



### MON 9-19

- ▼ SCRIPTURE
- ▼ THOUGHT

**Exodus 15:2**

"The LORD is my strength and my power; he has become my salvation. This is my God, whom I will praise, the God of my ancestors, whom I will acclaim." [CEB] God is our strength--what a great thought to dwell on. Sometimes we struggle to see past the pressures we are facing. When we find ourselves in this place, we can remember God's faithfulness throughout the ages and be encouraged!

- ▼ PRAYER

**Faithful God, I lift my eyes to you. Bring hope to my soul in this moment. Thank you for the ways you care and provide for me. Amen.**

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### TUES 9-20

- ▼ SCRIPTURE
- ▼ THOUGHT

**Psalm 31:24**

"All you who wait for the LORD, be strong and let your heart take courage." [CEB] It is hard to stay strong when we deal with ongoing problems, but we serve a good God who promises to remain with us through all circumstances. Sometimes that companionship needs to be in the form of a trusted fellow believer. We do not have to go through difficulties alone!

- ▼ PRAYER

**Loving God, my life is in your hands. When things seem to press in from all sides, you are my rescue! Help me to stay courageous and to resist isolation when I begin feeling this way. Amen.**

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### WED 9-21

- ▼ SCRIPTURE
- ▼ THOUGHT

**John 16:33**

"I've told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I've conquered the world." [MSG] Jesus wants us to experience the deep peace that comes with trusting him. Though the world can bring trouble, the love of Christ transcends the world!

- ▼ PRAYER

**Precious Jesus, your love is my comfort and peace. Sometimes I feel crushed by the things I have to deal with, so I ask for your help and guidance as I navigate the difficulties. Amen.**

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**THURS 9-22**

▼ **SCRIPTURE** John 6:35

▼ **THOUGHT** "Jesus replied, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'" [CEB] Do you ever default to scrambling for earthly comfort even when you know that what you truly need comes from Jesus? Jesus uses a metaphor we think of often--food! He might have done that so that we are constantly reminded of our need for his love to permeate our lives.

▼ **PRAYER** **Jesus, remind me multiple times per day of my deep need for a close connection with you. Thank you for filling me up with food for my soul and refreshment for my spirit. Amen.**

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**FRI 9-23**

▼ **SCRIPTURE** 1 Peter 1:3

▼ **THOUGHT** "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation..." [NLT] Great expectation! God wants us to live lives abundant with joy and peace. We can have great expectations for what is to come--this is our hope when things are hard!

▼ **PRAYER** **God of love, thank you for giving me a hope for the future. I know you are good and you are love. Today, I rest in your love and recharge as I move forward with confident expectations. Amen.**

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**SAT 9-24**

▼ **SCRIPTURE** John 8:12

▼ **THOUGHT** "Jesus once again addressed them: 'I am the world's Light. No one who follows me stumbles around in the darkness. I provide plenty of light to live in.'" [MSG] At times it is hard to see even a glimpse of light, but Jesus made this promise, and we can believe though we cannot always see.

▼ **PRAYER** **Almighty God, shine the love of Jesus in my life. Help me to be able to recognize your light in the people you have placed in my life, in the beauty of the earth, and in the many ways you provide for and comfort me. Thank you that I don't have to stumble in the dark. Amen.**

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# DIGGING DEEPER

## ▼ Intro

Mental health is one of those topics we are often uncomfortable discussing. We might feel at a loss for words or embarrassed to admit our struggles. However, God has given us a community of believers to share the weight of our burdens. We are not meant to walk through anything alone. The Spirit of God is with all of God's children, and we also have been given each other as a source of care and support.

## ▼ Reflect

- In your family, would you say it is acceptable to talk about mental health struggles? Why or why not?
- What has your experience been within the church when it comes to issues related to mental illness?
- What unique pressures do you think we are facing as a society that contribute to the rise of anxiety, depression, and suicide?
- Mental health professionals teach that there is a difference between clinical anxiety and depression and situational depression or temporary stress. Regarding temporary feelings of stress or worry, what types of coping strategies do you find helpful? Describe how your faith helps during these times in your life.
- Psalm 55:16-18 says, "As for me, I call to God, and the LORD saves me. Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me." [NIV]
  - What stands out to you in this passage?
  - How did David portray God in this psalm?
  - Have you ever cried out to God in distress?

## ▼ Prayer

**God of love, I am so grateful that we can cry out to you for help. Help us also to be willing to share struggles with each other and encourage one another to seek professional help when needed. Thank you for the community of mental health professionals that we have as resources. Vulnerability can feel overwhelming, but we pray for your strength and courage to fill us. Amen.**

# DIGGING DEEPER

▼ What did I learn? \_\_\_\_\_

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▼ How might it apply in my life? \_\_\_\_\_

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▼ What is a next step I can take? \_\_\_\_\_

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