

**Bible Study Notes**  
by Larry Roach  
**2 Corinthians: Section 1**

**Introduction and 2 Corinthians 1:1- 4a**  
**God Our Father**

## **Introduction**

Second Corinthians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul, A.D. 55, while in Ephesus, to the Church at Corinth.

It seems that Paul wrote as many as four letters to the church at Corinth: (1) the letter referred to in 1 Corinthians 5:9; (2) the 1 Corinthians letter; (3) the “severe” letter, (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:3–4); and (4) the 2 Corinthians letter.

After writing 1 Corinthians Paul continued his ministry at Ephesus until he heard that his letter had not completely accomplished its purpose. A group of men had come to Corinth who presented themselves as apostles. They were false teachers, who were challenging, among other things, Paul’s personal integrity and his authority as an apostle, (cf. 11:4; 12:11).

In the face of this serious situation, Paul decided to make a trip to Corinth (12:4; 13:1–2) to see whether he could remedy the situation. The visit turned out to be painful and did not accomplish its purpose. So when Paul returned to Ephesus, he wrote the Corinthians a severe letter “out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears” (2:4), probably sending it by Titus (12:8). Some identify this letter with 2 Corinthians 10–13. Others think it has been lost.

After writing the severe letter, Paul had second thoughts. He was deeply concerned about how the Corinthians might react to it. So after the riot caused by Demetrius and his fellow silversmiths (cf. Acts 19:23–41), he left Ephesus and set out for Macedonia by way of Troas. He expected to meet Titus in Troas to get news of the effect of his severe letter on the Corinthian church, but Titus was not there, (see 2 Corinthians 2:12–13).

Still deeply concerned, and despite the fact that the Lord had opened up an opportunity to preach the gospel at Troas, Paul said good-bye to the believers there and moved on to Macedonia, where he met Titus. To his relief, the news from the Corinthian church was basically good. The severe letter had brought its intended results, (7:5–16). The encouraging report of Titus of the improved situation at Corinth is the immediate occasion of the writing of 2 Corinthians.

In First Corinthians Paul devoted much of the letter to the problems of the church at Corinth. It was a letter of correction. Second Corinthians is a letter of Paul revealing much of his personal life and testimony. Through this letter he explains how he overcame personal obstacles through the Lord’s grace, and how the Lord strengthened him for greater usefulness.

## **2 Corinthians 1: 1-4a. God our Father**

Paul begins this letter, to the church in Corinth, stating his calling as an apostle of Christ. He made it clear that his calling was by the will of God. This is an assertion that he will make often during the course of this letter in response to those who claimed he was not an apostle. The basic meaning of the word apostle is “sent one.”

In verse 3 we notice that Paul starts the letter in praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He addresses God as Father, lifting the saints in Corinth to the very throne of God. Certainly our prayers are to be directed to the Father. Jesus made this clear in what he outlined as the model prayer, “Our Father which is in heaven....” (cf. Matthew 6:9). Certainly we can address Jesus or the Holy Spirit in prayer, but the Scriptures clearly point us to pray to the Father. We pray through the power of the Holy Spirit and Jesus brings our prayers before the Father. Jesus is the interceding High Priest for us before the Father. Jesus didn’t come to exalt himself – he came to reveal and exalt his Father, (cf. Matthew 11:27; John 17:4-6, 20-26; John 1:14, 18; 5:30; 14:6-10; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:2-3).

I was well into my Christian walk before I began to understand God as Father. It was nearly 25 years ago, while I was in a Christian meeting out of town, that the Holy Spirit came upon me, flooding my soul and breaking me to the point that I began uncontrollably weeping and crying out bitterly during the assembly of the saints. Certainly this disrupted the speaker’s sermon and all that was happening. It was a day like no other for me and probably for many others who were there. When this happened, an older man from the front of the church came and sat down next to me and drew me close to him, surrounding me with his arms, so I could lean my head on his chest. As I continued to cry he began to sing, speak Scripture and pray over me. I’m not sure if he spoke it, or I just remembered this passage from the Scriptures, “The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing,” Zephaniah 3:17.

On that day, when I began to rest in God’s peace I could hear nearly a hundred people crying and praying at the altar in the front of the assembly. I looked into the eyes of the man who was comforting my soul and what he said next I will never forget. He said, “Today you have met the Father.” I immediately knew what he meant, however, I have been learning of its impact on my life ever since. Perhaps this man was an angel of the Lord, or perhaps he was a man who had met the Father in a similar way. He certainly demonstrated what a loving father looks like.

In a more unspoiled world than we live in, what father would not do the same for his child who was devastated? Would he not draw his son or daughter near him, in the protection of his arms, with tears, prayers, words of encouragement and songs?

**Application Question:** Have you met the Father?

Jesus said, "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him," Matthew 11:27.

In the second part of verse 3 of the first chapter of 2 Corinthians, Paul goes on to describe the Father as the "Father of compassion." This is certainly the heart or nature of God – and all compassion comes from him. Compassion is an interesting word that is made up of two parts. The first part "com" means with or for. The second part "passion" means to suffer. Put the two parts together and the word "compassion" means to suffer with or for.

The Father suffers with us or for us. When we suffer he suffers as well. Sometimes his grace spares us the suffering which he takes upon himself so that we don't have to bear it. This is a loving Father.

Some of you may be unfamiliar with this reality in relation to an earthly father. This concept may seem difficult to understand because you have not seen it on earth. Over the years in my counseling practice this has been a common reality I have seen for many seeking help for depression – which is usually an impaired sense of worth. It was difficult for those in this situation to understand God the Father because their earthly father was unloving, absent or distant. Knowingly or unknowingly their father communicated that they were of little worth. As these people began to accept a new sense of their worth from God's perspective they were set free to live for God in the health of his worth, identity and security.

Our heavenly Father desires to draw us near to him, and will certainly do so when we are suffering. God the Father is just like the man I described earlier – he draws us into his arms, singing and speaking words of encouragement over us.

And certainly God suffers for us – in our stead. He, manifested through Jesus Christ, suffered on the Cross for our sins. The penalty of our sins (rebellion) is death; however God spares us that suffering through faith in Jesus Christ, (Romans 3:21-26; 6:23). Through the "passion" of Christ we have been reconciled to the Father –and now can have fellowship with him.

The next description of the Father that Paul uses (v3b) is that he is the "God of all comfort." Comfort is another interesting word that is made up of two parts. The first part "com" like we said before means with or for. The second part "fort" means strong. Put both parts together and the word "comfort" means strong with or for. "The LORD is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for his anointed one," Psalm 28:8. The Psalmist also said, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever," Psalm 73:26

This is the relationship that we have with God – he is strong with us and for us. “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble,” Psalm 46:1. It is by his Holy Spirit that he strengthens. “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty,” Zechariah 4:6. It is also by that same Spirit that his power works through us. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth,” Acts 1:8. In him we are made strong and victorious. God said to Paul when he was in a distressing situation, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Paul concluded, “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me,” 2 Corinthians 12:9.

God the Father is the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort. In 2 Corinthians 1:4a Paul continues by saying that the Father comforts us in all our troubles. Literally, the Father is strong for us and with us in all our troubles, afflictions and tribulations. The writer of Hebrews said, “Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need,” Hebrews 4:16.

Here are a couple more of God’s promises to his children: “Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint,” Isaiah 40:3. “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand,” Isaiah 41:10.

**Application Questions:** Examine your life and the situations, trials or temptations that you are facing. How do you need the Father to be strong with you or for you? What would that look like? What difference would it make in your life today?

Recommended Song: [Strength of My Life](#)