



ARTICLE

A REFLECTION ON FAITH AND MENTAL HEALTH

PRAYER SPOTLIGHT

PRAY FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND THE CHURCH

FBCToday

UNLEASHING THE GOSPEL



A REFLECTION ON FAITH AND MENTAL HEALTH

In recent years, conversations about mental health have moved from the margins to the mainstream. Once whispered about in private, topics like depression, addictions, trauma, and neurodivergence are now openly discussed on social media, in schools, at work, and

increasingly, in churches. Public figures, athletes, and even pastors have begun to share their struggles, and the stigma surrounding mental illness, while not gone, is being challenged in powerful ways.


NEXT WEEK'S SERMON

12 October 2025

Praying our Doubts (Part 1)

Psalm 73

Preacher
Dr. Peter Ng





GIVING

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A hand is shown from the wrist up, palm facing forward, with fingers slightly spread. The hand is positioned in the upper center of the frame, reaching towards a bright, hazy sky. The background is a soft, out-of-focus sunset or sunrise over water, with a gradient of colors from light blue to yellow and orange. The overall mood is contemplative and hopeful.


This shift toward public discourse has happened for many reasons: a rise in global stress and isolation (especially during the COVID-19 pandemic), increased access to psychological education and support, and growing awareness that mental wellness is deeply connected to every area of life. Anecdotally, one of the more common questions I get as a psychologist is, why do mental health problems seem to be on the rise? The fundamental premise of this question is supported by various statistics, including a 2025 report by the WHO indicating there are over 1 billion people living with mental health disorders.

For Christians, this raises several important questions: How should our faith shape the way we think and talk about mental health? Is it a sign of spiritual weakness when a believer struggles mentally or emotionally? What does Scripture really say?

SCRIPTURE IS HONEST ABOUT STRUGGLE

Many Christians often feel they need to “have it all together” to prove their faith is strong. The Bible, however, is refreshingly honest about the human condition. It doesn’t present sanitized stories of perfect people with unshakable faith. Instead, it gives us real people who are deeply faithful, deeply flawed, and deeply human.

King David, known as a man after God’s own heart, wrote many psalms in deep distress. In addition to prayers of praise and supplication, his psalms are littered with laments of anguish, fear, and sorrow. In fact, his professed state of being frequently overlapped with clinical mental health symptomatology, including persistent sadness, fatigue, somatic pains, restless agitation, loss of appetite and weight, heart palpitations, guilt, hopelessness, concentration difficulties, death anxiety, and traumatic stress (see Psalms 6:2-3, 6-7; 38:3-10, 13-14, 17; 55:2-5, 88:15-18; 102:4-5).



Another prime example is Elijah. After a supernatural victory on Mount Carmel, he fled to the wilderness, collapsed under a tree, and cried out to God to take his life while confessing he was no better than his ancestors (1 Kings 19:4). Elijah was burned out, despairing, and perhaps to the point of passive suicidal ideation despite having recently witnessed God's miraculous power. Yet God didn't rebuke him, but provided him with rest, nourishment, and a renewed calling.

Throughout history, the people of God knew what it was to feel afraid, exhausted, discouraged, or overwhelmed. Their circumstances were different, but their inner battle was similar. Peter was an emotionally reactive blunter whose actions did not always match up to his words of bravado. Job endured profound loss and trauma, oscillating between resilience and despair. Moses struggled with public speaking and self-doubt despite his calling to leadership from a burning bush. Jacob was a schemer who strove through manipulation until his wrestling with God established his identity. Martha was distracted and anxious in her service, worrying over less consequential things.

MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES ARE NOT A SIGN OF WEAK FAITH

There's often a quiet discomfort in admitting that, even as believers, we can struggle deeply in our thoughts and emotions. Mental health is complex. Our psychological makeup is affected by many things: trauma, loss, brain chemistry, stress, isolation, genetics, and more. Just like our bodies, our minds can experience pain and brokenness. But the truth is that it is okay to be broken. In fact, we all are, in different ways. And that brokenness doesn't disqualify us from God's grace; it is precisely what makes us need it more.

It's a mistake to think that if we "just prayed more" or "trusted God more," all our mental health issues would go away. Prayer is powerful, but it is not a magic formula with a confirmed auto-heal function. Sometimes healing comes through prayer and Scripture; other times, it comes through the presence of a safe friend, a church community, or grounded professional care. Sadly, there are people in the church who suffer in silence. They fear being judged if they admit they're seeing a therapist, taking medication, or simply not feeling okay. They worry others will question their faith.

But the church should not be a place where people feel they have to wear a mask. It is meant to be a hospital for the hurting. Sometimes, without meaning to, church cultures can prioritize spiritual performance over honest vulnerability. This is why I am personally inspired by preachers who share their own stories of struggle and grace. They make room for honest conversations in church, and exude a depth of relationship with God. They help us to understand that faith isn't merely an intellectual endeavour, rather it is an active commitment involving an exercise of one's beliefs, particularly during hardship.

FINAL THOUGHTS: RECONCILING FAITH AND TALK THERAPY

Another often-asked question that I get is, why should I go to therapy? I don't know that I can really convince anyone of the benefits of seeing a therapist if they are already dead set against it. There is something powerful about placebo and nocebo effects, something akin to the unbelief of the people of Nazareth that limited Jesus' ability to perform miracles there (Mark 6:5). From my experience, patients who felt coerced into therapy (by their spouses, parents, or court judges) tended to have poorer treatment outcomes unless their skepticism is overcome.

Therapy isn't a substitute for prayer. Nor is it a betrayal of faith. In fact, it can be a space where God's truth meets us in our emotional realities, where we learn to name the pain, trace the roots, and begin to heal. And often, therapy gives language to what we've only been able to groan about in silence. Healing often takes time, and God is present in that waiting, not just at the end of it. A good therapist can help hold space for the slow work of becoming whole, offering perspective and support as we learn to meet ourselves with the same patience and kindness that God shows us.



By Daniel Fung

Daniel attends CIA Lifegroup



PRAYER FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND THE CHURCH

- **Pray** for those struggling with depression, anxiety, trauma, addiction, and other mental health challenges – that they would experience God’s comfort, healing, and the courage to seek help.
- **Pray** for the church to grow in compassion to take action and support those struggling with mental health challenges. Grant us wisdom to listen with our hearts, to offer comfort without false cheerfulness and to speak words of healing.
- **Pray** for our elders, pastors, and leaders to lead in dismantling the stigma through both their words and actions, leading by example in faith and openness. Help us initiate conversations about mental well-being.
- **Pray** for wisdom for caregivers, counselors, and mental health professionals, that they would bring compassion and skill in walking with those who are suffering.