

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for "the big question."*

Read II Corinthians 1:3-11 aloud.

1. How is God described in verse 3?

When are some times that God has been compassionate or comforting for you?

We cannot see God, so how can we draw comfort from him?

2. How would you re-state verse 4 in your own words?

How do your troubles help you comfort others?

If someone has gone through troubles, does it make you more or less likely to go to them for comfort?

Who is someone you look up to because of the way they have come through troubles?

3. How do the sufferings of Christ flow into our lives? What are some losses you experience because of Christ?

How does comfort flow from Christ into your life? What are some ways you are better off because of Jesus?

Which flows into your life in a greater way – the sufferings of Christ, or the comfort of Christ?

Notice the contrast in 5 – sufferings flow, but comfort overflows.

4. What could be going on in verses 6-7? How did Paul's distress or comfort help the church at Corinth?

Paul is talking like a spiritual parent – think how a parent's distress or comfort works to comfort the child.

When has the church been a comfort for you?

What makes you optimistic about the church?

There may not be reasons for optimism based on us and our abilities. But if your hope rests on God, there is great reason for optimism. Despair is impossible when your leader is omnipotent!

5. According to verse 8-9, what had recently occurred in Paul's life? *A major trauma of some kind. He thought he would die.*

What had he learned from this near-death experience?
To rely on God.

When has a near-death experience deepened your faith?

6. What does verse 10 say about deliverance?

How does God's past faithfulness increase your confidence?

7. Pass it on. A theme in this passage is that God's blessings flow to us, and then we pass them on to others. What is a blessing God has given you that you intend to pass along this week?

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

What is an area of your life where you could use some comfort from God and from this group?

III. Other resources

The point – God comforts us so that we might join him in comforting others.

Prayer

Pray for a way that you need God's comfort.

Pray for someone who is in need of God's comfort.

Pray for our church and our LIFE group to be known as a place where God's comfort can be found.

Pray for God to guide the Lockes, our leaders and our congregation through the preacher transition.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Go on a “temporary” scavenger hunt. Divide into teams of 3-4 people (with at least one adult on each team), then scatter around the house looking for things that are temporary. Bonus points for things that will be gone in less than a month.

Give an award for the team that has the best or most items.

How do you feel when something temporary is gone?
Like the snow.

How do you feel when something you thought would last turns out to be temporary?

What on earth is not temporary?

Read Psalm 103:11-17 aloud.

How temporary is God?

How does it help us to serve a permanent God?

What are some things we can hold on to and what are some things we should hold to lightly?

LIFE Group Guide

II Corinthians 1 – comforting one another

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **God comforts us so that we can comfort others.**

Larry's Sunday sermon will focus on the theme of trusting God even through difficult times. One way God comforts us is through good people he sends into our lives. This LIFE guide builds on that idea that God comforts us so that we might comfort one another. LIFE groups are a wonderful way to live out this principle.

Leadership tip: Invite a new person to attend your group every week. Particularly look around on Sunday morning for people who might not have found a group. If you need ideas on who to invite, stand near Larry Locke or Tom Wallace or Jim Andrews in the lobby & ask them to steer people your way.

I. Relate *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ Tell us about your baptism.
- ❖ When have you come close to dying?
- ❖ This discussion guide talks about comforting one another. For a lot of people, the most important comfort in life is their pillow. Tell us about your pillow.