



A HARVEST OF PEACE

7 Ways to Boost
Your Mental
Health

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Introduction

God needs you to invite Him into your situation so He can help.

Do you or someone you know struggle with a mental health issue?

Despite our reluctance to talk about mental health, **there is no reason to be ashamed.** Stats show that it is a current struggle for one in five people. Just as a pancreas or heart can develop dis-ease, so can our brains. But as believers, we can walk in healing.

This healing can come instantly, or it can come as we apply the practical advice of medical and natural health experts and counsellors. Just as medications, manual therapies, diet and supplements can make a huge difference for other ailments, **they can be instrumental in the area of mental health.**

In addition to encouraging you to seek out these treatments, I want to provide a **Biblical response to mental health** that can be applied simultaneously. Think about Isaiah 41:10 to start.

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV)

God says that He is with you, but **He needs you to invite Him into your situation** so He can help.

Why not take a moment to do that right now? God is YOUR God, and He promises to strengthen you, help you, and hold you up as you do what you need to do to get to a place of healing, peace and stability.

If you know of someone who is struggling and it's appropriate, share this eBook with them. And if you're struggling, remember that you don't have to do this journey alone. **God loves you and He wants you to be healthy and whole: spirit, soul and body!** Now, let's walk through seven Biblical ways to boost your mental health.

The True Message of Grace

In Jesus, we have grace, forgiveness, love and acceptance.

This may seem bold, but I believe that **religion is a major amplifier of depression and other mood disorders.**

Years ago, I had an interesting conversation with a psychiatrist who told me that religion was one major reason why people are in mental institutions. He seemed to think that religious guilt and condemnation can be so intense that it drives people insane.

Over the years, I've discovered that there is some truth to what he was saying—but only when it comes to legalistic, condemning, never-measure-up type religion. We can find this type of religion inside and outside of Christianity, and it all brings the same kind of devastation.

The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).

John 10:10 (AMPC)

I'm not saying that a legalistic upbringing will result in mental illness. Other factors are at play. However, it does have a detrimental effect, which is so sad because **Jesus sacrificed Himself to free us from condemnation and shame**, not to heap it upon us for everything we've done wrong. In Him, we have grace, forgiveness, love and acceptance. These bring life and healing, which is why it is so important that we get the true message of grace out to the world.

If you're struggling in this area, **could feelings of condemnation be making things worse?** Romans 8:1 says that there is no condemnation for those of us who are in Christ, and John 10:10 says that Jesus came so we could have and enjoy life. **His Word brings healing**, and He wants you to know and experience His joy and peace!

You Don't Have to Earn It!

We are qualified through Christ's behaviour, not our own.

It's important to know that we will struggle to live life as an overcomer if we're stuck in old covenant, law-based, legalistic thinking.

In the Old Testament, if you obeyed the law, you received good things from God. If you disobeyed, you had to deal with consequences from Him—punishment or the withholding of blessings. In fact, every promise in the Old Testament had conditions attached. *If* you met the conditions, then you got the promise.

In the New Testament, we see a radically different agreement. This new covenant with God is through Christ. The essence of it is this: when we accept Christ, **He qualifies us** for every blessing and promise from God. We are qualified **through Christ's behaviour**, not our own.

But if it is by grace (His unmerited favor and graciousness), it is no longer conditioned on works or anything men have done. Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace [it would be meaningless].

Romans 11:6 (AMPC)

The trouble is, people still try to mix the old covenant and the new. They teach that if we do bad things, God is going to punish us. But this is not what we are taught in the New Testament. Under this new agreement, even when you do wrong, God is there for you. He's empowering you to do better, and His love for you never diminishes.

You don't have to earn your right standing with God. Jesus already did! **Every promise in the Bible is yours**—promises of protection, health, and the ability to allow His joy and peace to reign in your heart. These are the free gifts you were given in Christ that will help you to overcome!

How Deep Beliefs Affect Feelings

As we continually renew our minds in the Word of God, the truth drops into our hearts.

What we believe deep down in our hearts is so powerful. If your upbringing or experiences have caused you to form **incorrect beliefs**, these **play a huge role in how you feel**.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this eBook, many factors can come into play when it comes to mental health, including your physical health. It's important to seek out advice from a variety of natural, medical and psychological advisors when you're struggling. But the purpose of this eBook is simply to add a Biblical response to this healing journey.

Along with what's going on in your physical body, your moods are greatly influenced by the beliefs in your heart. **Only God's Word through your relationship with Jesus Christ can begin to change these deep beliefs.**

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

This verse talks about renewing your mind, which is crucial. As we continually renew our minds in the Word of God, the truth drops into our hearts at that deeper level of thinking. Over time, this has the power to **derail those anxious or depressed feelings** we can't seem to overcome—simply by changing our focus.

Changing your heart beliefs is not complicated or overwhelming. It's a matter of repeatedly meditating on, studying and claiming God's promises over time. This may not seem like a big deal, and you may not notice a change at first, but renewing your mind in God's Word is life-changing!

Fleeting Emotions vs. Deep-Down Feelings

Deep feelings can come from beliefs inside of each of us that we didn't intentionally form.

I'd like to differentiate between fleeting emotions and deep-down feelings.

Fleeting emotions come from focus. We can alter our emotions by changing what we look at, listen to, think about and focus on. Deep-down feelings, on the other hand, are often hard to pinpoint and can seem to come out of nowhere. **These deep feelings come from beliefs inside each of us that we didn't intentionally form**—beliefs stemming from failures, traumas, past experiences, the culture around us, repeated teaching and what people have said about us.

As a pastor, I've met with many people who have deep-down feelings of inadequacy. These were brilliant, talented people, yet these feelings governed what they attempted in life—from who they married to the level of success they achieved in their careers. Others seemed to have a deep-seated sense of doom. They were constantly looking over their shoulders, wondering when the next tragedy would strike.

These feelings are caused by misbeliefs, but **meditating and claiming** the truth can set us free over time. The truth is, you are not inadequate. **Your identity is in Christ, you are precious to Him and He desires to empower you to excel in all that you put your hand to!**

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV)

You have no reason to expect the worst. **You can expect all kinds of good things** because God has “plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for” (Jeremiah 29:11, MSG).

Law vs. Grace Affects Mental Health

God forgives you, loves you, and empowers you to move on and do better!

If you want great mental health, then it's crucial to understand how Jesus fulfilled the law and established this as the day of grace.

You see, religious, law-based teaching can cause us to feel condemned or doomed. This type of teaching doesn't prevent sin—it actually entrenches people deeper into it, destroying peace and causing all kinds of dis-ease.

The truth is, **God's favour, blessings and gifts have been given to us.** Think about the word favour for a minute. When you do someone a favour, you don't expect them to earn it or pay you for it. It's a gift, and that's the way God looks at the blessings and gifts He gives us.

For out of His fullness (abundance) we have all received [all had a share and we were all supplied with] one grace after another and spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing and even favor upon favor and gift [heaped] upon gift.

John 1:16 (AMPC)

We need to stop thinking that we have to achieve a certain level of performance before God will bless us, help us or love us. That's law-based thinking. God has provided us with everything we need through His grace, which is unearned. **Believe it and claim it all as yours!**

God also extends His forgiveness and acceptance our way, not because we've earned it, but because Jesus Christ stood in our place and atoned for all sin. While sin still brings earthly consequences, **God forgives you, loves you, and empowers you to move on and do better!**

Recognizing the provision and freedom we have in Christ is incredibly powerful when it comes to mental health. God's grace gives you the power to be free!

Combat Negative Thoughts

God has chosen to bless, heal, protect and provide for you in Christ.

Do you hide behind a mask in life? Maybe you think there's no way people would like you if they got to know the real you or found out what you've done.

When these thoughts come, we often also feel that God is unhappy with us, or we think that because we've made mistakes, we don't deserve God's help. The truth is, **we don't qualify ourselves for His love, acceptance or blessings!**

It's true that right-standing with God and His promises have conditions attached in the Old Testament: "If you do this, then you will get that." As believers, we need to take these verses through the cross. Because of what Jesus has accomplished, we can read them this way: "If Jesus did this, then you get that."

Did Jesus fall short? Is there any commandment or law He failed to fulfill? No! Jesus met every condition. He fulfilled the law (Hebrews 10:9) and established a new covenant. With that, the day of the grace of God began!

For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:17 (NKJV)

Any time the devil tries to trap you with thoughts about what you've done or what you lack, remind yourself that **the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed you and you are a new creation in Him.** Although you may not be perfect, God has chosen to bless, heal, protect and provide for you in Christ. You are always welcome in God's presence and empowered with His Spirit to overcome any fault or failure.

Say the Word, Reap the Benefits

Passion and repetition have an impact on the heart.

Let's talk about the power of your words. **Speaking God's Word is the most powerful way to change your heart.** Proverbs 4 also teaches us to keep the Word of God coming through our eyes and ears so that it stays at the centre of our hearts. When we do this, it brings life and healing—not just for our bodies, but also for our minds and our mental health.

James 3 compares your tongue to a bit in a horse's mouth, which can steer its entire body. It's also compared to the rudder on a ship, which has the power to turn a huge ocean liner. In the same way, **our tongues have the power to alter our course** from a place of depression and anxiety to joy and peace as we keep speaking God's promises out loud and claiming them for ourselves with passion.

Passion and repetition have an impact on the heart. We don't pray fervently to try to make God listen to us. We do so to impact our hearts, because out of our hearts flow the forces of life (Proverbs 4:23).

The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].

James 5:16 (AMPC)

Every day in your prayer time, when you're alone, or when negative thoughts begin to rise up, confess the Word of God. Do it boldly, reminding yourself that **Jesus earned you this right.**

You can boldly say something like this: "Thank you, Father, that You are my helper, so I don't need to fear. You have made available everything I need to live in peace, joy and abundance. Help me as I choose to allow peace to reign over my mind and thoughts. I am blessed! Your favour is on my life and I am right with You. Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!"

Just as it takes a while for a great ship to turn around, this process takes time. Be patient and keep speaking life. As your deepest beliefs change, you will begin to know a new level of joy and peace.

Conclusion

True rest comes from a deep understanding of God's promises and provision.

Our mental health is affected by many factors—hormone and neurotransmitter imbalances, life circumstances, poor digestion, deficiencies caused by diet, a lack of sleep and lifestyle choices, just to name a few.

Let us therefore... strive diligently to enter that rest [of God, to know and experience it for ourselves], that no one may fall or perish by the same kind of unbelief and disobedience [into which those in the wilderness fell].

Hebrews 4:11 (AMPC)

Labouring and resting seem like complete opposites, but what Hebrews 4:11 is talking about is labouring to renew our minds in God's Word and speak His promises over our lives. Then we can experience the **rest that comes from a deep understanding** of His promises and provision.

Mark 4 is all about getting God's Word into your heart where it can grow. If you keep planting the Word in your heart, then that truth begins to grow, and you begin to experience God's peace, joy and rest.

We don't labour to earn this rest. Jesus has already done that for us. We can't earn God's favour or our right-standing with Him. These are gifts. As we begin to see that truth, we form heart beliefs that support healthy living and joyful, peaceful thoughts.

Labour to get the right beliefs planted in your heart, and as you do, those beliefs will grow and result in a **harvest of joy, peace, hope and trust** in the good future God has for you!