



BROKEN

by Whitney Davis

“And something inside me just...broke...that’s the only way I could describe it.” - Ranata Suzuki

Many women can identify with this statement. Mental health is something we should all be aware of and committed to fighting for together. Several different disorders fall under the mental health category, but anxiety and depression are two of the more common issues women face. The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) states that women are 2-3 times more likely to develop depression than men and that 18% of the population is impacted by depression every year. Furthermore, the ADAA states that 23% of women struggle with anxiety, and only 37% seek treatment or help. Most psychologists believe these statistics have increased throughout the pandemic. Mental health issues are caused by genetics, brain chemistry, personality, and life events. These very

real illnesses deserve to be treated authentically. As a culture, we need to normalize their occurrence and provide safe places for women to share their struggles and seek help.

As believers, we have an advantage because we embrace and depend on the Holy Spirit to help us in these struggles. We also have a responsibility to seek help for ourselves and others from healthcare professionals whenever the issue becomes more than we can handle.

Charles Spurgeon said, “The mind can descend far lower than the body, for in it there are bottomless pits. The flesh can bear only a certain number of wounds and no more, but the soul can bleed in ten thousand ways and die over and over again each hour.” We

encourage you to create safe spaces and places for conversations about mental health with the women in your life.

What can we learn from scripture about taking care of our mental health?

1) YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

God's people have suffered physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally since the fall in Genesis. For many years, depression, anxiety, and mental health issues were stigmatized subjects that many did not talk about. Fortunately, in recent history, more churches and people recognize the importance of talking about these struggles. Depression and anxiety may force you to feel isolated and alone. Be assured; you are not alone in your suffering. The statistics mentioned earlier are a testament to this truth.

Furthermore, we can be comforted that the Lord knows our struggle very well. Hebrews 4:15 states, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." The Lord is acquainted with our difficulties and pain.

2) YOU ARE NOT WITHOUT HOPE.

From the beginning of time, God has been making a way out for His children. He can make a way out of the despair you may find yourself in as well. Psalm 42:5 says, "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation." Because of the death of Jesus, we can have life. That is the story of salvation. We are redeemed from the pains of this world. Our weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5). Often, we walk through seasons of darkness to be stripped of ourselves and become dependent on the Father. The Lord draws nearer as we

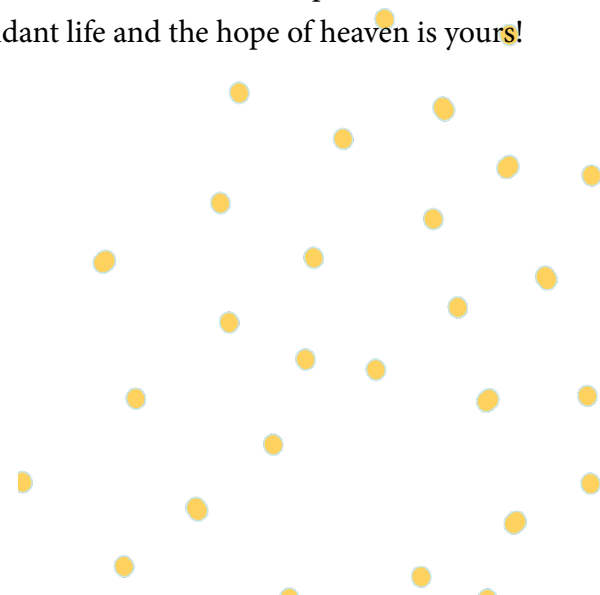
begin to trust Him in new ways and learn more about His character during this darkness. We will again praise Him because our salvation, redemption, and restoration are sure in Him.

3) THERE IS A REAL ENEMY. MUCH OF THE BATTLE WE FIGHT IN MENTAL HEALTH IS IN OUR MINDS.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

We must be on guard to make our minds obedient to Christ. We are not alone in this journey. The Lord is with us, and He has given us the gift of the Christian community to help us bear the burden of these mental health struggles. Reach out to a trusted mentor or friend during your times of crisis. Ask them to partner with you to encourage you and pray for you in your time of darkness. If you are in a place that feels too dark to dig out of alone, seek professional Christian counseling to help you. A counselor will walk alongside you on your journey. There is hope, freedom, and restoration on the other side of depression and anxiety. Abundant life and the hope of heaven is yours!



CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) If you are comfortable, share about a struggle you have had with depression, anxiety, or mental health.
- 2) Have you felt guilt or shame during times of depression or anxiety? Why do you think you've felt that?
- 3) What has helped you most during these times?
- 4) What have you learned about Jesus in these dark seasons?

CALL TO ACTION:

- 1) If you are struggling with your mental health, reach out to a trusted friend this week and ask them to pray and believe with you for deliverance and healing in this area.
- 2) Spend some time journaling about past or current struggles you have with your mind. Be sure to write out a few scriptures you can find encouragement and hope in during these times.

Commit this week to fight against depression and anxiety:

Memorize Psalm 42:5 this week. "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation."

Commit to spending time daily in prayer and reading your Bible this week.