



Soul Care Guide

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YOU ARE NOT BROKEN

Healing is not about fixing what is wrong, but tending to what has been wounded. It requires patience, self-compassion, and openness to God's work in your life. Healing often happens gradually. Sanctification is the process or act of being made holy and set apart for a specific, sacred purpose.

Goals:

- Normalize struggle in the Christian life
- Remove shame around mental, emotional, and physical health
- Establish safety and trust in community
- Provide resources to those in need

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”-Matthew 11:28-30 MSG

Practice:

- 2 minutes of silence
- Breath prayer: “Holy spirit, please speak truth to me.”

“Speak Lord, your servant is listening.”-1 Samuel 3:9

ABIDING

Soul care is formation,
healing and wholeness-over
time. Formation happens
through practices, not
willpower.
Healing follows presence.

Soul care is the intentional practice of paying attention to your inner life with God. It is the slow, faithful work of bringing your thoughts, emotions, wounds, habits, relationships, and body into the loving presence of Jesus.

Our brains are designed to change and adapt—a process known as neuroplasticity. The brain strengthens the pathways we use regularly and activates underused ones, supporting learning, memory, and even recovery from injury.

The brain changes based on what we repeatedly think and practice. When those practices are spiritual—like prayer, repentance, or forgiveness—the physical changes in the brain reflect spiritual growth.

The healing journey may include: medical doctors, medication, supplements, recovery groups, grief support, trauma informed therapy, therapeutic intensives, coaching, mentorship, pastoral counseling or therapy, small groups, Freedom Prayer, and more.

“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”– John 15:4-5

PRAYER

Prayer is essential, and God often shows up in quiet rhythms, relationships, and practical pathways that guide us toward healing and growth.

Practice:

Lectio Divina (Latin for "Divine Reading") is a practice of reading Scripture, meditating and praying intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word. (Ex. Read the verse in 3 different translations slowly, *reflect*, *respond*, and *rest* in God's presence).

1. Choose a verse from Scripture
2. Read it slowly three times, using a different Bible translation each time if possible. Resist the urge to rush.
3. Reflect. Pause and consider:
 - What word or phrase stands out to me?
 - What is God drawing my attention to?
 - What emotions, thoughts, or questions arise as I read?
4. Respond. Talk with God about what you notice. Respond honestly in prayer with thanksgiving, confession, or questions.
5. Rest. Sit quietly in God's presence for a few moments. Simply be with him and receive His love.
6. Journal. Write down what you observed, sensed, learned or want to remember from this time spent with Him.

"Let the Spirit change your way of thinking."-Ephesians 4:23

COMMUNITY

Jesus heals through shared life, not isolated effort. Healing rarely happens all at once, and it is often nurtured in the context of community—where we are seen, supported, and held accountable.

- Soul care is not a quick fix, self-improvement project, or replacement for professional care.
- God brings restoration through His word, other believers, mentors, small groups, counseling, and caring neighbors. He uses the presence of others to reflect His love, encourage growth, and provide practical help.
- In community, we experience God's grace tangibly, learn from one another, and discover that we were never meant to journey alone.

Reflection Questions:

- Who in your life can walk alongside you in your healing journey?
- Are there small groups, mentorships, or support networks you could join to nurture your soul?
- How might you show God's love to others in a way that also supports your own healing?

SELF ASSESSMENT

Discipleship is about the next small step, not the total transformation.

How is your soul?

Take the Soul Health Assessment here:

<https://www.soulcare.com/blog/a-soul-care-self-assessment>

- Notice patterns, not failures
- Compassion as a spiritual discipline
- Paying attention as prayer

Practice:

- Pray the Examen (a practice of prayerful reflection on the events of the day, using careful observation to recognize moments of God's presence)
1. *Begin by becoming aware of God's presence.* Offer thanks to God.
 2. *Ask for grace and clarity.* Invite Holy Spirit to help you notice how God has been at work in your life today.
 3. *Review your day with honesty and compassion.* Recall specific moments, interactions, and emotions as they unfolded.
 4. *Reflect on your responses.* Consider what you said, did, and thought. Were you moving toward God's love or drifting away?
 5. *Turn your attention toward tomorrow.* Ask God how you might more fully participate in His purposes in the day ahead. Be specific and conclude by praying Matthew 6:9-13.

GUIDELINES

You may want to seek professional counseling if you experience persistent anxiety, depression, emotional numbness, unresolved trauma, grief, addiction or compulsions, marriage or family strain, spiritual burnout or loss of joy, patterns that interfere with daily life, work, or relationships.

- There are several affordable counselors in the area, with options for both in-person and Zoom sessions.
- If finances are a concern, some providers may offer sliding-scale options to help make care more accessible—just ask.
- Check with your employer about an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for free counseling and support with legal, family, and financial concerns.
- College students: check with your guidance counselor or campus counseling center, as many schools offer up to eight free counseling sessions per semester.
- Some counselors offer temperament testing to promote self-understanding, identify underlying issues, improve relationships, and tailor therapy to individual needs.
- Please refer to page Twelve for recommended counselors and other providers.

CHRIST CENTERED

Celebrate Recovery (CR) is a Christ-centered, 12-step recovery program for anyone dealing with "hurts, habits, and hang-ups," from addictions (drugs, alcohol, food, sex, gambling) to emotional issues (anger, anxiety, codependency, fear, grief), offering a safe, faith-based community for healing through worship, teaching, and small groups based on biblical principles and the Sermon on the Mount.

- It's for everyone, because we are all recovering from something; we all have sin and its consequences
- It provides tools and fellowship to find freedom and a new way of living through personal responsibility and reliance on Jesus Christ
- It offers specific programs for teens and kids
- While Celebrate Recovery may not eliminate Mental Health struggles, their tools are aimed at helping equip leaders and sponsors to walk alongside participants as they learn to struggle well. Celebrate Recovery is not a replacement for professional counseling, therapy, and/or medical treatment.

"This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary."-Hebrews 6:19

REST, MOVEMENT, SABBATH, AND SLEEP

Jesus invites us to slow down and let His presence restore our soul, body, and mind.

- Rest was relational, not just physical. Jesus modeled abiding in the Father as essential to life, not optional.
- Movement was embodied discipleship. Caring for the body and using it to walk long distances, engage with people, and serve. Think of movement as worship; caring for your body.
- Jesus honored *Sabbath*, not as a legalistic duty, but as a gift of restoration and presence. It's about aligning life with God's rhythms.
- Sleep was an act of trust in God's care, not self reliance. Jesus slept in boats, outdoors, and during travel, even in the midst of storms. He trusted God with His safety and timing.

Reflection Questions:

- What does Sabbath mean to you? Can you create a Sabbath plan for yourself?
- Can you commit to 30 minutes of exercise 3-5 times a week?
- How could you create a calming bedtime routine that keeps screens off 1-2 hours before sleep?

Reading recommendations:

- *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer
- *The Sabbath Practice* by John Mark Comer
- *Finding the Sabbath in the Everyday Sacred Rest* by Cheryl Wunderlich
- *Slow Burn The Work and Wonder of the Wait* by Dawncheré Wilkerson

FOOD & HYDRATION

God created our bodies to be temples, and caring for them through proper nutrition and hydration is an act of worship. Food is medicine—whole, nutrient dense foods provide the building blocks our bodies need to heal, restore energy, and support the mind and soul.

- Protein is essential for repairing tissues and supporting overall recovery.
- For healing and repair, Stanford Lifestyle Medicine recommends about 0.55 grams per pound of body weight (multiply your *body weight* by 0.55 to estimate your *daily protein needs in grams*).
- Include high-quality protein sources such as lean meats, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds.
- Water is crucial for every bodily function, including nutrient transport, toxin removal, and brain function.
- Many functional and lifestyle medicine practitioners suggest *aiming for roughly half your body weight in ounces of filtered water daily as a general hydration guideline*.
- Choosing to limit excessive sugar, artificial sugar, and processed foods can support healing by reducing inflammation and stabilizing moods and emotional health.

STRESS REDUCTION

Our minds and bodies were not designed for constant stress.

Integrating spiritual practices and simple daily habits helps us manage stress, deepen presence with God, and restore our souls.

- *Breathing exercises* help regulate the nervous system, signaling to your body that you are safe and creating space for calm. God gave us our breath as a gift, and using it intentionally can draw us closer to him. It's helpful to practice this when you wake up, at night before bed, or whenever you feel stressed or anxious.
- Invite God (Yahweh) into your breath. For example, with every inhale whisper "Yah" and on the exhale whisper "Weh."
- Try incorporating techniques like *box breathing* (inhale for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4, exhale for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4) or the *4-7-8 method* (inhale for a count of 4, hold for a count of 7, exhale for a count of 8)
- *Meditation* on God's word helps calm the mind and align your heart with God. One simple practice is to slowly read a short passage of Scripture, repeating it silently and reflecting on its meaning.

"The Lord will fight for you while you [only need to] keep silent and remain calm."—
Exodus 14:14

LIMBIC SYSTEM

Limbic system retraining is a therapeutic process that uses neuroplasticity to reset a chronically overactive or “stuck” stress response system. Through specific, repetitive cognitive and behavioral exercises, it helps the brain shift from a constant “fight or flight” state into a calm, “rest and digest” mode, reducing symptoms of chronic illness, anxiety, and trauma related stress.

- This rewiring or retraining involves consistently applying positive thought patterns to overwrite negative thinking habits. We can choose to focus on replacing one specific negative thought or belief with a positive, empowering truth. Try it and track your progress then notice how these changes impact your emotional and physical well-being.
- We do this by applying the truth of God’s word to our circumstances. For example, when fear arises—but there is no real danger—choose to hold firmly to Scripture: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind.”—2 Timothy 1:7

Reflection Question:

- Which recurring negative thought or belief will you choose to replace with the truth of God’s Word?

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

GriefShare– First Mt. Juliet

- 615-754-2929
- <https://find.griefshare.org/ministries/181736>

Celebrate Recovery – Mount Juliet

- 615-598-3848
- Email: matthew.t.driscoll@gmail.com

Celebrate Recovery – Hermitage United Methodist

- 205 Belinda Dr. , Hermitage, TN
- Meets every Wednesday 6:30-8:30PM
- <https://humc.org/celebraterecovery/>

Hope and Healing at Hillenglade is a non-profit organization that offers completely free equine-assisted therapy and retreat programs for active-duty military members, veterans, first responders, and their families.

<https://www.hillenglade.org>

Christian Counselors:

Denise Holley, Counselor 615-445-0859

Peggy Vogtner, Counselor & Life Coach 615-604-5356

Jason Roy, LPC with Saving Grace Counseling 615-669-0046

Jacob Daniel Dye, Counselor, LPC 615-492-3734

Christian Marriage Counselors:

Kathleen Stommel, LPC with Igniting Purpose 615-972-1679 (Offers Intensives & Zoom)

Alex VanFleet, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist 626-765-1214

Jordanne Crews, LMFT with Saving Grace Counseling 615-933-9251

David Roper, LPC, Relationship Coach 210-215-7945 (Zoom Sessions)

Prayer:

Freedom Prayer at King and City Church

<https://subsplash.com/u/-VGDXB/forms/d/80b05fdb-a048-4407-bcba-4ef2a8a8b07e>

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

If you are struggling, overwhelmed, or in crisis, please know that you are not alone. Seeking help is a brave and faithful step toward healing. There are trained professionals and caring volunteers available 24/7 to listen, support, and guide you through difficult moments. You deserve safety, understanding, and hope, and help is always within reach.

Immediate Support:

- Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call 988
- Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO → 741741
- 211 is a free and confidential service helping people find the local resources they need for help in times of crisis and beyond. Dial 211 or text your ZIP code to 898-211 to get started.

Reach out without hesitation-God cares for you, and there are people ready to walk with you through this season.

Disclaimer: This guide is intended for educational and spiritual support purposes only. It is not a substitute for medical, mental health, or emergency care. If you are experiencing a crisis, severe anxiety, depression, or thoughts of self-harm, please call 911, contact a qualified professional or use emergency resources immediately.

CREATIVITY

Nurturing your soul through creativity means letting go of perfection, embracing simple daily practices, and making space for quiet self-expression. It is about enjoying the journey. Here are some ideas to help you get started:

1. Get out in nature and smile
2. Worship, sing, or play an instrument
3. Write a list of 1,000 gratitudes
4. Paint or color
5. Make art of any kind
6. Dance
7. Bake
8. Sit in stillness with the Lord and observe your surroundings
9. Walk barefoot in the grass, slowly
10. Get your hands in the dirt, plant & prune something
11. Create a beautiful meal
12. Enjoy a DIY spa night at home
13. Read a book
14. Go kayaking, swimming, or paddle boarding
15. Play mini golf
16. Sit outside and gaze at the stars
17. Pet an animal, bathe an animal, give an animal a spa day
18. Go for a run or on a hike without your phone
19. Plan a trip or go on a retreat
20. Visit a museum

HOPE

Caring for your soul is a journey, not a destination. Healing happens in small, faithful steps through prayer, rest, movement, nourishment, reflection, and connection with God and others. Even when life feels heavy, God's presence is constant, and His hope is unshakable. Remember that you are not alone in your struggles. Little changes over time make a BIG difference. Lean into God's promises, trust His timing and the people He puts along your path. Let His peace guide your heart, because He is faithful.

*“Why are you in despair, O my soul?
Why have you become restless and disquieted within me?
Hope in God and wait expectantly for Him, for I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my God.”
-Psalms 42:11*

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”- Romans 15:13