

Better than a bear hug



By Welby O'Brien Bayer

What do you do when you need comfort? Eat cookies, snuggle in a cozy comforter, or perhaps hug a cuddly bear? Industry is making big bucks on selling us comfort. If you want to pay a couple hundred dollars you can “build a bear,” or even thousands if you want to add accessories for your furry friend.

These vendors have a finger on our tender pulse. From the tiny infant to the aged, life itself drives us to crave comfort. We want to have that good feeling that everything is going to be okay. Even if the feeling is fleeting and not based on reality. Funny how stuffed bears can warm our hearts. But logic tells us they really aren't worth the stuffing in their furry little ears (what?).

Where does God fit into all of this? As humans we are limited to a hug or words of sympathy in our attempt to comfort the cancer patient or the mother who has just lost her son to a tragic death. What does He offer to a hurting world? Nothing short of a wonder was the offering up of His Son to die for us on the cross. His unspeakable gift. May we never ever take it for granted just because we are so used to hearing about it. His sacrifice is our hope. Our comfort is based on reality. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Certain. Unalterable. A done deal. However we must consciously accept His gift and choose to follow His lead in our life. What a fascinating journey!!

More good news. He has given us a living Book that has been a lifelong source of comfort throughout all time. **Romans 15:4** reminds us that it is through the scriptures that we have comfort and hope. The comfort comes from looking back at all God has done, and from peeking forward into the future to all He will do. What a gift! He did not have to tell us all that. He could have just let us stumble around groping in the dark for something to bring us temporary comfort.

So as you enter the New Year, go build a bear if you want or gobble down some cookies. But as you do, remember that true comfort comes from the truth. Our God is the God of Comfort. Let Him be to you all that you need. Today and forever.