



## Demolishing Strongholds Sorrow, Grief and Suffering

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 - For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

### What is the most painful experience of my life?

2 Corinthians 1:3-11 - Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. <sup>5</sup> For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. <sup>6</sup> If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. <sup>7</sup> And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

<sup>8</sup> We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup> Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. <sup>10</sup> He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, <sup>11</sup> as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

## Finding God In The Trials Of Life

### God permits trials to come into our life and He is in control.

We must never think that trouble is an accident. For the believer, everything is a divine appointment. There are only three possible outlooks a person can take when it comes to the trials of life. If our trials are the product of “fate” or “chance,” then we will give up. Nobody can control fate or chance. If we have to control everything ourselves, then the situation is equally as hopeless. But if *God* is in control, and we trust Him, then we can overcome and grow stronger through our circumstances with His help.

### God uses trials so that we can comfort others.

In times of suffering, most of us are prone to think only of ourselves and to forget others. We become a pool rather than a river, holding it all in instead of letting it flow out. The reason for trials is so that you and I might learn to be channels of blessing to comfort and encourage others. Because God has encouraged us, we can encourage them. However, Paul made it clear in verse 4 that we do not need to experience *exactly* the same trials in order to be able to share God’s encouragement. If we have experienced God’s comfort, then we can “comfort those in any trouble.”

### God uses trials to teach us to rely on Him rather than ourselves.

The word “despaired” in verse 8 literally means “no passage,” or no exit. Paul’s life was at the point that he didn’t see any hope for his situation. God will use trials and suffering to show how weak and needy we are so that we will learn to trust in Him and rely on Him. God will take us to the point that we cannot rely on our own intelligence, skills, physical ability, wealth, or emotional strength so that we **MUST** rely on Him. If we rely on God, then God gets the glory.

God works out His purposes in the trials of life, *if* we yield to Him, trust Him, and obey what He tells us to do. Difficulties can increase our faith and strengthen our prayer lives. Difficulties can draw us closer to other Christians as they share the burdens with us. Difficulties can be used to glorify God. So when you find yourself in the trials of life, remember what God is to you and what God does for you.