

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE MIND: FACING THE MONSTERS THAT COME CALLING DAY AND NIGHT

Chapter 8

When the floodwaters rise: Living with pain that won't go away

(Revised 8/26/05)

On August 12, 2000, the Russian submarine, Kursk, sank in the gray waters of the Barents Sea during routine naval exercises. Investigators were unable to identify what caused a blast to tear through Russia's most modern nuclear submarine, leaving friends, relatives, and officials to speculate. Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed the pain of the nation by stating, "The grief is immeasurable, no words can console. My heart is aching but yours much more so."

How do you respond when tragedy strikes?

Some of the relatives of the 118 sailors who died aboard the submarine grieved and mourned. Others were angry with the government's handling of the rescue operation. Many relatives refused to mourn until the bodies were recovered. Prosecutors launched a criminal inquiry looking for someone to blame. Three senior officials offered to resign, though their resignations were not accepted.

One year after the Kursk disaster, commemorative ceremonies took place near Murmansk, Russia, to pay tribute to the men who lost their lives when the nuclear sub sank in Arctic waters. Weeping family members of the 118 sailors who died on the sunken Kursk submarine marked the first anniversary of the disaster at the pier where the

vessel had been docked, laying carnations at the water's edge and flinging roses into the sea.

The family members still did not have any closure for their grief. The government still did not have any answers as to what caused the disaster. The bodies had yet to be recovered from the sunken vessel. As a result, family members could only continue grieving.

How do you react when the pain lingers? Those who have lost a loved one through a sudden accident or a lingering illness can testify that there is a grief that cannot be spoken. There are others who suffer from chronic pain that refuses to go away.

Perhaps you are one who suffers from arthritis or lower back pain. Maybe you live with the threat of debilitating migraines. Possibly cataracts or glaucoma are your constant companions. Chances are that you have talked with doctors, neurologists, chiropractors, dentists, orthodontists, surgeons, and other medical professionals seeking a solution and relief from the throbbing, and yet to no avail.

Perhaps you have prayed over and over again that God would take away the pain and grant relief. Okay, so maybe the monsters have convinced you that it's ok to whine about it. Possibly there were times when you cried out and said, "God, why won't you take this away? I don't want to live with this for the rest of my life! How can I put up with this pain and discomfort?"

LIVING WITH PAIN THAT WON'T GO AWAY

When I feel overwhelmed during times of pain and discomfort, I try to gain some perspective and inspiration from those who have learned to live with far greater pain and limitations than I ever dreamed possible.

Sandwiched among the portraits of winners and losers during during the 1992 and 1994 Winter Olympic Games, the world was touched by the picture of nearsighted Brenda Kerrigan pressing her nose within three or four inches of the television monitor to make out the gauzy images of her daughter Nancy as she skated her way to the bronze medal in 1992 and the silver medal in 1994 in the women's figure skating competition.

A virus stole most of Brenda Kerrigan's vision in 1970, when her baby daughter was but a few months old, thus depriving her a chance to fully savor the grace, beauty, and elegance with which her daughter skated. Legally blind, she has no vision in her left eye and only a bit in her right. She cannot see any details, but she can discern motion. In commenting on her daughter's performance in the 1992 Olympics, Brenda stated,

Sometimes I get emotional when everyone is clapping because I'd like to see that, too. . . I say to myself, "This isn't fair, this isn't fair." Anyone who can't see would like to see. But I accept it for what it is.

I go along with what everybody else is doing. If they're clapping, I know something must be good. I can tell when she does a jump, spin, a fall. . . I can't tell all the in-between nuances. But I liked what I saw. It was perfect.¹

While she has her moments of struggling with her lack of sight, it would seem that Brenda Kerrigan has come to terms with her limitations. She has learned to live with them and has even discovered some special compensations. In addition to her weakness drawing the family closer together, it served to inspire her daughter Nancy in her figure skating.

In a similar fashion, the apostle Paul said that there were special compensations for his physical limitations. In 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, he wrote,

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardship, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

In 2 Corinthians, Paul had to defend his authority and credibility. Evidently after writing such a harsh and difficult letter in 1 Corinthians, a group of people rose up and began to question Paul's right to take them to task. “Who was he to give us a verbal whipping?” they seemingly asked. “What gives him the right to question our behavior? After all, who does he think he is? He's fickle, proud, unimpressive in speech and appearance, dishonest, and unqualified as an apostle of Jesus Christ. He's not such a big deal. We're not so bad.”

Paul's response to their criticism was to write the letter of 2 Corinthians in which he defended his conduct, character, credentials, and calling as an apostle of Jesus Christ. It is by far Paul's most personal letter.

As he wrote chapter 12, he continued his defense by talking about himself in the third person. He spoke of a man who was caught up into heaven and who saw and heard things that could not be expressed.

In going through this type of experience and having the knowledge that comes with it, the average person would be tempted to feel proud, conceited, and tend to look

down on everyone else. If it were me, I would feel privileged, special, and probably think that all other people were beneath me. Spiritually, I would be tempted to conclude that I was the greatest thing since sliced bread and that I was God's gift to mankind. "Watch out world!" I can hear myself saying. "I'm more spiritual than you are. I'm the answer to your every need!!"

Evidently Paul was tempted to lean in that same direction as well. In light of that, God allowed Paul to undergo some type of physical affliction to remind him of his weakness and need for constant dependence on God. The theories on Paul's thorn in the flesh abound greatly. They range from incessant temptation to dogged opponents to an illness such as ophthalmia or another eye disease, malaria, migraine headaches, epilepsy, or a speech disability. Regardless of what it was, he carried with him a daily, visible reminder that instead of being above everyone, he was just as weak and needed God's power just as much as did everyone else.

While we're not sure exactly what Paul's problem was, we do know that it was irritating. He considered it to be a thorn in his side, a constant source of pain and discomfort. In addition, we know that it was given for a beneficial purpose. It was there to prevent him from becoming conceited.

STRUGGLING WITH SOVEREIGNTY

Quite frankly, this is an aspect of God that we do not like because we don't understand it. We are plagued with questions such as, "How can problems be beneficial? How can God use pain to accomplish his glory?"

We have great difficulty with passages such as Exodus 4:11 which states, The LORD said to him (Moses), “Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”

Reading verses like this raises further questions in our minds. “Are you trying to say that God allows and even makes some people blind and deaf? You’ve got to be kidding!! Why in the world would He want to do that? It’s got to be some sort of punishment, right?”

The monsters don’t even have to suggest these questions. We think of them on our own.

Examining John 9:2-3 adds confusion to our mind as well. “His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.’”

“Wait a minute,” I hear you say. “I always thought someone who was blind, deaf, or crippled was either being punished by God or was simply a victim of blind chance. And you’re trying to tell me that God did it to demonstrate his power? Give me a break! How can a physical handicap or limitation bring God glory? If that’s the kind of God you believe in, I certainly don’t want any part of Him.”

In our kitchen we have a portable electric grill that we use to barbecue when the weather outside is bad. We’ve found however that when we plug it in and also use the microwave oven in the same corner of the kitchen, we usually blow a circuit breaker because the two of them pull more watts than the breaker can handle. We have to run

downstairs to the garage, flip the circuit breaker, and then come back upstairs and move the grill to the other side of the kitchen.

In the same manner, when you couple these two passages of Scripture with the first two chapters of the book of Job, it tends to short-circuit our understanding of God completely. The jolt from that current is much too strong for our mental circuit breakers. Not only does it trip the breakers, the whole system is on the verge of a meltdown.

How can God allow pain and suffering? How can He let difficult circumstances come into our lives? How can he use those same situations to bring glory to his name? How can our physical limitations serve a beneficial purpose? How does God compensate us for what He takes away? How. . . ? Why . . . ?

Questions such as these and others overload our feeble brains. They tax our mental circuits and threaten to shut down our system entirely.

EXPANDING OUR HORIZONS

One of the reasons we seem to struggle with understanding the sovereignty of God is because we tend to limit God's blessings to only what we consider to be good things. In contrast, Scripture seems to indicate that God created us with both strengths and weaknesses or limitations. He has created us with built in needs. Granted, as a result of the Fall in Genesis 3, we have greater needs and weaknesses than before. But even prior to the Fall, man had built in needs such as relationships and fellowship.² It is part of how God makes us unique.

We need to broaden our view of the horizon of God's blessings to realize that they include things which from our perspective appear to be both good and bad. God does more than merely bless us with prosperity and material things. In addition, he has

“blessed” us with weaknesses and limitations that both allow and even force us to depend on him. He blesses us with people and situations and circumstances that sand away our rough edges so that we might be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.³ It is in the midst of these dark nights of the soul that his faithfulness stands out like a light house.⁴

Job provides an excellent example of a person who recognized this truth about God’s blessings. According to Job 1:1-4, Job was the greatest man of his time in all the land. A perennial top ten member of the “Most wealthiest in the East,” his portfolio was suddenly and completely wiped out in the space of a few hours. Bands of marauders stole his oxen and camels while natural disasters decimated his sheep and his family.⁵ He went from being a dot.com billionaire to a dot.com bust in a matter of hours. Yet instead of blaming God for his misfortune, he fell down and worshipped.⁶

“How could he respond that way?” you’re probably asking. While Job did not understand the reasons for his demise, he hung on tightly to two facts that he knew to be true. The first truth was recognizing that no test would come into his life without first passing through the hands of God. Job stated this confidence by saying, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.”⁷

The second fact that gave him confidence in the midst of his dark trial was realizing that though painful, each test would result in his growth. “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.”⁸

Because of these truths, Job knew that God could be trusted.

I understand that God is sovereign and in control. I know that He has a plan and a purpose in all that He does. I believe that God can use pain, suffering, and loss to

accomplish his greater glory. I can see that on paper. I've read and studied it in theology books. I just don't understand how it works in real life. I have difficulty when it affects those I know and love.

TRUSTING THE MASTER WEAVER

In April 1983, my father was diagnosed with cancer in one of his kidneys. At the same time, another gentleman in our church was also diagnosed with cancer. Doctors performed surgery on both men. They removed one of my father's kidneys and drained a cyst in the other one. When the surgeons opened the other gentleman, they concluded his cancer was far too advanced and they sent him home to die, feeling they had done as much as they could do. Following his own surgery, my father underwent chemotherapy. His cancer returned and doctors performed surgery a second time in July. He died in December 1983, a short 8 months after contracting that dreaded disease. The other man from went on to live for several more years.

Because of these conflicting circumstances, I struggled with unanswered questions. "Why did God take one home and let the other live? If he healed the one, why couldn't he heal my father?" Not only do I not have the answers to those questions, I don't even have a clue as to why or what or how God works. I know that this side of eternity, I will never know the answer to those questions.

Sometimes the sovereignty of God is explained as looking at the backside of a giant tapestry. All we see are a jumble of knots and colored thread. Everything appears to be a confused mess of color and distortion. We won't see the beautiful artistry on the other side until we stand in God's presence and meet the artist of our life face to face.

If I commission an artist to weave a tapestry that will hang in my office, I must give him the right to choose the color, the stitching, the canvas, and then allow him to follow his own procedure and timetable in completing the masterpiece. In the same manner, I must give God the right to be God in my life. God is the Master Weaver; only he knows when the tapestry is complete.

You see, before I can be content with my limitations and difficulties, I must first accept the fact that God is sovereign. As God weaves the tapestry of my life, I must allow Him to choose the colors, the pattern, and the stitching that will create a beautiful masterpiece. I must allow Him the freedom to work according to his timetable for completion. I must let him be God.

There are aspects of God's character and conduct that I know I will never understand until I stand in his presence. It is only then that my questions will finally be answered. But in spite of those unanswered problems and nagging doubts, I still believe that He is sovereign and in control.

WHEN GRACE IS ENOUGH

Somehow, and it's beyond the scope of my limited understanding, God can use pain, suffering, bankruptcy, loss of job, physical handicaps, and a host of other difficult circumstances to bring glory and honor to his name. Dave Dravecky is a man who is living proof of that fact and he is another person that I draw inspiration from.

As a former pitcher for the San Francisco Giants, countless fans were thrilled as he overcame cancer to pitch again in the Fall 1989. His 1990 autobiography, *Comeback*, detailed his heroic struggle. But his cancer returned and on June 18, 1991, he lost his left

arm to the disease. His second book, *When You Can't Come Back*, detailed the agonizing, yet inspiring transition since the summer of 1991.

As would be expected, Dave struggled not just physically, but mentally with depression as well. He and his family endured multiple setbacks. During that same period of time, his wife lost her dad who was her only living parent. They were discouraged and depressed. And yet they did not give up. Through this difficult period of time, it was his faith in God that has pulled him through.

In looking back at what had taken place in his life, Dave summed it up by saying, "I've come to understand that God is really shaping and molding my character. I've come to realize that real growth of character takes place in the valleys of life."⁹ Dave Dravecky has come to understand that God's grace is sufficient. It is in those valleys where God's grace is not only most needed, but also most evident.

That is the same lesson that God taught the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9. "My grace is sufficient for you." The word used to describe God's grace, sufficient, is the same word used in Philippians 4:10 when Paul says he has learned to be "content."¹⁰ In this passage, it indicates that because God's grace is enough, we can be content with our weaknesses or limitations. We can be content with our circumstances because of God's power.

By now I'm sure you're thinking, "How can we be content with less than desirable circumstances? How can we be satisfied with physical limitations? In the midst of pain, suffering, and loss, how can we say, 'It is enough?' How does God compensate us for what He seemingly takes away?"

The answer to these questions and others just like them lies in understanding God's grace. It is only through his grace that we can learn to be content even in the midst of pain and suffering and disappointment. God says that we don't need a different set of circumstances to be satisfied because his grace is enough. His grace makes up for whatever we lack. It is sufficient to meet our needs.

This doesn't mean that we cannot try to change a less than desirable set of circumstances. It doesn't mean that we should merely learn to live with cancer rather than seek treatment for the disease. It doesn't mean that we should tell our children to be satisfied with crooked teeth instead of getting braces.

It is quite all right to attempt to change or improve our lives. In fact, we cross the line into dangerous territory when we become complacent. It is perfectly normal to try to remove our hindrances and limitations.

Contentment does not mean that we merely sit back and suffer in silence when life seemingly turns against us. This is certainly not the model that the apostle Paul left us. On three different occasions, Paul asked God to remove his thorn in the flesh. He cried out and pleaded with God to take it away.

Paul was a normal human being just like us. He didn't enjoy pain any more than we do. He disliked it and begged God to remove it. As I said and let me repeat it again, There is nothing wrong with asking God to remove or change or improve our weaknesses, limitations, and circumstances. It is quite natural. In fact, it would be odd if we did not make that request.

But in delivering that petition, we must be willing to be content with God's answer, even if it is "NO!" After all, it is the king who has the authority and the power to

either grant or reject his subject's petition, not the other way around. How much more it is in the heavenly kingdom.

Following a severe car accident in which her ankle was crushed, Kathy Trout explained her adjustment to living with pain.

I tried to tell myself that my injury was just a broken ankle, and after a season of healing, I could return to a normal life. But as the weeks passed and turned into months, my ankle failed to respond beyond a certain point. . .

Gradually, I came to grips with the idea that I would never again run down a sandy beach or attack a powdery ski slope. . . . Sometimes I think, This has gone on long enough; let me get on with my life. That's because I want everything to be taken care of right now. I want to do what I used to do; Mike (her husband) wants me to go places we used to go. We both get frustrated that those things don't happen anymore.¹¹

LETTING GOD GROW OUR CHARACTER

Sometimes God does reverse a person's misfortunes and/or heal their illnesses. At the close of the book of Job, God blessed Job and restored his possessions and family to double what he had to begin with.¹² After the exile, God restored the nation of Israel to the promised land. Jesus healed a blind man,¹³ and a man who was deaf and mute.¹⁴ Mark 5 is devoted to the healing of a demon possessed man,¹⁵ a sick woman,¹⁶ and the raising of Jairus' daughter.¹⁷ Peter and John healed a crippled beggar¹⁸ while Paul raised Eutychus from the dead.¹⁹

It would be tremendous if God always did this. But sometimes God does not change our circumstances. Instead, He gives us the grace to live through the situation.

Sometimes God removes us from a trial. At other times, he walks with us through the trial.

Though Paul begged and pleaded with God to remove his thorn, God denied his request. Rather than renew his health, God refreshed his spirit. Instead of giving him freedom from limitations, he gave him more grace. Rather than make him stronger, God demonstrated his power against the backdrop of Paul's weakness.

The grace of God transformed Paul from begging for removal to boasting of renewal, from pleading to powerful, from weak to strong. He was initiated into the divine secret that it is only when he is weak that he is strong. He was so conscious of the all sufficient grace of Christ that he took pleasure in any affliction he was called upon to endure for Christ's sake. He learned to lean on the grace of God. Rather than change his circumstances, God gave him the grace not only to endure, but also to triumph.

I had the opportunity to observe this quality in a couple in our church who learned this lesson firsthand. John and Sarah were leaders in the church, singing in the choir and teaching a Sunday School class. They had two wonderful children and were excited when they discovered Sarah was expecting their third child. The day he was born, their world was shattered as the doctor told them little Philip had spina bifida and would probably never walk.

They cried out to God and wept bitterly. Their hearts were broken and they begged God to heal their son. They pleaded for a miracle. But none came, at least outwardly. Rather than heal Philip, God poured his grace into John and Sarah. It was several months later that they gave their testimony in church and spoke of how God had changed their hearts and attitudes.

After initial reluctance and fear, John and Sarah said that God could not have chosen a better family in which to place Philip. While they and little Philip faced an uncertain future, they were confident that God would be with them and that his grace would sustain them.

In commenting on how God's grace enables us not only to endure but also to triumph over difficult situations, Joni Eareckson Tada wrote,

The world has a philosophy that says, "What can't be cured must be endured." Christians have a philosophy that says, "What can't be cured can be enjoyed." Paul backs up this point of view when he affirms, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

But how many Christians live life, believing that what can't be cured can be enjoyed? Too few, I'm sorry to say. I'm not being cynical. The very people about whom I'm speaking would be the first to admit they will never be happy. Some are locked into a difficult marriage. Many are the parents of severely handicapped children. Others are sidelined by chronic illness. A few resent an unplanned pregnancy. A promotion passed over. A loan application denied. Singleness. Single parenting. These people are convinced that happiness is beyond their grasp, that life is a never-ending drudgery of the same sad circumstances. Many Christians are not only unhappy, but are going to be unhappy in significant ways for the rest of their lives.

It doesn't have to be this way. Elisabeth Elliot has suggested, "The answer is not to get rid of unhappiness, but instead find a new definition for it.

Define happiness in things like duty, honor and sacrifice, faithfulness, commitment and service.” Honor gives value to a bad marriage. Sacrifice is the true expression of love to ungrateful children. Faithfulness in guarding the reputation of a coworker is worth far more than a promotion. Commitment and service to others brings joy unspeakable to the disabled person who removes his focus from himself.²⁰

GOD’S COMPENSATION

In Joel 2:25, God made a startling statement. In picturing how he would one day restore the fortunes of the nation of Israel following the exile, he said, “I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten.”

While we don’t know what form that repayment took, we do know that God said he would make it up to them for the devastation they experienced. Along that same line, in many states today, there is either a state disability insurance or workmen’s compensation insurance for those who are injured while performing duties related to their work. In the event of a job-related injury, the insurance company will compensate them for their loss. In a similar fashion, I believe God compensates us for what He seemingly takes away.

When we think of the word “compensation,” we naturally think of finances. Thus, in our frame of reference, it seems strange that God would compensate us for damages suffered. It makes it sound like we took God to court, he lost the case, and thus must make restitution. I think that is the wrong imagery.

I think a more accurate picture of how God compensates us is when I replaced my daughter’s crib with a twin bed or the day when I took away my son’s tricycle and gave

him a two-wheeler. Hold onto your circuit breakers, but I believe that when God seemingly takes something away (eyesight, loss of a limb, loss of a child, financial reversal, etc.), he not only does it for a beneficial purpose, but he replaces it with something even better.

In the case of the apostle Paul, God removed his health and left behind a thorn in the flesh. The benefit was to prevent him from becoming proud. In addition, I believe Paul had a deeper relationship with God than he otherwise would have had because he was forced to depend and lean on God's grace.

With Dave Dravecky, God replaced his arm with a broader ministry than he normally would have experienced. Dave admits himself that he has a greater impact now than before. "More people relate to adversity and suffering than to sports figures."²¹ He has had the opportunity to speak at conventions, prayer meetings, hospitals, American Cancer Society meetings, and wherever else he is invited to go.

Through her experience, Kathy Trout gained a deeper appreciation for her family and friends and saw how her accident drew her family closer together. In addition she experienced a closer walk with God and a deeper understanding of his word. One of the verses she treasures is Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" In commenting on the verse, she said, "Of course, I've heard that verse before, but it really struck me this time. I may never understand why I can't do many of the things I used to do, but the verse tells me that God is here. He loves me, and although he didn't choose to fix my ankle, He will still walk with me every step of the way."²²

God's compensation for our loss may be to enable us to identify with those who hurt and suffer. Experiencing the loss of a child may open up doors of ministry with other grieving parents. Being content in the midst of physical pain or limitations may give us greater credibility and validate the message we share with others. Being forced to depend on God for daily needs after being laid off from work may leave us with a deeper and more fruitful prayer life. By experiencing weakness, we are given the unique privilege of leaning on God's grace. Going through pain and hardship can give us a tender heart for those who are hurting as well as open up the doors for future ministry.²³

In order to deal with the pain that comes into our lives as well as the personal weaknesses and limitations that we are born with, we must first wrestle and come to grips with the sovereignty of God. In addition, we must also learn the secret of contentment. Finally, the acceptance of pain, weaknesses, affliction, and limitations requires that we recognize and accept God's compensation plan. If we are willing to go through that process, we can say with the apostle Paul, "Your grace is sufficient. It is enough."

WHEN PAIN SEEMS TO OVERWHELM,

1. Recognize that God is the Master Weaver.
2. Anchor deeply in God's grace.
3. Trust God's compensation plan.

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU TURN ON THE NIGHT LIGHT

1. Have you ever experienced a time when you asked God to take away a problem and he said, "No"? Explain your answer.

2. How did you learn to live with the situation?
3. In your own words, explain what the is meant by the phrase, “my grace is sufficient.”
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¹ Hubbard, S. (1992). "Kerrigan draws inspiration from mother's strength." *Seattle Times*, Friday, February 21, 1992.

² Genesis 1:24.

³ Romans 8:29.

⁴ Read the book of Lamentations to discover how Jeremiah experienced God's faithfulness in the midst of the destruction of Jerusalem. Lamentations 3:22-23, a testimony of that fact, lies right in the heart of the book.

⁵ Job 1:13-19.

⁶ Job 1:20-22.

⁷ Job 1:21-22.

⁸ Job 23:10.

⁹ Johnson, C. (1992). "Loss of arm breaks heart but not spirit." In *USA Today*, Friday, February 28, 1992, p. 2C.

¹⁰ For more on contentment, see chapter 9.

¹¹ Trout, N. (1992). "Learning to live with pain." *Focus on the Family*, May 1992, p. 7.

¹² Compare Job 1:1-3 with 42:12-13.

¹³ John 9:1-12.

¹⁴ Mark 7:31-37.

¹⁵ Mark 5:1-20.

¹⁶ Mark 5:25-34.

¹⁷ Mark 5:21-24, 35-43.

¹⁸ Acts 3:1-10.

¹⁹ Acts 20:7-12.

²⁰ Tada, J. E. (1987). "When you can't escape." *Discipleship Journal* (42), p. 24.

²¹ *USA Today*, p. 2C

²² Trout, p. 7

²³ Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 where Paul explains that when God comforts us in our troubles, he also opens the door for us to comfort other people in any of their troubles.