Dealing with GRIEF *and* LOSS

Comfort and Hope in Christ



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WOT PUBLISHING

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Published by WOT Publishing, a ministry of Word of Truth Ministries International.

WOT PUBLISHING

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Published by WOT Publishing, a ministry of Word of Truth Ministries International.

www.wotpublishing.com

Interior formatting: WOT Publishing

First English mini-book edition 2026

Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible.

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Introduction

Beloved, the absence of someone you love can touch many parts of daily life. A familiar conversation is missing. A place at the table, a shared responsibility or an ordinary day may remind you of that absence. Grief is the sorrow experienced in relation to a loss. It may be expressed in tears, in quietness or in the need to speak about what has happened. The expression is not identical in every person.

The Word does not require you to conceal sorrow before you approach the Father. He is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. His love for you has not been withdrawn, and the Holy Spirit who lives in you has not departed. You can bring your heart before Him, receive the encouragement of His Word and accept the care He makes available through others.

This book follows several passages that speak to grief and to the way believers care for one another. We will consider the Father's comfort, the compassion of the Lord Jesus, the promise concerning those who have died in Christ, the place of remembrance and the practical care of the body. The Scriptures give hope without asking us to pretend that an absence is insignificant.

Read the passages alongside each chapter. Give yourself room to receive the truth at a pace you can attend to, and allow a trusted person to walk with you. The Father’s faithfulness is a sound foundation for this part of your journey.

CHAPTER ONE

The Father of Comfort

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

2 Corinthians 1:3 (KJV)

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3–11

Paul begins his letter with thanksgiving to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He calls Him the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. These names direct our attention to the character of the One from whom help comes. Before Paul describes his own severe trouble, he identifies the God who comforts and delivers.

The passage does not speak of comfort as a reward earned by hiding distress. Paul writes of affliction plainly. He later tells the Corinthians that the pressure he and his companions faced in Asia was beyond their own strength. His account honours God's deliverance while acknowledging the seriousness of what had happened. The Father's care is not made smaller by an honest account of need.

A word that serves the argument

The Greek noun paraklēsis, translated "comfort" in verse 3, can describe comfort or encouragement. In this passage Paul uses the word and related forms repeatedly. The movement of his thought is important: God comforts us in tribulation so that we may be