

DON'T SQUANDER YOUR PAIN

A GOSPEL-CENTERED GUIDE FOR SUFFERING, COMFORT & MISSION

“...to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.”

2 CORINTHIANS 1:9

**Pain is never good in itself. But in the hands of the God who raises the dead, it
is never meaningless.**

Use this guide slowly, honestly, prayerfully, and with trusted believers who can walk with you.

00 BEGIN HERE

The goal is not to explain away your pain, but to bring it under the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

2 COR. 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...”

This guide follows five movements: name the affliction, expose counterfeit comfort, remember the cross, trace God’s comfort, and share that comfort with others. The point is not self-improvement. The point is deeper dependence on Christ, fuller participation in His church, and more faithful love for suffering people.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- What pain or affliction are you bringing before God?
- Who is a trusted believer, pastor, elder, counselor, or friend who can walk through this with you?
- What would honesty before God require from you today?

01 NAME THE AFFLICTION

Suffering becomes more dangerous when it remains vague, hidden, or isolated.

2 COR. 1:8

“We were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.”

Paul does not minimize his pain or disguise it with religious language. Biblical faith tells the truth. Naming the affliction is not unbelief; it is the beginning of bringing the affliction before God.

TELL THE TRUTH

- What happened? Be specific.
- What has been lost, threatened, exposed, or broken?
- Which relationships have been affected?
- What emotions are strongest right now?
- What are you afraid this pain means about God, yourself, or your future?

Prayer: Father, keep me from pretending. Give me courage to tell the truth before You, because You already know me completely and You receive me in Christ.

02 EXPOSE COUNTERFEIT COMFORT

Pain turns us inward and tempts us to seek relief without trust, holiness, or Christ.

PSALM 139

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!”

Counterfeit comfort promises immediate relief while quietly deepening bondage. It may look like isolation, control, anger, fantasy, food, alcohol, pornography, work, shopping, entertainment, bitterness, self-pity, or constant distraction. The issue is not merely what you do, but what you are asking it to give you.

FOLLOW THE DESIRE

- Where do you run when the pain becomes intense?
- What are you demanding from that refuge: control, numbness, approval, revenge, escape, certainty?
- What does this counterfeit comfort promise?
- What does it actually produce afterward?
- What would repentance look like in one concrete action today?

Hard question: Am I trying to receive Christ's comforts while refusing His cross?

03 REMEMBER THE CROSS

Gospel comfort does not begin with easier circumstances. It begins with union with the crucified and risen Christ.

2 COR. 1:5

“For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.”

Jesus did not remain distant from suffering. He entered it, bore sin, absorbed wrath, died in the place of His people, and rose in victory. Christian comfort is not the promise that pain will immediately stop. It is the certainty that Christ has already faced the deepest judgment for us and that nothing can separate us from His love.

PREACH THE GOSPEL TO YOURSELF

- What does the cross prove about the seriousness of sin?
- What does the cross prove about the love of God?
- What accusation against you has Christ already answered?
- What burden are you trying to carry as though Jesus had not said, “It is finished”?
- How does the resurrection change what you believe about the ending of your story?

Confession of hope: His suffering is my suffering. His death is my death. His resurrection is my resurrection. His reign will be my reign.

04 TRACE GOD'S COMFORT

God is not only working on you. He is working through His Word, His Spirit, His people, and His providence.

2 COR. 1:9-10

"He delivered us...and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again."

Paul looks backward in faith so he can look forward in hope. Comfort is not always removal. Sometimes it is strength to endure, clarity to repent, courage to obey, a believer who stays, a promise remembered, or a deeper reliance on God than you had before.

LOOK FOR GRACE

- Where has God sustained you, even if He has not removed the trial?
- What Scripture has become more precious?
- Who has carried part of the burden with you?
- What sin, illusion, or false confidence has God exposed?
- What evidence shows that God has not abandoned you?
- What past deliverance can help you trust Him now?

Practice: Write three specific mercies you can thank God for today, without pretending the pain is small.

05 SHARE THE COMFORT

Affliction can become an entrusted stewardship rather than a wasted wound.

2 COR. 1:4

“...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.”

Your suffering does not automatically make you wise. But suffering brought under Scripture, prayer, repentance, community, and hope can prepare you to love people with unusual patience and credibility. You do not need to have a clean ending before you can testify to present grace.

TURN OUTWARD

- Who is walking through pain you now understand more personally?
- What could you honestly say about God’s grace without exaggerating?
- How can you identify with their suffering before trying to correct them?
- What practical act of presence, prayer, or service could you offer?
- How could you invite them toward Christ and His church rather than making yourself their savior?

A simple pattern: Identify with suffering. Testify to Christ’s comfort. Invite into community.

06 A RULE FOR THE HARD DAYS

Use this simple rhythm when suffering narrows your vision and turns you inward.

MOVEMENT	PRACTICE
STOP	Refuse frantic escape. Become still before God.
NAME	Tell God and a trusted believer what is actually happening.
REMEMBER	Rehearse the cross, resurrection, and a specific promise of God.
ASK	Pray for comfort to you and comfort through you.
MOVE	Take one obedient step toward worship, community, or service.

07 FINAL REFLECTION

Do not rush past these questions. They expose whether pain is pushing you toward Christ or deeper into yourself.

TWO QUESTIONS

- Am I praising God, even in my pain?
- Am I praying for God to use me - whatever it may cost - to share His comfort with others?

SUFFERING NEVER GETS THE LAST WORD.

The God who raises the dead does.