

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. - 1 Peter 2:2

THE SINCERE MILK OF GOD'S WORD

The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword... - Hebrews 4:12

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God of All Comfort

2 Corinthians 1:3-4: *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, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

A theme of **2 Corinthians** is the suffering the apostle Paul faced as a faithful servant of Christ's. In the opening verses of the epistle, the apostle stressed the One who supplied him strength to endure fiery trials.

The phrase "*God of all comfort*" shows some things about Paul's character, but it foremost demonstrates the character of *God*. His character provides great reason for faithful Christians to lean on Him, *especially* through trials.

For instance, when faced with afflictions, faithful Christians can take comfort in the knowledge that God is *all-seeing*.

Hebrews 4:13 teaches that "*there is no creature that is hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.*"

To the hypocrite, this verse is frightening. God is fully aware of every action, word, and thought of the one whose faith is insincere.

To the sincere child of God, though, God's "all-seeing eye" is *comforting*. God knows everything we face, and He knows the efforts of those who genuinely surrender all to Him.

This principle is demonstrated in **Revelation 2** and **3**. These chapters contain

seven sections, each of which directly addresses one of the seven churches the book of Revelation was written to (**Rev. 1:11**). A phrase that is used when addressing each of the seven churches is "*I know*" (**Rev. 2:2; 2:9; 2:13; 2:19; 3:1; 3:8; 3:15**).

While the Lord's knowledge included the sins many of the Christians in these churches were guilty of, it also included knowledge of the sincere faith among some (**Rev. 2:9; 3:4**), and the sufferings they faced (**Rev. 2:9-10**). The Lord understood fully what was going on.

God *knows* when His faithful children pour out their hearts to Him in prayer, or do other good deeds that no one else may be aware of. Moreover, He *knows* when His children face persecutions, catastrophes, health problems, loss of loved ones, or financial hardships. He is aware and He perfectly *understands* what we face.

God not only perfectly understands though, but He also perfectly *cares*. **1 Peter 5:6-7** commands, "*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your worries on Him, because He cares for you.*"

Prayer is, on the one hand, a duty, but on the other hand, it is a *privilege*. It is amazing to consider that the Creator of this world allows us to speak to Him and cast our anxiety on Him.

It is even more striking, though, that He *wants* us to do this because He *cares* for us. What can be more comforting for the faithful Christian than to know that our Almighty God cares about us and wants us to let Him know what we are struggling with?

In addition to this, our all-seeing and caring God is also perfectly *faithful*. He can be trusted because He is perfectly *trustworthy*.

Notice **1 Corinthians 10:13**: *No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

This verse stresses the fact that no matter how strong a temptation may be, we always have the ability to *choose* not to sin. There is a “*way of escape*” with every temptation.

The assurance we have of this “*way of escape*” is grounded in the truth that “*God is faithful.*” God’s character is such that He can be depended upon to make sure no temptation is unbearable for us.

More generally, God’s faithfulness means He can be trusted to follow through with *everything* He promises.

God’s faithfulness is the foundation of the Christian’s hope that anchors him or her through trials. Because God “*cannot lie,*” we have assurance that the righteous will be raised to eternal life in heaven (**Titus 1:2**).

The perfect faithfulness of God assures that He is always available to hear the prayers of any one of His faithful children, and that He will answer in perfect harmony with His divine wisdom.

When faced with any difficulty, it is nice to be able to speak to someone who understands, cares, and can be depended upon to help. No one understands as well as God. No one cares as much as He does. No one is as faithful as Him.

When God’s obedient children consider these and other truths about His character, the phrase “*God of all comfort*” resonates deeply. Because of who *He* is, the faithful Christian’s response to trials is far different

from the world’s.

Like Paul, the faithful Christian is able to have a deep sense of joy even in the midst of trials (**Phil. 4:4**). The righteous are able to have a peace that “*surpasses all understanding*” (**Phil. 4:7**) even in times of difficulty, and learn contentment, regardless of temporal circumstances (**Phil. 4:11-12**).

The faithful Christian understands that this world is not our permanent home. The righteous are able to (spiritually) see the (physically) unseen (**2 Cor. 4:17-18**), and confidently trust the One who has promised to never leave us nor forsake us (**Heb. 13:5**).

The faithful Christian occupies significant time with the comforting practice of prayer (**Phil. 4:6-7**), and is comforted by meditation on the true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, virtuous, and praiseworthy things taught in God’s Word (**Phil. 4:8**).

The spiritual-mindedness of God’s faithful children allows them to see “silver linings” in situations that seem entirely negative. For instance, the apostle Paul focused on the spiritual benefits of the sufferings he faced instead of focusing on the temporal difficulties (**Rom. 5:3-4**). This helped him see his thorn in the flesh as a primarily *positive* thing, though it brought him some temporary pain (**2 Cor. 12:7-10**).

Like the apostle Paul, faithful Christians today have spiritual riches that far outweigh anything the world can offer (cf. **Rev. 2:9**).

This is what God offers for *any* who choose to come to Him on His terms. While all are going to face sad times, there is at the same time a deep sense of comfort for the obedient child of God. In good times and bad, faithful Christians can lean upon One who is the “*God of all comfort.*”

- **Michael Hickox**

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For questions, comments, or to request a Bible study, please contact MichaelDHickox@gmail.com