

ACCESS, 10/20 - Mental Health and Illness

Read:

Psalms 42:2-3, 5 // ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? ³ My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" ⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation.

Romans 8:16-17 // ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

1 Corinthians 10:13 // ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Big Questions:

- At the end of your small group, ultimately, we want every youth to be confronted with this question: is this something I or someone close to me is experiencing? And if so, how do I respond and move forward?
- How do we make the church and our community a more welcoming and open arena for those struggling with anxiety, depression, or other mental disorders?

Teaching Points:

- Our identity is found in Christ as co-heirs with Him, not in our specific weaknesses, disorders, or afflictions. Our ultimate hope is not in others, ourselves, our relationships, our work, or in the world, but in God alone, who will not fail us.
- Point to the community and family we have in CBC youth as a refuge and as an open, accepting place where "it's okay to not be okay" and as a place of healing.

Discussion Questions:

- What is mental illness or brokenness and how is it different from physical illness or brokenness? How do we treat them differently?
- Mental illness is often a private, secret affliction. Why do you think we hide or avoid talking about it? Is this a healthy practice? What would make it easier?
- Have you ever experienced depression? How did it feel? Were those feelings connected to reality or fiction? What lies did you tell yourself in the grip of depression? How did you endure it (Note: endure, not escape)?
- How should we reach out and help people around us who may be dealing with depression, anxiety, or other mental disorders?

Further Resources:

- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-root-of-mental-health>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-to-fight-for-faith-in-the-dark>
- <https://careynieuwhof.com/episode162/>