

BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....”
John 1:40-42a


A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a

MISSIONARIES OF THE WEEK



Tony & Marcia Haug | JAPAN

1. Pray for the salvation of Mr. Itou who has been attending church with his wife and three children. Several months ago he met with me weekly for Bible Study and I took him through our Introduction to Salvation course. He remains interested but has not yet decided to follow Christ.
2. Continue to pray for the salvation of Mr Okamoto(50's) and Mr. Tsutsunomi (31) both seem very interested in the gospel. Pray that they will continue coming to church and that their hearts will be opened to the Truth of the Bible.
3. Thank you for your continued prayers for New Beginning International Preschool. We currently have 14 students enrolled for the new school year beginning in April. We thank God for this opportunity to share the gospel with these families. Pray that we will be able to recruit 5 more students.

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GROWTH GUIDE

The Great Exchange

Handout: 04/17/22
Study: 04/24/22

Exchanging Depression For Encouragement

The apostle praises God who provides comfort when we are in affliction (1:3-4). It’s clear from the following verses that Paul had been in a painful situation. He speaks of affliction (1:4, 6, 8), suffering (1:5-7), despair (1:8), and death (1:9-10). Thus, Paul was able to validate Jesus’s promise to his disciples: “You will have suffering in this world” (John 16:33).

If anyone assures you that you can avoid suffering like health problems, mental anguish, relational difficulties, or financial straits—provided that you have enough faith—they’re not telling you the truth. Paul was a visible and verbal follower of Christ who stood head and shoulders above other Christians in terms of faithfulness. And he suffered greatly—not in spite of his faith but because of his faith in and obedience to Christ. Paul’s suffering and ours is directly related to God’s purpose of using us to minister to others. So if you’re suffering, read on.

In addition to the words of pain, there’s another word repeated in these verses with which we need to come to grips: comfort. God is the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our affliction (1:3-4). We must not be so overcome by our suffering that we miss the unlimited comfort that God makes available in every circumstance.

Notice two things. First, God is sovereign over our suffering. Christians follow in their Master’s footsteps, sharing in the sufferings of Christ that overflow to us (1:5). Our trials and tribulations don’t catch God off guard. Nothing happens to you that hasn’t first passed through his fingers. Remember that “all things work together for the good of those who love God” (Rom 8:28). When Jesus promised his disciples that they would undergo suffering, he also told them, “Be courageous! I have conquered the world” (John 16:33). Don’t run from the Lord when suffering strikes. Run to him and let him work in you so that you may be comforted.

Second, there is an important purpose for our affliction: it equips us to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God (1:4). Paul knew that he was afflicted and comforted so that he could bring comfort to the Corinthians (1:6). God often lets us experience difficult circumstances so that he can use us to experientially minister to others, since they empower us to empathize with their pain. When you offer comfort to a fellow believer, you serve as a conduit for the comfort of God, and you open yourself up to experience a deeper level of his reality at work in your life.

Source: *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary*

KEY VERSE

II Corinthians 1:3 (NKJV)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort”

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: II Corinthians 1:1-11; II Thessalonians 2:16-17

Introduction

1. Tony Evans reminds in his commentary on the cover that we all will suffer. How can God’s sovereignty encourage us during times of suffering?
2. How does God give us a purpose in our suffering? How have you seen this in your life?

Tuesday: II Corinthians 1:1-5; I Peter 1:3; Ephesians 1:3

Remember What God Is To You

3. How does II Corinthians 1:3, describe God?
4. How do these attributes help you in times of difficulty?

Wednesday: II Corinthians 1:4-7, 7:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:11

Remember What God Does Through You

5. According to today’s readings, why does God comfort us?
6. List some times in your life when God comforted you. How can He use those experiences in your life to comfort others?

Thursday: II Corinthians 1:8-10; Romans 3:23-24; I Thess. 4:3

Remember What God Does In You

7. According to today’s readings, what does God do in you?
8. How does the resurrection of Jesus demonstrate that we should trust God and not ourselves according to I Corinthians 1:9?
9. In what sense did God deliver us from sin? In what sense does He deliver us in the present? In what sense, does He deliver us in the future?

Friday: II Corinthians 1:11; Philippians 1:19; Rom. 15:30-32

Remember What God Does For You

10. What does today’s readings say about the importance of God giving us people who pray for us?
11. How can being involved in a Growth Group increase the number of people praying for you and also give you the opportunity to pray for and comfort others?
12. List some answered prayer that you have experienced. Take some time to thank God.