

## Week 3: Why Do Christians Struggle with Mental Health?

**Message Overview:** Mental health is a real and important part of our lives, and God cares deeply about it. In Scripture, we see examples of people like Hannah, David, and even Jesus experiencing deep emotions, showing us that bringing our struggles to God is not a sign of weakness but of faith. As followers of Christ, we can find hope and healing through prayer, community, God's Word, and the promise that one day He will restore all things—including our minds and hearts.

**\*Speaker note:** *It shouldn't be the focal point of the message, but it would be great if this message could include personal experience and vulnerability on how God has worked in your life through mental health struggles*

**Key Scripture:** 1 Samuel 1, Isaiah 53

### Key points:

#### Introduction:

- Your mental health shapes how you see yourself, others, and the world. It affects friendships, school, family, and your relationship with God. The good news? God cares deeply about your mental and emotional well-being. He created you, loves you, and wants you to experience healing and hope. Our hope is for you to walk away from this message understanding that ***caring for our mental health should be important to us, as it is important to God.***
- Mental health is a big topic today, which has helped reduce stigma, but awareness isn't enough—we need to know how to respond. So, let's look at what the Bible says about faith and mental health

#### Overview of mental health

- Mental health is our emotional and psychological well-being. It can be strong or struggling, and
- Struggles can come from:
  - Biology – chemical imbalances, genetics, or physical conditions.
  - Life Circumstances – trauma, stress, loss, or toxic environments.
  - Choices & Habits – addictions, social media overload, isolation.
- Over 42% of Gen Z has been diagnosed with a mental health condition (anxiety and depression most common). That stat should move us—not just to awareness, but to action.

#### Hannah's Story (1 Samuel 1)

- Summarize Hannah's story: Hannah deeply wanted a child, but she couldn't have one. She was surrounded by reminders of what she lacked, and even those who loved her didn't fully understand her pain. Her struggle led to deep despair—she couldn't eat, and she wept constantly.
- Her situation:
  - Was outside of her control - She can't control the fact that she was unable to have children.
  - Caused her emotional and physical suffering
    - Her suffering went on for years. She was living in a time where her main social pressure was to have children! Her disparity impacted her physical health – she was unable to eat!
  - Was within God's control
    - God closed her womb. We see God's hand, even amidst her great suffering. Sometime God leaves us in the tension of waiting for his deliverance.

- What we learn from Hannah:
  - Her pain was real, but she didn't ignore it – She brought her emotions to God instead of burying them.
    - God is not afraid or ashamed of our emotions. It's ok to struggle – we need to acknowledge our struggles and find a healthy way to deal with them.
  - She prayed with honesty and desperation – Instead of shutting down, she poured out her heart to God.
  - She trusted God's timing and sovereignty – Even though her suffering lasted for years, she kept her faith.
  - God met her in her pain – He didn't shame her emotions; He restored her hope.
    - God embraces those who come to Him as a loving, gracious, and compassionate Father.

Other examples of people struggling with mental health in Scripture:

- Moses (Ex. 3&4, Num. 11:15) - displayed worry and insecurity throughout his leadership.
- Naomi (Ruth 1) - expresses grief, depression, bitterness, and isolation.
- King Saul - exhibited signs of great anxiety, paranoia, and obsessive-compulsive thoughts and behavior.
- David (Psalm 6,13,31) - expresses great depression affecting both emotional and physical wellbeing. A great example of bringing these emotions to the Lord.
- Elijah (1 Kings 19) and Jonah - desired for their life to end rather than continue in suffering.
- Jeremiah (Lamentations) - suffered great emotional distress as a prophet of the Lord. He mourned the injustice and disobedience of Israel.
- JESUS - Isaiah 53 (many verses can be highlighted in this passage)

Jesus's mental health

- Isaiah 53:3-5: this is what the prophet Isaiah foretold that Jesus would experience in His time on earth; sorrow, grief, suffering, and affliction. We know that He did. Jesus wept when His friend Lazarus died. He was often deeply moved by the struggles and burdens of those he encountered. He pleads with God in the garden (Matt. 26:38-39, Luke 22:41-45), where He displays physical signs of grief and despair. Jesus, who held the power to overcome sin and suffering, still took time to process His emotions before God and with others.

Why do Christians struggle with mental health?

- We live in a broken world – Sin has affected everything, including our emotions and minds.
- Spiritual battles are real – We see examples of godly people (Hannah, David, Jeremiah) struggling deeply.
- Our choices matter – Some struggles come from sinful habits or unhealthy patterns (Saul's paranoia, Jonah's bitterness).

How do we prioritize mental health as followers of Jesus?

- Stay grounded in God's truth – Let Scripture shape your thoughts (Philippians 4:6-7, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10).
- Be honest with God – Lament like David in the Psalms. It's okay to struggle, but don't struggle alone.
- Lean on community – God designed us to support each other (Galatians 6:2).
- Use the science and resources God provides – Counselors, mentors, and professionals are tools God can use for healing.
- Imagine a generation free from mental health? That's what God's eternal Kingdom will look like. We will all be restored not only physically and spiritually but mentally and emotionally. We have hope in this as followers of Jesus.

- Why don't we begin that now? We should put in the effort to be the change in our generation. We should prioritize our mental health and well-being as followers of Jesus.
- **Gospel Proclamation:** Jesus understands our struggles, including our mental and emotional pain. He experienced sorrow, grief, and deep distress, yet He endured it all to bring us ultimate healing. Through His death and resurrection, He offers us hope—not just for eternity, but for today. In Christ, we are not alone in our suffering; we have a Savior who meets us in our pain and offers peace, healing, and the promise of restoration.

**Key question/application:** What practical steps can you take this week to prioritize your mental health while trusting in God's care for you? How can you care for others in your life who are struggling with their mental health?

**Community Group questions:**

- What are some of the biggest mental health struggles you see among people your age? How do people typically cope with them?
- How do you typically respond to emotional struggles? What would it look like to bring them to God the way Hannah did?
- Jesus experienced deep emotions, including grief and distress. How does that shape the way we see our own struggles?
- What are some ways our group can encourage and support each other in caring for our mental, emotional, and spiritual health?