



Unbounded Comfort

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

1. Did you (or your children) have a particular item like a blanket or special stuffed animal that you (or they) held onto for comfort? How did you handle it when it was time to get rid of that item?
2. It is good and healthy to take comfort from things and people around us, but they all fall short at some point. What are some of the things people might turn to when they need comfort? Why do you think people and things can only provide limited comfort?
3. As Pastor Mark pointed out, this passage assumes that trouble and suffering are a *normal* part of life. What thoughts or emotions does that stir in you? What do verses 3 & 4 teach us about who God is in light of this reality? What do you think it means in verse 7 when it says that our "comfort abounds through Christ"? Why do you think some people fail to experience God's comfort in the midst of their troubles?
4. Looking at verses 4, 9, and 11, in what ways can our troubles and sufferings be a benefit to us and to others? How have you seen these things in action in your or someone else's life? Since all of these benefits are possible, but not assured, what do we need to do so that we do experience them?

5. It is sometimes hard to experience hope in the midst of troubles. What does this passage tell us about our reason for hope in suffering? What has helped you hold onto hope in God in times of trouble?

6. What do verses 8 & 9 tell us about the very real distress that suffering can bring? Are there any dynamics in the church that might make a person feel guilty when they feel this level of distress? How can we overcome these dynamics and allow people to be open and honest when they feel this way?

7. We know that troubles and sufferings will enter our lives. Maybe you are in a season of trouble right now. When the trouble and suffering does come, how will you respond? Will you choose to receive God's comfort *in* your suffering and allow Him to work in your life *through* it? Will you choose to use that time of trouble for your benefit and the benefit of those around you?

Take some time to pray as a group for anyone in the group or someone connected to the group who is experiencing a season of trouble and suffering. Pray that they will receive God's comfort through Jesus, that they will hold onto their hope in God, and that He will someday use their suffering to help others.

Going Deeper - explore some of the ways that Jesus suffered and know that He understands our troubles...

Luke 2:1-7 - Jesus was not born into a life of luxury and plenty; He knows what it is like to have physical needs

John 8:48-59 - People wanted to kill Jesus; He knows what it is like to be hated and attacked unfairly

Matthew 26:14-16 & 47-50 - Jesus was betrayed by one of His disciples; He knows what it is like to be betrayed

Luke 22:54-62 - Jesus was disowned by one of His closest friends; He knows what it is like to be abandoned