

Day 1

In 2015, my husband Kevin and I entered one of the most difficult seasons we've ever been through. I was diagnosed with a chronic autoimmune disease. We lost a beloved family member, and our youngest son was suffering through some developmental issues.

I'd like to tell you that I rose above, overcame, more-than-conquered. But truthfully, my faith in God wavered. My go-to spiritual disciplines no longer helped me feel connected to Jesus. My gnawing questions about suffering and God's goodness became too much to handle.

Although I've been a Christian for thirty years, for the first time in my walk with God, I began to wonder if I was praying to the ceiling fan. Ultimately, God no longer fit into the box I had designated for Him, and I had no idea what to do about it. What I didn't realize is that God was about to blow the box wide open and reveal more of Himself to me.

And in the middle of this very difficult season, God gently led me back to Himself and to His supernatural comfort.

In today's reading, the apostle Paul writes about a time he faced overwhelming trouble. Paul was crushed to the point of thinking he'd actually die. In his pain, he reminds us that we have a great Comforter—who comforts us at the very moment we need Him most.

Paul makes three significant points:

1) **God is the source of all comfort.**

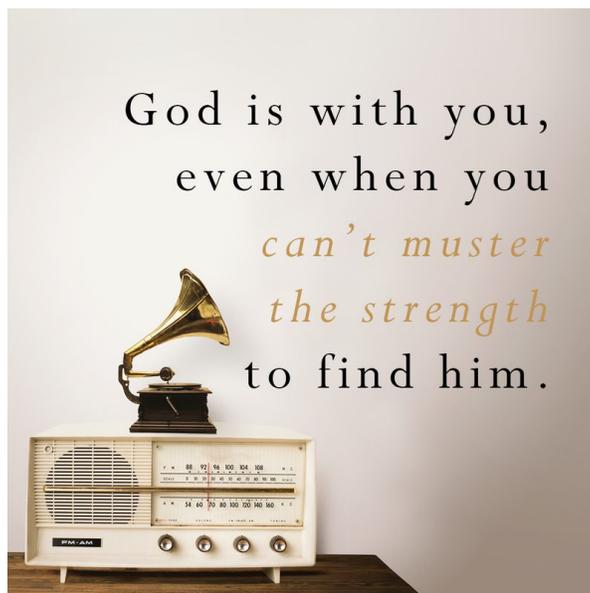
This may seem obvious, but we don't always live like it is. We run to so many other things or other people for comfort. What would it look like to stop running to all of those things, and instead, cry out to God for His comfort?

2) **We don't have live in fear of seasons of anguish.**

Difficult seasons are actually beautiful invitations into deeper intimacy with God. In fact, Paul proclaims that the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with His comfort through Christ. What an incredible thought!

3) **We are called to comfort others with the comfort we've received.**

God comforts us with purpose--- He actually comforts us, so that we will comfort others—for the sake of their salvation (verse 6). Who might God wants you to comfort today?



2 Corinthians 1:3-6 NLT

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others.

When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. 5 For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. 6 Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer.

1 John 3:1-3 NLT

1 See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him. 2 Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. 3 And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.

This reading plan can be found at <https://my.bible.com/en-GB/reading-plans/14521>