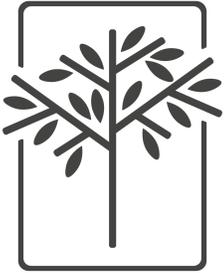


Going Deeper

The Collective Church Weekly Devotions

August 15, 2021 - Linda Stevens – How the Gospel aids us in Mental Health



As Christians, we are often reminded that the enemy's intentions are simply to steal, kill and destroy. How often do you remember, however, that this spiritual warfare is constant and that the enemy, for centuries, has had the exact same goals? 1 in 5 adults lives with mental illness that might make them feel isolated, anxious, depressed, or otherwise not the person God had intended them to be. Maybe that's you.

The Gospel gives us the answers we need, but first it's important to understand that Christians have come up short when it comes to mental illness. We have not been there for ourselves or our loved ones who have been living with mental illness, so we have not been doing all that

we can to contend for the Gospel. It's important first to be curious and seek understanding when talking to someone with mental illness. Do not judge! Secondly, seek to empathize, do not sympathize. Do not put a silver lining on what someone else is going through. If you don't know what to say, simply say you are glad they told you about this. Lastly, as a Christian, it is of the utmost importance to remind others of who their true identity is as a son or daughter of Christ.

Now, the aid of the Gospel can be divided into three important roles: The Emergency Care Kit, the Balm, and the Power of Christ.

Just like any emergency care kit, this is designed for the critical wounds that simply need the care required to make it out of the current situation. It's easy to use and has everything you need for any type of urgent care. "The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." -Philippians 4:5b-7

This verse is your emergency care kit and it is meant to bring God's perfect peace. Peace is what we need first in all mental illness battles.

The balm gives comfort and is soothing. It can't be applied first, but is applied when the wound is stabilized. "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me... Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long... Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way... Who, then, is the man that fears the Lord? Will he instruct him in the way chosen for him... Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have multiplied; free me from my anguish." -Psalm 25:1-2, 4-5, 8-9, 12, 16-17

Yes, even King David was challenged with anxiety and depression. He gave it all up to the Lord and recognized that only He could give the hope that David required.

Lastly, Christ's Power gives us the Joy to overcome and to take on the identity that God has intended for us from creation. "It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in

prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after Passover. So Peter was kept in Prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen." ...The Lord had brought (Peter) out of prison.'" -Acts 12:1-11, 17

The enemy's intentions cannot surpass God's power of deliverance!

Application Questions:

1. Am I experiencing internal panic or sadness that is lingering? What will I do this week to seek help?
2. If I stop and think, really think, about the people God has brought into my life, is there someone that may be struggling from any form of anxiety, excessive worry, fear, or deep unrelenting sadness?
3. What will I be courageous enough - this week - to do to reach out to them?
4. If I have been dealing with someone I know is struggling through this kind of season in their life, can I be more effective at being empathetic, non-judgemental, or provide resources to help them?

Bonus Tips and Resources for approaching mental illness:

1. Celebrate milestones (Yes, brushing your teeth counts as a milestone)
2. Three good things (Say them aloud)
3. Take your foot off the gas (Say no and show yourself grace)
4. Socialize (Say hi to one person)
5. Get outside (Walk to your mailbox)
6. Limit social media (More harm than good)

The Collective Church

Saddleback Church: [Hope4MentalHealth](#)

Lectio 365

Calm