

DEFYING MENTAL ILLNESS a 10 day devotional



TO SUFFERING



TO DISCRIMINATION



TO STIGMA

FOR THOSE CHALLENGED WITH MENTAL ILLNESS,
THEIR CAREGIVERS AND THEIR LOVED ONES



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Defying Mental Illness 10-Day Devotional

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The use of the name 'satan' in this book has deliberately not been capitalized. We do not acknowledge him and are prepared to make grammatical errors where his name is concerned.

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JESUS CARES ABOUT THE MENTALLY ILL

It is estimated that there are over 450 million people worldwide living with mental illness (WHO 2001). That is staggering statistics and shows there are many challenged with mental health.

What does the Word of God say about mental illness? Is this something that God is concerned about?

Emphatically yes. God cares about our total being, mental health et al.

We see this in the story of the wild man who lived in the cave (see Mark 5:1-20). So wild was this man, he broke the chains others bound him in. His story always touches my heart because the man was in a terrible situation. I try to imagine what it was like. Howling day and night like a hyena, naked and bruised in a cold cave, hungry and senseless. No one dared come near him for he was uncontrollable. We read that the man ran towards Jesus.

However, Jesus did not do an Usain Bolt dash away from him? No, he healed the 'mad' man. The healing power of God reached out to a man who others saw as having no hope or future.

Whatever your situation today, remember Jesus cares about you. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. If you are going through a mental health challenge, Jesus cares about you. He loves you as much as He loves everyone else.

Thought for the day

Jesus cares for you irrespective of your circumstance or situation

NEVER GIVE UP. YOU ARE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

Imagine you are watching a video of your life. The screens flash by. You see all the familiar moments of your life. Then you see an episode of a time when you were pushed to a corner by all the challenges that were swinging at you from every angle and corner.

You couldn't handle it then. The pressure was too much. The familiarity of that time is ever so poignant now, so real. The situation brought such incredible pain. You just had to quit and give up.

Imagine now, that same video is played back to you again but this time it shows a new scene, the 'happy ever after' scene; the one that didn't happen. Now you can see how close you were to getting to your destination, you were just one leg forward away, but how were you to know?

A lot of times, we stop short of our dreams. Dream job, dream business, dream marriage, dream health...the list goes on. What if Jesus had given up on the way to Calvary? The excruciating pain was much to bear. There was the humiliation, the shame, the scorn from these hypocrites who had hailed and decorated Him with palm leaves just few days before. Also there was the ingratitude crowd of those He had healed now jesting at Him.

But Jesus never considered any of these. He was driven by His mission and purpose and kept His focus on that. Because He did, today we have a hope and a future. If He had given up just at the point when it got too much, satan would have won. We would have been slaves to satan forever. Shudder at the thought.

Never give up on you! Don't give up on your healing or anything. Every day, you are further away from where you used to be but closer to where you need to be. You have come too far to turn back.

Keep the course. Keep the focus. Keep the dream.

Thought for the day

It is said '97% of the people who quit too soon are employed by the 3% who never gave up

THERE IS NO STIGMA WITH JESUS

The story of one particular leper in the Bible is so touching (see Luke 5:12-13). A leper approaches Jesus. The NIV version says he was *covered* with leprosy. That immediately gives us a picture of how devastating it was. The man falls to the ground and begs Jesus to be healed. We can see where he is coming from.

Now, one thing that gets my attention was not just the reassuring words of Jesus that He was willing to heal the man. Jesus *reached* out and *touched* him. Now, that gets me excited.

Lepers in those days were the unclean in society, the despised and the loathed. Leprosy is a highly contagious disease that deforms. Lepers faced stigma, and discrimination had a new meaning where they were concerned! Kept in confined communities, if they dared venture out they would be stoned.

Jesus could have simply healed the leper without touching him as there are several instances of healing where Jesus did just this. But *reaching* and *touching* of the 'untouchable', gave the man not just physical healing but mental and emotional healing too.

If you are facing stigma and discrimination, or you are the so-called 'untouchable' of today's society, let the love of God embrace your heart now and take away all that pain. Jesus assures you that you are touchable, and you are the apple of His eye. You are made in God's image with His eternal heavenly guarantee. There could never be a better copy of you.

Thought for the day

"God does not prefer one of His kids above another. He relates with you as though you're the only one in the whole wide world" – Pastor Chris Oyakhilome PhD

JESUS CARES FOR THE CAREGIVER

Jesus was and is the number one Caregiver. He cares about the 7 billion people in the world today. He cared so much that He went to the Cross for them. What a heavy weight responsibility. The Bible is full of His assurance of His loving care towards us His children.

Jesus has a heart full of compassion. When He walked the earth, He saw a widow burying her only son. Immediately His heart went out to her (see Luke 7:11-17). That was the first person He ever brought back to life. He saw how Martha and Mary adored their brother Lazarus. When He stood by the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus wept (see John 11:34-36). Those are just two examples of the several that are replete in the Bible.

Caregivers give so much of themselves in love, compassion and care. Sometimes caring for a loved one can seem like a thankless 'job' with long hours and little gratitude even from the one they are looking after. Caregivers can find themselves looking after their loved ones to the detriment of not taking proper care of themselves. Their daily deeds are a selfless act. They require patience. I often say when patience runs out, they require long suffering!

But Jesus, the ultimate Caregiver, sees and cares about every caregiver. He is the One that talks to them when everyone else is wondering why they do what they do. He is the One who urges them to carry on when it seems too easy just to throw in the towel. He is the One that comforts and reassures them when they are choked with tears.

If you are a caregiver, make Jesus your friend. The Holy Spirit is the One who dwells in and with us today, the One whom Jesus has assigned the task so that we can feel Jesus' presence through the Spirit. Get to know this Holy Spirit, and you will find out that He is with you always even when it seems like your oil is running out.

Thought for the day

"God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them" – Hebrews 6:10 (NIV)

YOUR LIFE IS PRECIOUS – DON'T END IT...PLEASE!

“Teach us to number our days that we may gain...” - Psalm 90:12 (NLT)

You did not come into this world by accident even if everyone has been telling you so all your life. You did not suddenly appear on earth and there was an urgent heavenly meeting questioning how your existence came into being!

1. Long before the foundations of the world were laid, God knew precisely when you were coming into this world. He had it all planned. When He created the world, He had you in mind because He was preparing for your coming.
2. He numbered the hairs on your head. In other words, every strand of hair was coded because of His vast love for us. If a strand was to fall off your head, He knew about it and had a record of it. It shows God was interested in even the least important things about us.
3. He also knew what you were coming to do in the world. And He loaded you with gifts and abilities to accomplish them. His plans for you are fool proof and have a lifetime guarantee.
4. He also knew that you would face challenges and trials, but He knew they would not swallow you up because He ensured that there would be no temptation that you would not be able to bear. He put faith in your spirit. He knew you would depend on Him because His desires for you were out of this world, and would need your reliance on Him to accomplish them.
5. He gave us His Son because His desire was for you to be saved so you could not only spend eternity with Him but start enjoying the benefits right here on earth.

The thoughts that God thinks towards you are more numerous than the sand on the seashore. Can you imagine He thinks about you more than you can conceivably think of yourself? He wants you to live out your days not shorten them. He does not want surprises of any early arrivals in heaven.

Don't let circumstances persuade you to end your precious life. God has put something in you that only you can and ever will do in the universe even if you find that hard to believe right now. This is why everyone has a unique DNA and no one before or after you will have that same coding...ever.

You are God's dream. Don't end the dream. Live the dream, live your life.

Thought for the day

“When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, ‘I used everything you gave me’” – Erma Bombeck

FORGIVENESS, THE NECESSARY STEP

Someone once said *unforgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies*. That is because unforgiveness is a poison even though we feel justified.

Recently, I went to minister to someone who was going blind due to Glaucoma. She was already nearly blind in one eye, and the other eye was misty with limited view. As I spent some time with her, I felt moved to ask her if she had any bitterness in her heart.

The lady began to weep. She recounted a very sad story of an injustice that had been done to her. Her story was agonizing and I was myself pained listening to it. She was so hurt by the ordeal that she admitted every night she had nightmarish images of seeking revenge to the individual.

Jesus on the Cross said, "*Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do*" (Luke 23:34). These are words from a Man who has been abused physically, emotionally, mentally, morally and with injustice. These are words from a Man who saw His closest buddy betray Him; someone He had invested a lot of time with. These are words from a Man who saw another close buddy deny Him three times.

But you say that was Jesus. Yes, Jesus also taught His disciples (and us) to forgive an offence, even if the same offence, seventy times seven.

Forgiveness is a choice. God would not ask us to do something that He knew we could not do. Remember He has forgiven us too. Medically today, Science has proven that a lot of chronic and even incurable diseases are linked to forgiveness and bitterness. That definitely sobers me up and puts me on the right side of forgiveness!

Well, back to my story earlier. I asked the lady if she wanted to release the person who had caused her so much distress. Before I could pray for her, it was vital that she took that necessary step. She conceded declaring with tears some words I asked her to repeat after me.

I then prayed for her eyes. And to God's glory, she testified afterwards that the eye that was misty was clearer; she could see my hair and features and the cars steaming past outside. She also said that the eye that was blinded was now seeing white light. Her healing had begun. Praise God!

What decision will you make today? Don't drink the poison of unforgiveness. Take the first step today towards a clearer, brighter future.

Thoughts for the Day & Prayer

Forgiveness is not a will power step. You need the power of God to forgive some hideous things that may have happened to you. Forgiveness is a miracle in itself.

“Don’t struggle in your life to forgive; receive God’s forgiveness and pass it on to others” – Pastor Chris Oyakhilome PhD

Father, your Word declares that we must forgive in order that we might be forgiven too. Today Lord, I make the decision to let go of every anger, unforgiveness and bitterness I have towards <insert name here>. I let it go. I will not think unkind or revengeful thoughts towards <insert name here>. Holy Spirit, I welcome you to take complete abode in a heart that is now free. I choose to purposely walk in love everyday towards <insert name here> just like Jesus did. Thank you Father. In the Name of Jesus

Congratulations. Something wonderful has just taken place in you. Don’t resurrect unforgiveness even when wrong thoughts try to invade your mind to remind you of the pain. It is now a closed chapter.

THERE ARE NO WASTED YEARS EVEN IF IT SEEMS SO

Someone once said there is no deadline in making a fresh start. How true. Many are reluctant to make a fresh start because maybe they don't feel they deserve one or maybe they are fearful to do so. Some live in the regrets of yesterday. They believe they have wasted their years.

God's mercies are new every morning. Great is His faithfulness. It does not matter the mistakes you have made. They were all part of the plan conspiring towards God's expected end.

Joseph could have been wailing whilst sitting in the cold damp prison dungeons regretting the fact that he opened his naive mouth to share the dream God had planted in his heart to his brothers. It was not a wise move obviously to let his brothers in on God's secret plan for Joseph's great future. But his mistake fitted into God's divine plan.

Even as the years counted up and the possibility of the dream now seemed as farfetched as building a mansion on Mars, we never read for once that Joseph lamented of wasted years living as a slave when he was a prince. In fact he reassured his brothers later when they reconciled that even though they meant their act for bad, God planned it to his advantage.

There are no wasted years for a Christian. The Bible in the Old Testament says yes God will restore our wasted years. But there is a higher promise than that. When Jesus came, God now lets us know that ALL things are working together for our good.

It does not matter how ill or broken you may be right now. Remember Joseph went from prisoner to prime minister in one day. God is the creator of time and does not need an excessive amount of time to promote you. And by the words of life you speak to yourself, you can keep prolonging your years on this earth.

Thoughts for the day

1. *"You are never too old to set another goal or dream a new dream"* – C.S. Lewis
2. The cheetah is faster than the tortoise but the cheetah lives 15 years while the tortoise can live for as long as 150 years. Long after Mr Cheetah's great-great-grandchildren (8 greats!) are dead and buried or eaten, Mr Tortoise is still living and enjoying the abundant life. Resurrect your dreams TODAY. Your best days are ahead.

SILENCING FEAR

Fear is the chief weapon of satan. “Fear not” is mentioned so many times in the Bible. It is therefore clear to see that it is a necessary requirement from God.

Fear is the corruption of faith. Satan seeks to corrupt everything that God has given. God has given to everyone the measure of faith hence satan seeks to introduce fear always. The Bible lets us know that without faith it is impossible to please God (see Hebrews 11:6). Fear distracts you from God’s provisions for you. It is an instinctive emotion resulting from being led by sensory perception of an unwelcome outcome.

It does not matter the nature of the adversity. Our God is greater than everything and when we focus on Him and the Holy Spirit within us we effectively silence fear. When David faced the Philistine giant Goliath, his focus was on the Lord of the armies of Israel and not on the size of the challenging Goliath before him.

The Bible lets us know that the Holy Spirit within us is greater than he that is in the world. The Holy Spirit cannot take action through us without us giving Him permission to do so. Acting in faith permits Him to be our ability to overcome adverse circumstances and silence fear.

Scriptures for Meditations

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” - 2 Timothy 1:7

“Let your character or moral disposition be free from love of money [including greed, avarice, lust, and craving for earthly possessions] and be satisfied with your present [circumstances and with what you have]; for He [God] Himself has said, I will not in any way fail you nor give you up nor leave you without support. [I will] not [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless nor forsake nor let [you] down (relax My hold on you)! [Assuredly not!]

So we take comfort and are encouraged and confidently and boldly say, The Lord is my Helper; I will not be seized with alarm [I will not fear or dread or be terrified]. What can man do to me?”

Hebrews 13:5, 6 (Amplified)

Other scriptures for meditations can be found in *Meditations and Confessions for People Facing Fear, Anxiety and Worry - A 21-Day Program* by E Onah;

CULTIVATING JOY

Joy comes from your spirit. The Bible lets us know that it is a manifestation of the fruit of the recreated human spirit. Cultivating joy is the same as cultivating the fruit of your spirit. Cultivating essentially means tending to that which is receiving attention...

Joy is maintained by thanksgiving. When you give thanks you give no room for dissatisfaction and complaints from your spirit. Thus a nature of thanksgiving is essential for the cultivation of joy. Joy is expressed in thanksgiving.

David encouraged himself in the Lord when his family and those of his men were taken captive by the Amalekites and his men were so grieved they wanted to stone him. Encouraging yourself in the Lord by singing hymns and psalms of worship with thanksgiving, is an effective way of cultivating joy in adverse circumstances.

God inhabits the praises of His people. Joy comes from the spirit. To bring in the manifested presence of God, begin to sing praises to God. The more you sing praises to God, the greater the joy that is brought into your situation. Cultivate joy by increasing the praise you give to God regardless of circumstances.

Thoughts for the day

Patience is not the ability to wait, but to wait with a joyful, thankful and anticipatory spirit, knowing that your request is granted.

GO ON A THOUGHTS DIET

Someone once said that your life is a product of your thoughts.

Another said:

Watch your thoughts, they become your words
Watch your words, they become your actions
Watch your actions they become your habits
Watch your habits they become your character
Watch your character they become your nature
Watch your nature as it determines your destiny.

Thoughts are satan's entry point into our lives. Only when we speak, does satan know how to further distract us from our purpose in God.

Diets are selective by nature. Being on a thoughts diet means becoming selective of the thoughts we accept. It is very essential to be as disciplined in the choice of thoughts we accept. When we are on a strict diet, the purpose is to achieve weight loss. That is the same when we are on a thoughts diet.

The condition of your spirit determines the quality of your life. The thoughts that you accept affect the quality of your spirit. That is why the Bible instructs us to guard our hearts, i.e. our spirit, with all diligence because out of it flow the issues of life (see Proverbs 4:23). Speech comes from what is within one's spirit. It is difficult to speak that which you have yet to accept into your spirit. Think right!

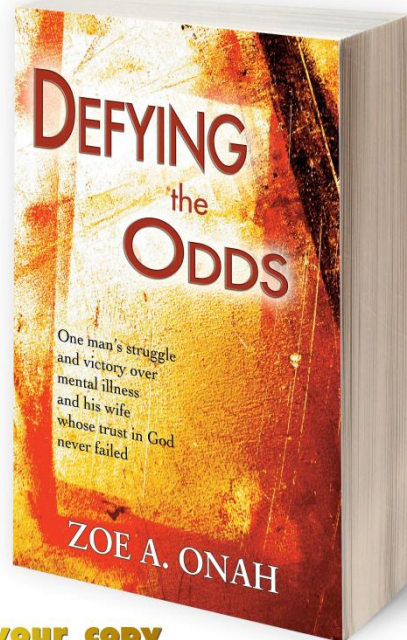
Thoughts for the day

My thoughts determine whether I am happy or not. My attitude determines my response to events and thus my thoughts about them. .

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You will discover

- How not to give up on God even when stubborn circumstances prevail
- How to deal with stigma
- How to stand firm when things get worse
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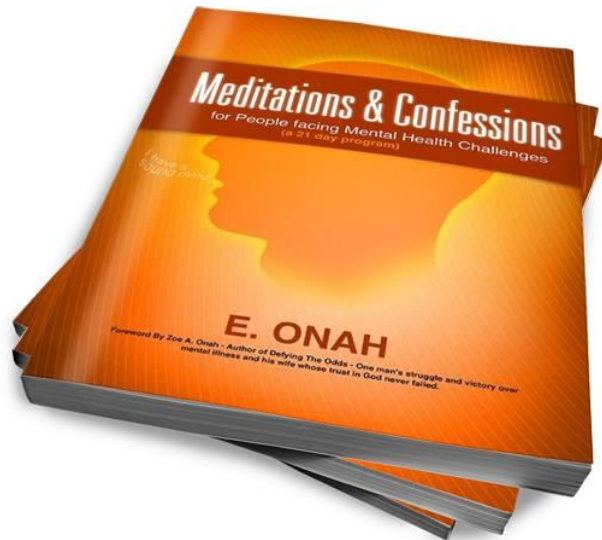
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Confessions & Meditations For People Facing Mental Health Challenges



It is said a man and his word cannot be separated. This means words are important. The words we speak, whether positive or negative have an impact on our lives, positively or negatively. We have what we say! “Confessions for People Facing Mental Health Challenges” is a gem. The world has been waiting for a book like this. This book has scriptures for meditation and confessions (declarations), that anyone with mental health challenges or even their loved ones, can use daily over a 21 day period to start a positive change to their situation. Each day has a theme, including:

- Dealing with fear
- Dealing with distressful thoughts
- Dealing with side effects of medication
- Dealing with confusing thoughts
- Dealing with discrimination and stigma
- Dealing with low self esteem
- Dealing with suicidal thoughts
- Dealing with physical health challenges
- Not giving up

And much more

This book will change your life. These were the same words the author of this book and his wife declared, and the scriptures they meditated on. After 18 long and painful years, the author was given a clean bill of health by a consultant psychiatrist. Years later, he has not been on any medication or had any symptoms since. They kept declaring and speaking to his mind, refusing to give in or give up, no matter what. That can be your story...just get this book and make it your companion!

