do the work alone. That is not how it works.

- Our prayers are there to support, uplift, and carry one another

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The question is: Why does God allow these things to happen to a person? Why does the Lord allow these trials, and I am tempted to say, *torture* sometimes, that it almost feels as if one cannot take another step?

1.2 Spiritual Warfare

Some years ago, Eleanor and I went through a tremendous struggle while on our way to southern Namibia for an outreach. We had been engaged in spiritual warfare for weeks and slept very little. It was truly, as Paul says here, that you feel as though your life is about to end. I remember how someone we knew well and met while traveling south, said to me: *Gert, the Lord told me last night that I must watch and pray for you so that you might get just one good night's sleep before the outreach.*

It was such a source of support for me because that is exactly what happened to Paul. For a while we went through a battle, but the Lord knew we were weak and needed to be strong for the outreach. God told another man to keep watch and pray on behalf of Eleonore and me for one night. That man's prayers supported us, enabling us to be strong for the outreach. This has taught me a great deal about how the Body of Christ functions.

2. INTERCESSION

2 Corinthians 1:6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

2.1 Paul makes it clear

- Affliction is for your consolation and salvation.
- When a brother or sister is going through a great struggle, we need to intercede with the Lord for them. We may not, like so many others, make empty promises to pray, only to follow them with no prayer at all, or with a quick, rambling prayer. No, that is not what it is. However, Paul says whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.
- When I pray and intercede for a person, I need to step into their situation with that same passion and heart, as if I were in that position myself.

2.2 How do you do that?

You cannot do it alone because you need the Holy Spirit's guidance to be able to do it.
This means that your heart needs to be changed to become like Christ's heart, so that you can almost speak the same language. Only then do your prayers support them and you will be a source of consolation and salvation.

2 Corinthians 1:7 And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.

2.3 Take Note

When the breakthrough comes for the person for whom you intercede and support with your whole being,

- you will find the same comfort and deliverance that he does and
- receive the same reward.

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3. STRENGTHEN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Let us return to verse three.

2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort

- It is to enable the Body of Jesus Christ to be joined together more strongly.

Just think that when you went through a crisis, there was a person who walked alongside you, called you every day to ask how you were, supported you with their prayers, and who carried you through- that time. You would be heartless if you ever threw away that person's love, attention and help into the trash can, or forget about him after he carried you through.

Go ahead and smash your thumb with a hammer and see how the entire body concentrates on that thumb, on that sore nail. One time I slammed our car door on my finger. It was extremely painful and it felt as if I could not live that day, my thumb throbbed terribly and turned blue*;* my entire fingertip was blue. When I arrived home that night, someone told me *all you have to do is see if you can make a little hole in your nail for the blood to drain*. When I did, it was much better. But the point I want to make is, the entire body made everything revolve around that thumb's nail. I walked more carefully, I handled more carefully, I bound it with a cloth and ice. I nursed my finger. The entire body concentrated on it. That is how we should be.

The Bible tells us: **1 Corinthians 12:26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.**

If a brother or sister goes through a big crisis, people, then he should not keep it a secret. He should come forward and say: P*eople I need you, I need your prayers, I need your support, I need your help*. Be bold and uninhibited. We are one house and one body. If we do not know each other in weakness, how can we know each other in victory?

4. TO GLORIFY GOD

4.1 Why does God allow these things to happen?

Remember, I have said multiple times that whatever happens to us, in *EVERYTHING*, The Father should always be glorified.

Read carefully what Paul says in verse 3

2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

2 Corinthians 1:4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

The entire plan of God is fulfilled in this matter. It is never about you and me. It is always about the Father alone. He is glorified in all circumstances.

4.2 Why do you think Jesus had to die the terrible death that He did?

So that the Father may be glorified because fruit will come forth.

You and I were the fruit of His suffering and whatever took place on the cross. It was an expensive, heavy price to pay.

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We have now passed the Easter weekend. We have once again seen how He was tortured and how His flesh was ripped from His body. Historians say that one could see His lungs functioning through the ribcage. This is truly how it was!

4.3 But why?

What is the reason for it?
Is God a sadist? Does He take pleasure in it?
No, no, no, no!

Remember, He is God. He is everything. He allows us to go through these things so that we can come to know His different personalities.

- If you do not need the God of compassion, He cannot reveal Himself to you as the God of compassion.
- If you do not need warfare, then He cannot reveal Himself as the Warrior God.
- If you do not need provision, then He cannot reveal Himself to you as the God of Provision.
- If you do not need peace, He will never be able to reveal Himself as the God of Peace.

He will be able to reveal Himself to you as the God of Comfort and compassion, exactly when you need comfort and compassion He can then enter the stage and say: *Here I am the God of comfort and compassion.* Just as a mother holds and comforts her child, so He comforts us.

- With that same tenderness, God approaches us when He allows us to go through these crises.

You yearn for the Lord. You cry out! The prayers of the saints support and uphold you. God comes now and reveals Himself,

- neither as Creator, nor as Provider, but reveals Himself in the distress that exists right now. The need you have is comfort, hope and help. Right now, He comforts and helps you. God reveals Himself as the God of Comfort.

Which is why he says in verse 3:

2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

- Now He reveals Himself as the God of compassion and comfort
- Now you know Him in that specific aspect of His being.
- Only NOW do you know Him in this way.
- Before this you did not know Him.

Now you can speak from experience and say that you know the God of Compassion and Comfort.

2 Corinthians 1:4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

The whole point is that I am not there for myself. I am there for my brother and my sister. I am there for my fellow child of God and for my fellow members of the Body of Christ Jesus.

i) This means that when I go through a crisis I call out to the Lord, seek His grace, and plead on my knees before the Lord. I make it known to the congregation that I am going through a tremendous crisis. The prayers of the saints support me. God now reveals Himself and I have met Him as the God of compassion and comfort. Tomorrow or the day after, someone else will face a crisis. With

the experience I have, not with the person, but with the God of compassion and comfort, I can now be an instrument to approach such a person because now I can talk along with him.

ii) As Paul says I can now comfort others with the same comfort that God has comforted me with. I became a channel through which the Lord works so that He can use me or work through me to comfort others. Even if I lack experience, I can be a channel through which God reveals Himself. God can reveal Himself through me to those who need Him right now as the Comforter and the One who shows compassion

iii) Can you see people? We are simply a link in the chain. It is not about you and me. It is always about building up the Body of Christ Jesus and expanding the Kingdom of God.

Look at what Paul says in verse 3

2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

When we do these things in this way, God is glorified, blessed, and exalted.

- The people can now praise, glorify, honour and worship God,
- because the entire process and God's counsel are coming to fulfillment.

I had the privilege of being part of this, even though it sometimes came at a time when I felt like Paul. He had lost all hope of survival and simply trusted that God would raise him from the dead.

That is precisely what such a major crisis is all about.

- I thank the Lord for walking that path,
- to be a channel for Him today,
- to be an instrument and a link in this entire divine plan of God.

So, do not become discouraged if you go through a crisis. Fulfill the plan of God.
Do what is right.

- ✓ You now know how to act in such a situation. Let us join together, everyone. Each of us has a role to play. We all have a divine purpose to fulfill.
- ✓ Do not become discouraged. There is a purpose and a plan behind it to ensure that the Father is glorified by the ultimate outcome.
- ✓ Do not neglect to fulfill God's plan, no matter how small it may be.
- ✓ The Lord is giving you an opportunity to serve. If you say no, He will simply choose someone else, and you will lose that blessing and place.

People, I hope I have really blessed you today.

May the Lord bless you.

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Wikipedia

Compassion (or *mercy/loving-kindness*) means having sympathy or empathy for someone and actively intervening to alleviate their suffering or distress. It is a deep form of mercy where you take pity on someone (caring for them and showing grace) instead of punishing them or leaving them to their fate.



The word carries a few very specific nuances:

- **Deep sympathy:** It is not just a feeling of sympathy, but a state where you truly feel the other person's pain.
- **Active assistance:** It leads to action, such as helping, caring for, or supporting someone when they are vulnerable.

In religious or Biblical contexts, it is often used to describe God's unconditional love, grace, and forgiveness toward people who do not deserve it

"Compassion" can be a very personal and emotional experience. It is often described as deep sympathy, mercy, or extending a hand to someone who is going through a difficult time.
Since a "picture of compassion" is a proverbial or figurative expression, the true "picture" depends on how you choose to see it.

Here are a few ways this concept is often painted or expressed:

- **Biblical Picture:** In the Christian faith, God's compassion is compared to a mother comforting her child, or a Father welcoming back a lost child with open arms.
- **Human Empathy:** This is the image of someone putting their own plans aside to help lift up a fellow human being in need—as in the parable of the Good Samaritan.
- **Visual Images:** Visually, it is often depicted as open, outstretched hands, a warm embrace, or a clear, sunny clearing after a dark storm.

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