

# life groups

NorthStar Church

NorthStar Church  
Breaking Bad, week 3  
2 Corinthians 1-5  
Oct. 28 & Oct. 29, 2017

## Main Idea

If we are going to be able to break the bad in the church, we must exhibit the three primary functions of a healthy church. We must be willing to stand with and comfort a lot of broken and messed up people, we must be willing to forgive a lot of hurtful people, and we must constantly be working towards bringing people back to God.

## Study

When you think about a hospital, what do you think its main function is? When you think about a school, what do you think is its purpose? What about a chik-fil-a restaurant? Now, when you think about church, why do you think it exists?

This week our pastors walked us through the three primary functions of a healthy church. Read the following passages associated with each function, then discuss each one in your group.

1. Comforting (2 Cor. 1:3-4) When we have compassion for others we feel someone else's pain in our hearts. God is the Father of compassion and the originator of this emotion. If we are going to break the bad in His church, we have to be willing to stand with a lot of broken and messed up people, just like God does with us. Sometimes over and over! Do you have someone to walk with you through dark and heavy times? Are you that person for anyone?
2. Forgiving (2 Cor. 2:5-8, 11) To forgive is to freely pardon with or without "deserving" it. It is about being obedient to God. Our ability to forgive is not the same as our ability to stop hurting; it is a process of healing and restoration. Do you struggle with forgiving others? Do you struggle with the fact that God has completely forgiven you? If we are going to break the bad in His church we must be willing to forgive and reaffirm a lot of hurtful people.
3. Reconciling (2 Cor. 5:17-20) Reconciling is to exchange or to return to favor with. Another way of looking at this is to be reinstated. Is there anyone in your life who needs to be reinstated after a forgiveness? Do you need to work towards being reinstated with someone? If we are going to break the bad in His church we must constantly be about bringing people back into favor with ourselves, others, and God.

## Prayer

Pray for each other in your group and their various requests. Specifically pray for the following people in your lives:

Who in your life do you need to come alongside and comfort? Who do you need to forgive? Who do you need forgiveness from? Who is God calling you to walk with long enough to reconcile with?

### 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

1:3-4. Paul began describing his hardships on a positive, exuberant note. The formula praise be to ... God derived from the Old Testament (Ps. 41:13), but Paul modified it to express distinctively Christian praise. Not only is God praised, but he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This modification demonstrates that Paul saw Christianity as one with Old Testament religion, but not precisely the same. Christ had become the center of true belief. New Testament believers relate to God as the one who sent Christ.

Paul added that the Father has compassion and all comfort. This praise also derives from the Old Testament (Isa. 51:12; 66:13). Compassion denotes God's mercy and his concern for the plight of those who suffer.

Comfort is what God gives to those who suffer. These terms were appropriate because Paul was about to describe his own troubles in suffering for the gospel.

Paul suffered and was comforted partly so he could bring comfort to others in any trouble. His suffering in ministry was an act of service to the Corinthians. Having suffered and been comforted, Paul could comfort others with the comfort he had received from God. Paul's use of the first person suggests that he thought primarily about himself and his company in this passage, but the principle applies to all believers. God permits his servants to suffer, and then comforts them so they may in turn comfort others.

1:5. Paul explained how he knew this principle to be true. Christians are so intimately joined with Christ that experiences flow from Christ, to believers, through believers, and to others. The sufferings of Christ extend from Christ to his followers. Believers fill up ... Christ's afflictions because the church is his body (see Col. 1:24; cf. Phil. 3:10). This was plain enough from the hardships in Paul's own ministry. Yet, just as Christ received joy and glory in his resurrection, and sent the Holy Spirit of comfort, comfort also overflows to believers through Christ. In union with Christ, we face the hardships of sin and death, but we also receive compassionate encouragement from God.

1:6. Because the Corinthians benefited when the apostles were distressed, Paul's experiences had been the Corinthians' comfort. As he ministered at great personal cost, he brought comfort and salvation to those who heard his message. At the same time, when the apostles were comforted by Christ, they received the encouragement they needed to bring the Corinthians comfort.

Further, the comfort believers received from Paul's suffering produce[d] ... patient endurance in the midst of their own sufferings. Christians must remain faithful to Christ, no matter how difficult circumstances become. Endurance (*hypomone*) describes how believers must continue in faithful service to the end. Yet, endurance will not last unless it is patient. Patience is the ability to wait for Christ to return and end all suffering. Comfort enables believers to find energy, which in turn makes them patient as they endure suffering.

1:7. The Corinthians faced trials, disappointments, and conflicts. But Paul believed they had saving faith in Christ and that they would endure. He hoped this because he knew the Corinthians share[d] in the apostles' comfort as well as their sufferings. So long as Christ comforted the Corinthians, they would be able to endure their suffering to the end.