

EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH

community reflection (5 minutes)

During the month of March (2021) our community has entered into a conversation about emotional and mental health. More than this, we have discussed the ways these areas of health affect our discipleship to Jesus.

As a community we have sought to consider the reality that guides us all through this broken and cracked world. There is a way to know our self that leads to greater awareness of our inner life. Without this understanding we cannot hope to know life truly. We must come to a place that admits our emotions, fears, and diseases.

Scripture can help with this freedom, for there are many companions of the human experience in its pages. However, we must learn to take Scripture not as a prescription for healing, but an embrace of beginning.

There is a spiritual enemy at work in all of life that would seek to twist and distort reality – creating fear, disillusionment, apprehension, distrust, and disease. Much harm has been done in the over-spiritualization of mental health, but there is harm that will come if we neglect the spiritual powers at work in the world.

A PRAYER

“There is so much lost in this world, O Lord,
so much that aches and groans and shivers
for want of redemption, so much that
seems dislocated, upended, desecrated,
unhinged – even in our own hearts.

Even in our own hearts
we bear the mark of all that is broken.
What is best in this world has been bashed
and battered and trodden down.
What was meant to be the substance has
become the brittle shell, haunted by the
ghosts of a glory so long crumbled that only
its rubble is remembered now.

Is it any wonder we should weep sometimes,
without knowing why? It might be anything.
And then again, it might be everything.

So moved by the pain of this crushed creation, you, O Lord,
heaved with the grief of it, drinking the anguish like
water and sweating it out of your skin like blood.

Is it possible that you – in your sadness over Lazarus,
in your grieving for Jerusalem, in your sorrow in the garden –
is it possible that you have sanctified our weeping too?

O Spirit of God, is it then possible that
our tears might also be a kind of intercession?

If that is true,
then let such weeping be received, O Lord,
as an intercession newly forged of holy sorrow.
Then let our tears anoint these broken things,
and let our grief be as their consecration –
a preparation for their promised redemption,
our sorrow sealing them for that day when
you will take the ache of all creation,
and turn it inside-out,
like the shedding of
an old gardener’s glove.

O Lord, if it pleases you,
when your children weep and don’t know why,
yet use our tears
to baptize what you love.

Amen.”¹

¹ Douglas McKelvey, *Every Moment Holy: Volume One*
(Nashville, TN: Rabbit Room Press, 2019), 242-46.

personal reflection (15 minutes)

Take time to review any notes (or mental notes) you have taken during the following content:

NavNight (March 4th, can be found on YouTube)

re:discipleship ep3, conversation

re:discipleship ep4, question&response

personal reflection, cont.

After reviewing any notes you have collected, try to write out 1-3 statements to summarize your understanding. (*What has God taught you about emotional & mental health and its impact on your discipleship to Jesus?*)

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Practically, what is ONE step you could take to create clarity and foster reality in self-awareness, scripture-awareness, **or** spiritual-awareness.

Spend time in prayer asking God to honor your desire to draw close to him. Ask for help and wisdom in this journey. Spend a few minutes in a quiet space. Record any thoughts, affirmations, or scriptures that seem to come to your mind, but be content with the silence as a gift.

small group reflection (15-30 min depending on size)

Take some time to share journeys with mental & emotional health. You might consider using Caitlin's framework as a guide (swamp of despair; forest of tension; meadows of care; mountains of hope)

Share one question or struggle that still remains practically (e.g. *how to create rhythms and find support that leads to greater health*) or theologically (e.g. *Is my anxiety a sin? What if I'm never "healed" from my mental illness?*).

Take time to discuss, pray over one another (laying on or extending hands if comfortable), and encourage towards next steps (appointment with counselor/pastor, regular personal reflection, use of feelings wheel, etc.)