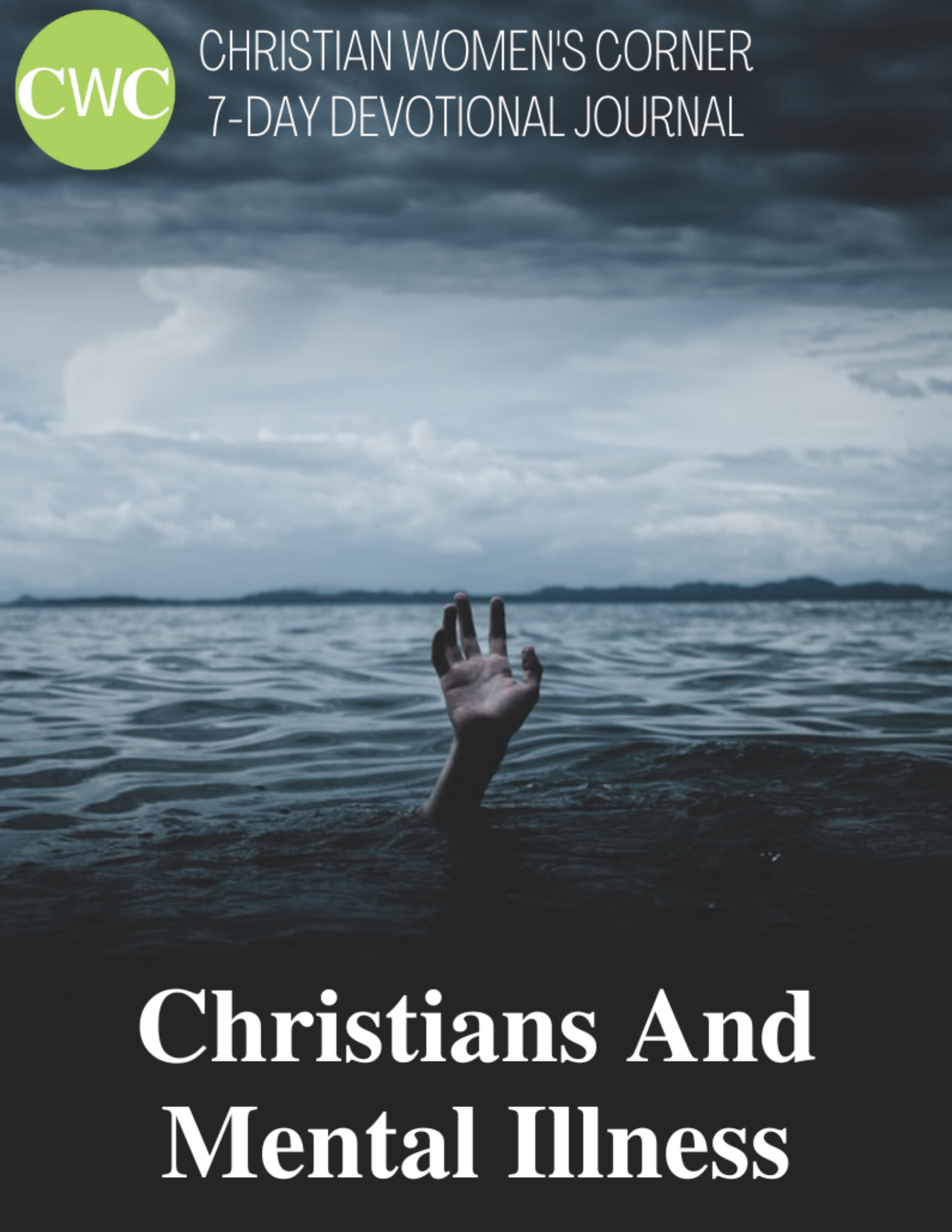




CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S CORNER
7-DAY DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL



Christians And Mental Illness

Welcome

IT'S TIME TO DIG A LITTLE DEEPER INTO LOVING THOSE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS.

This 7-day devotional journal was created to complement our [Christians And Mental Illness](#) blog post. Journaling is a great way to help you digest what you're learning through the written word. We hope you find this useful when loving and caring for those around you with mental illness. Enjoy your journaling time!

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Alicia Bowyer

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Carried to Jesus

Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."
– Matthew 9:2

Sharon's life looked perfect on the outside. She was married to a godly man who loved her deeply. She had three beautiful, healthy children. She worked part-time in a job that she found fulfilling.

But still, Sharon couldn't shake the depression that followed her around. She didn't understand why she was depressed. She'd had a great childhood with loving parents. She'd never suffered any significant illnesses or diseases.

Still, she struggled to get out of bed each morning. She felt guilty for being depressed. "You don't have a real reason to be sad," she reminded her reflection in the mirror.

One day, her husband gently suggested Sharon should see a counselor.

"I feel like I should be strong enough to overcome this on my own," Sharon said.

"You don't have to be," Her husband responded. "Just like the paralyzed man needed people to carry him to Jesus, sometimes, we need people to carry us. Let me help you. I'll go with you to see the counselor and support you every step of the way."

God, when I can't do it on my own, send sweet friends and a loving community to wrap their arms around me. Let me feel their support and care each step of this journey. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. What circumstances make you feel as if you're alone?

2. Who has carried you to Jesus during a dark time in your life?

3. How has God reminded you that He sees your pain?

With You Always

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” – Isaiah 41:10

Autumn was the oldest of five children. Her family had been homeless when she was young. To make sure her siblings got enough to eat, she often went without food. Sometimes, the only food she would eat was what her friend at school shared with her.

Eventually, her mother was able to secure a good job. They moved into a tiny apartment complex and began rebuilding their lives. The financial struggle was still present, but now, there was enough food.

The problem was that Autumn had associated food with being selfish. When she ate, she often felt so guilty that she'd go into the bathroom and purge. As soon as the food left her stomach, her anxiety would ease.

When Autumn was in college, her roommate suggested that Autumn see a counselor to deal with her eating disorder. The thought of going made Autumn feel like panicking, so her roommate volunteered to go with her.

It took years of therapy, but Autumn no longer purges. She still struggles with the desire, but now she has a support system in place that loves on her.

Eating disorders are a form of mental illness. They can stem from a difficult childhood (like Autumn's), past abuse, low self-esteem, and other issues.

Getting help for an eating disorder may feel challenging. But God is with you, and He can send a friend or loved one to walk with you through this season of healing.

God, I'm scared. I want help, but I don't know where to begin. Please heal my heart and my head from the lies I've heard. Help me to see myself through Your eyes of Love. Send a compassionate friend to walk with me so I can feel Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. What painful moments have affected who you are today?

2. Are you struggling with, or do you know someone who struggles with disordered eating?

3. What do you think God sees when He looks at you?

Healing the Broken

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” – Psalm 147:3

Justin always had “gaps” in the memories of his childhood. He didn’t think it was unusual until his son turned four years old. Suddenly, he began having flashbacks to being abused as a child.

He was terrified of these memories that would surface at random moments. One evening, he was waiting to board the subway when a flashback began playing in his mind. He stood rooted to the spot in terror.

After that, Justin was afraid to leave the house. He worried that if he did, the memories would start again. Fortunately, Justin’s wife recognized that her husband needed professional help. She called a local counselor who specialized in dealing with agoraphobia (fear of environments that are believed to be “unsafe”).

A panic attack can trigger agoraphobia. When someone has a panic attack, they fear it will happen again. For some people, that means they avoid the place where they had the first attack. For others, they fear that just leaving their home might trigger a second attack.

Often (but not always), panic disorders are the result of trauma. This might be trauma that occurred years ago (like in Justin’s case), or it might involve a recent trauma (like surviving a serious car accident).

God can use mental health counselors and other professionals to heal you or your loved one from trauma. But it can take a few months to see results, and some people may need daily medication to manage their panic disorder.

God, I need help. I feel like there’s a weight on my chest, and I can’t breathe. This pain feels all-encompassing. Please give me peace. Let me experience the comfort of Your presence. Send others to walk with me through this challenging season in my life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. Have you ever experienced trauma? How did it affect you?

2. Are you struggling with, or do you know someone who struggles with panic attacks?

3. What do you wish others understood about panic attacks?

The Desperate Father

A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech." – Mark 9:17

In Mark 9, there's a story about a desperate father who brings his child to the disciples. They try to heal the boy, but they're unable to do anything.

Then Jesus shows up on the scene and wants to know what's happening. When the man explains that he's come for healing, Jesus asks how long the child has been suffering.

The father shares that the spirit of suffering often injures the boy, pulling him into water or fire in an attempt to kill him. At the end of his story, he quietly adds, "If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." (Mark 9:22)

It's hard to fault the father for his words. Few things in life leave us feeling more helpless than watching a loved one suffer. At first, you probably spent hours trying to help. Maybe you Googled the symptoms, made doctor's appointments and picked up medications.

But as the days turned into weeks and the months turned into years, you were left with little more than desperation. If that's you today, then you're in good company.

Despite his doubts, the desperate father's child was still healed. Often, we think that God's healing is linked to our faith. If we dig deep enough, try hard enough, or pray enough, we'll get the results we crave.

But Jesus illustrates a powerful truth—that He can (and does) heal even when we are sometimes plagued with doubts.

God, help my unbelief! Sometimes, I'm tempted to give up. The doubts are so loud, but You are the God of the impossible. You have all power over Heaven and Earth, so I ask for Your healing touch in the life of (loved one's name). Set them free from their pain and suffering. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. Have you ever prayed for a loved one's illness only to feel as if God didn't hear you?

2. How have you supported a loved one with a mental illness?

3. What makes you doubt that God can or will heal your loved one?

Broken Vessels

“The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” – 1 Samuel 16:7

After coming back from two tours of duty overseas, Grant struggled with a traumatic brain injury. He found it difficult to remember short-term information. He never slept more than a few hours at a time. He sometimes panicked when confronted with a new situation.

Before the injury, Grant had been confident and happy. He had planned on returning to his hometown and becoming a pastor. Now though, he struggled just to make it through the day. He managed to connect with a few other veterans and formed a regular meeting. Each week they got together to share what they were dealing with.

When he was with his father, Grant said, “I know I was meant to be in ministry. I want to serve God—I feel so shattered now.”

His father shared, “Just because you’re broken doesn’t mean you can’t serve God. Some of the most beautiful ministries are birthed in brokenness.”

It’s easy to think something disqualifies you from serving God. Maybe you think you can’t because you have a painful past, a disability, or a mental illness. But what you may see as obstacles could be the area of ministry that God is calling you to.

God, I’m broken, and I’m fragile, but I’m Yours. Use this broken vessel to bring honor and glory to Your name. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. What circumstances have left you feeling shattered or broken?

2. Have you ever felt called to minister to others? What happened?

3. What things do you fear disqualify you from serving God?

The Last One

“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.” – Matthew 20:16

Years later, Ethan could still remember how he felt that moment as the clock inside the gym ticked. He waited with a growing sense of dread as all the other kids in his class were picked for teams.

When the moment came, the captain of his team looked at him scornfully, “Try not to mess up the game for the rest of us, lardo.”

The words cut deep into Ethan’s heart. From that moment on, Ethan defined himself with a host of negative comments: Unwanted. Last. Worthless.

He was already the victim of bullying by his older brother at home. His parents turned a blind eye because his brother was seen as “the good one.” He got good grades. He made the Dean’s list. He earned a baseball scholarship.

Ethan struggled to do well in school. He had trouble reading, and he slowly found himself slipping into a deep depression.

But William, the school’s new Engineering teacher, noticed the boy. While Ethan struggled with most of his school assignments, he had a solid grasp of building things. He easily created a birdhouse, picture frames, and even a bookshelf.

William always paused to compliment Ethan’s work and encourage him. He let Ethan stay after class to work on projects so he didn’t have to go home. He inspired him to seek a degree in engineering and even wrote a letter of recommendation on his behalf.

Years later, Ethan graduated from college at the top of his class. He smiles when he thinks of William. “If there’s one person who changed my life, it was him. He was the first person to believe in me. He taught me that I could do more with my life.”

God, give me eyes to see the people around me that need encouragement. Let me speak life and kindness over them. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. Have you let words from others define you? If so, what words?

2. In what ways do you feel you've been picked last?

3. Who has had a positive influence in your life and believed in you?

Sharing Peace

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” – John 14:27

Carrie woke up from a lengthy surgery. Since her body had difficulty metabolizing medication, she often had wild and unexpected side effects. To protect her, the medical team opted to strap her arms and legs to her gurney.

Still suffering the effects of the medicine, Carrie’s whole body began shaking, and she felt cold all over. She tried to speak, but she still had a tube in her throat that hadn’t been removed yet.

She was terribly frightened and feeling alone when one of the nurses took her hand. Gently, she leaned over her and spoke in a soothing tone.

“I know you’re scared right now. You just came through surgery, so you’re probably feeling woozy. But you’re safe in the hospital room. I’m right here, and I’ll stay with you until you start feeling better.”

Instantly, Carrie felt comforted at the nurse’s words. As her tremors ceased, she felt her anxiety begin to melt away. She is thankful God sent a compassionate nurse to share peace with her in the middle of a scary moment.

God, when I see someone who is anxious or in a panic attack, give me compassion. Show me how to soothe and comfort them so they feel Your presence. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Journal Your Thoughts

1. Have you ever been in a situation that made you want to panic?

2. How has God sent people or things to comfort you in the middle of anxious moments?

3. Have you ever comforted someone in the middle of anxiety or a panic attack?

Congratulations!

You completed the 7-day devotional journal!

Our hope is that if you are loving and caring for someone with mental illness that you will do so the way that God does. It's also very important to make sure that they are ok and to check on them regularly.



Join Our Facebook Groups For Friendly Accountability And Community



The Christian Women's Corner private Facebook groups were created with you in mind. CWC's goal is to provide and facilitate encouragement, accountability, and community for Christian women.

The CWC private Facebook groups include Christian Women's Corner, Good Morning Girls, and Love God Greatly Bible studies.

Free online Bible study groups have become very popular because they offer flexibility and accountability for your daily quiet time. You'll feel connected with a group of women who share the same love of Jesus that you do and will be able to share as much or as little as you want with them.

We're excited and hope you will join our private Facebook groups to start reading the word of God daily and have the accountability to keep up this habit.

To find out more about the Christian Women's Corner Facebook groups, please click the green button below.

CLICK HERE

About The Author



Alicia Bowyer created Christian Women's Corner after talking to a good friend one day. They discussed how hard it was to keep up with daily prayer, Bible reading, and telling others about Jesus who didn't share their faith. She knew that some might not struggle with these three things, but many do.

She wanted to take the knowledge that she gained from over 40 years on her Christian walk and help others.

Alicia lives in Barrie, Ontario, Canada, with her family, whom she loves dearly.

To find out more, visit: www.ChristianWomensCorner.com