



**A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families:** For the week of February 19, 2017

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

**II Corinthians 1:1-7** *"Share In Our Comfort"*

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia:

<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able

to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup> For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. <sup>6</sup> If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. <sup>7</sup> Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

- The word "comfort" used in this passage means "to come alongside." This same word is often used of the Holy Spirit Himself, and tells us that part of God's ministry to us is simply His presence with us. How have you known the presence of the Lord in your life? Can you share one way you seen Him come alongside you to bring you comfort?
- How does Paul's experience of being comforted benefit the Corinthians? Have you ever had a similar experience?
- It can be challenging to come alongside afflicted people. What temptations can we experience when dealing with a friend in need of comfort? Why are we prone to these temptations?
- Paul is keying off a deep truth in the Christian's life. If you spend your life moving from created comfort to created comfort, life will be very small, indeed. But if you know Gospel-comfort in our need and weakness, you can be used as a powerful force to love others and have a full life. Have you see this to be true in your life?
- Pray for one another. If someone is suffering and afflicted, ask our Father of mercies to comfort them. If someone has been comforted, thank God for the faithful, comforting ministry of Jesus Christ. And ask the God of all comfort to use us to comfort the suffering and afflicted.
- Is there a specific way God is calling you, your group, or your family to offer comfort to someone this week?

## Sermon Notes

*This week, Steve Shelby preached on II Corinthians 1:1-7*

Last week we learned that comfort is help in and through the Gospel in suffering, not relief. Comfort is strong words for bad times when we feel our weakness.

God, just as He is "the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ", is also, the "Father of mercies and the God of all comfort".

What is the point of affliction and comfort?

First, it is a demonstration of our connection to Christ (5)

Second, suffering affliction and receiving comfort is meant to expand our lives into the lives of others.

We comfort others with the comfort we have been given.

The operative word in this section is "share" in verses 5 and 7

We share in one another's suffering and we share in one another's suffering.

What power is there in ease?

What power is there in suffering?

"Since you have the comfort of the Gospel, all the uncomfortable things lose their power and sting. Are you dying? Be comforted, for your Jesus has already died your death. Are you sad? Be comforted, for your Jesus knew sadness in Gethsemane and shares even your gloom. Are you a sinner who has fallen again and again? Be comforted, for your Jesus has assumed every one of your sins, and gives to you in exchange His righteousness." (*Christopher Esget*)

My testimony is not just my testimony.

My suffering is not just my suffering.

My healing is not just my healing.

We belong to one another in Christ.