


EVEN IN THIS
EVEN IN THIS
EVEN IN THIS
there is hope

A scenic view of a mountain valley with a river and green slopes. The text is overlaid in the center.

God is
FOR YOU
AND HE IS
with you!

Even In This.

It's a declaration. It's the core of our faith. The promise that comes from the victory Christ had over death. That 'Even In' dire and desperate circumstances, God is for you and He is with you.

No matter what we're walking through, there's still hope, there's still good and there's a God worthy of our worship no matter what our present circumstances are.

Our prayer for you as you utilize this resource is that you find perspective and balance - seeing God's hand moving in everything, not just through the good times or the blessings. To learn more about who God is and how He's designed each and every one of us as we process through topics that can feel so overwhelming and earth shattering. We know that - whatever your present circumstances are - He is moving, He is in control, and He loves you deeply!

So stay connected with us each of these five weeks. Attend in-person or online. If you miss a week, catch back up on-demand. Use this resource to take intentional time processing through your unique mental health and see what God might be trying to grow inside of you through all of it.

He is always faithful - even in this.

Dig deeper

1. 'Even In This'. The title of the series suggests that God can be present and powerful even in the painful realities of mental health. Are mental health problems so difficult that we sideline God as unable to help or heal? Discuss.

2. How do we shift toward saying, "Even In This (poor mental health), God can move in my life or in the life of my friend"? Encourage each other to trust and believe that God is and can be active in this difficulty.

3. **Read John 20:19–31.** Jesus says the same thing three times in these short verses. What is the significance of these words coming on the heels of Christ's own mental torment? Why did the disciples need to hear this? What caused Jesus to say it repeatedly? How do these words from Jesus impact you?

4. We want pain to go away immediately. God seems to work on a different clock than we do. Why does God delay when we just need help and relief and how should we grapple with that?

5. **Read John 11** and pay close attention to v. 4. Christ intentionally delays his arrival to what end? What does this mean for your life, when mental challenges prevail and linger. How can you steward this prolonged delay for God's glory when we are often jaded and struggling?

Even In Our Mental Health.

Personal Reflection

“Our mind cannot focus on positive and negative information at the same time.” Dr. Alex Korb author of *‘Grateful Brain’*

There are so many factors that contribute to our mental health. To say that if we just do ‘this one thing’ we will have a sound mind, would be comparable to saying if you just exercise then your body will finally be healthy. We know that exercise contributes to a healthy body, but what about eating right, sleeping well, stretching, lifting weights? All of these factors together contribute to total body health. The same goes for our mental health. It is important that we take into account all of the areas that contribute to a healthy and sound mind, and then take responsibility for the areas that we can control. One of those areas is our choice to focus on positive thoughts or negative thoughts, and scripture even speaks to this:

Philippians 4:8 says “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. **Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.**

When we choose to focus on all of these things, the God of peace will be with you. God created and designed the inner workings of our brain, and the same part of our brain that is responsible for focusing on worry, fear, and negative thoughts is also responsible for focusing on whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable. We cannot focus on both of these things at the same time, and the God who created our brains knew this about us and even instructed us about it through His living word...” **put this into practice and the God of peace will be with you.**”

One thing that you can do today to take steps towards building a healthy and sound mind, is to actively and regularly practice gratitude. Start a gratitude journal and record one thing you are grateful for every day. Put a gratitude post-it on your mirror every morning you wake up so that you start your day choosing to focus on what you have instead of what you don't. Start a gratitude jar with your family, and together implement the practice of talking regularly about the importance of keeping this at the forefront of your mind. And as you do this, science has proven that you will train your brain to begin to make new neural pathways that default to positive thoughts verses negative thoughts.

Just a few verses later in Philippians, Paul writes “I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

I wonder if the secret that Paul figured out was just this – that when you choose to focus on the positive, negative thoughts can't live, and if negative thoughts can't live, your awareness of God is all around you. And when you are aware of God's presence, His gift of peace transcends and pours out over you.

READING PLAN
week one

Matthew 11:28 _____

John 20: 19 – 31 _____

Isaiah 41:10 _____

Philippians 4 _____

Psalms 23 _____

Proverbs 3 _____



COME TO ME,
ALL OF YOU
WHO ARE WEARY
AND CARRY HEAVY
BURDENS,
*and I will
give you rest.*

(MATTHEW 11:28)

Dig deeper

1. Read **Philippians 4:4–7**. What is God saying in this passage? What does it mean to you that God wrote this? What action will you take to be obedient to this scripture?

2. If you are in a group setting, have every person share something that is currently causing anxiety. If you are not in a group, is there any trusted person you could share your worries with? One minute each (not your life story!) An invitation to simply listen and be present rather than try and fix each other.

3. Share a time of prayer and lift each other up to the Father. Pray for each other.

4. Listen to the song “Even Though I Walk” by Bethel Music as a group. Have one person read **Psalm 23** after the worship song and reflect.

5. Obedience and accountability: Pray for each other throughout the week. Every time you begin to experience worry, allow that to trigger prayer and worship. Text/Ask each other about this throughout the week.

Even In Anxiety.

Personal Reflection

Do you ever feel the things the Bible tells you to do are impossible? Not just hard, but literally impossible? Or maybe you have thought the ways it expects you to live are not realistic? I mean, has God seen your life? Does He not see how this world is?

For most people who struggle with clinical level mental health issues, turning to the Bible for encouragement and hope typically results in discouragement and shame. When you wake up depressed every morning and then read that we are to be joyful (**Psalm 68:3**), you are far from encouraged. When your anxiety and panic come and go whenever they wish, it is hard to read about not being anxious (**Phil. 4:6**) and not feel like a failure. Does God really expect that we can follow the command to not despair (**2 Cor. 4:8**) when we are knocked down daily by our friends, family, work, health, and our own minds? Does God really think we are doing this on purpose? Does He think that we CHOOSE to feel like this?

The honest answer, NO! In no way does God expect us to be able to accomplish the commands He gives us about maintaining strong mental health on our own. In fact, **He has NEVER asked anyone to do anything on their own.** From the very creation of the world, He has always been there providing the power to accomplish the things He asked His people to do. He had Noah build the Ark, but He brought the animals into it (**Gen 7:8-9**). He had Moses lead the Israelites out of Egypt, but He parted the Sea for them to escape through (**Ex. 13:13-14**). He asked Mary to carry the Savior of the world, and then created the pregnancy (**Luke 1:35**). He sent Jesus' disciples out to teach, preach and heal, and empowered them with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:4**). There is never a time that God asks us to do something, even seemingly impossible things, and expects us to do it on our own.

And this remains absolutely true as we deal with our own mental health. There are biological aspects of mental health which we do not control. God knows this. There are times we do not choose to feel a certain way. God understands this. And yet, God offers us His support, strength, and power to continue to live out the commands of His scripture. **We can't do it on our own, but with God's empowering Spirit, we CAN do it.** For the vast majority of us, this doesn't mean He will remove our mental health difficulties, but rather that through His power we can daily overcome the struggles we face.

What would your day look like if you woke up depressed and immediately prayed for God to empower you with hope? What if any moment you noticed your panic rising, you sang a song of worship? How might your day be different if your frustrations become opportunities for you to focus on your blessings? God is ready, waiting, and wanting us to ask for the power we need to effectively live mentally healthy, scripture fulfilling lives for Him.

If we ask, He WILL give **(Mt. 7:7)**, and with God's power, NOTHING is impossible! **(Luke 18:27)**

READING PLAN
week two

John 16:33 _____

2 Corinthians 12:9 _____

John 14:27 _____

James 1 _____

Psalms 46 _____

Proverbs 11 _____

A white lamb is sitting in a lush green field under a clear blue sky. The lamb is the central focus of the image, positioned in the lower half. The background is a vast, open landscape with a flat horizon line. The text is overlaid on the upper and middle portions of the image.

TAKE
heart,
I HAVE
OVERCOME
the world.

(JOHN 16:33)

Dig deeper

1. Read **Proverbs 16:32**. What does this contrast mean to you? Why is anger more appealing than patience, and what do each of them produce in your life?
2. The sermon spoke about emotional idolatry. How would you define that and what is its impact?
3. The anger smoke detector: Anger exists to tell you that something is wrong and to move you to action. Anger exists so you will be motivated to make it go away, and so you will be motivated to fix what needs fixing, and so you don't have to live in a state of anger. Your body was not created to live in a constant state of anger. Discuss.
4. Three triggers for anger were introduced in the sermon. **1. STOP. 2. ASK. 3. RETHINK.** Break each of these down. How can you act on these?
5. Two questions to ask when you are angry... **1:** Why am I angry? **2:** What do I want? What is the value of these questions and can you try them out the next time you are angry?
6. We ended the sermon repeating a small phrase... *'I could be wrong, Jesus died for this person, love is not easily angered'*. Hold each other accountable in this when you meet again.

Even In Anger.

Personal Reflection

“Be still, and know that I am God.” — **Psalms 46:10**

Let's be honest—life can feel heavy sometimes. Anger bubbles up when things feel unfair. Depression settles in like a thick fog, making joy seem out of reach. Anxiety? Oh, that one loves to whisper worst-case scenarios at 2 AM.

But here's the good news: you don't have to face any of it alone. God invites you to draw near to Him, especially in the messy moments. And one of the best ways to do that? Spiritual disciplines—things like prayer, fasting, reading Scripture, solitude, worship, and gathering with others who point you back to Jesus.

Now, before you start thinking, “Oh great, another to-do list,” hear this: these aren't rigid rules. They're lifelines. Anchors for when emotions try to sweep you away.

- When you're angry, prayer is a safe place to let it all out. (Seriously, have you read the Psalms? David didn't hold back!) God can handle your frustration, and He's the best place to bring it.
- When you're feeling low, meditating on Scripture reminds you of truth when your feelings tell you otherwise. Gratitude—yes, even for the small things—can be a game-changer in shifting your perspective.
- When anxiety creeps in, silence and solitude help quiet the noise. And sometimes, fasting from distractions (hello social media overload) makes space to actually hear God's voice above all the worry.

Journal Reflection:

1. What emotions have been weighing on you lately? Take a deep breath and bring them honestly to God.
2. Which spiritual discipline feels the hardest for you? How might leaning into it help you in this season?
3. Find a Scripture that speaks to your current struggle. Write it down, pray it, and ask God to make it real in your heart today.

Pray this over your life this week:

Lord, when I'm angry, be my peace. When I feel overwhelmed by sadness, be my hope. When anxiety fills my mind, be my calm. Teach me to lean into You—through prayer, through Your Word, and through stillness in Your presence. Thank You for carrying my burdens with me. I trust You. Amen.

READING PLAN
week three

Proverbs 16:32 _____

Psalm 139:14 _____

Psalm 73:26 _____

Romans 12 _____

Psalm 91 _____

Proverbs 17 _____



HE IS MY
PLACE OF
Safety

(PSALM 91:1)

Dig deeper

1. Everyone has fears. Some are greater than others. Gather your courage right now and admit something you fear. (It's ok. This is a very safe environment.)

2. **Read Ephesians 6:12.** Now, take this quote and talk about what it means regarding your particular fears. "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer defeat."

3. **Proverbs 9:10** states that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. How does that fear differ from the fear you acknowledged when answering the first question?

4. Explain the process necessary for you to move from fear in your life that causes you to fight, freeze or flee, to a fear of the Lord which will deliver you.

5. In **2 Timothy 1:7**, the Apostle Paul says that you were not given the "spirit of fear" and then he relates what you were given. How do those three gifts, power, love and a sound mind relate to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

6. Write an "I Will" statement that reflects your willingness to overcome fear with the love of God because the Bible says that perfect love casts out fear.

Even In Fear.

———— A Personal Story

Standing in a group of people feeling completely alone. The words running over and over in my mind, “I have cancer.” I have struggled with mental health my whole life, but how would I endure the hardest blow yet? As it turns out, I have never felt stronger and closer to God than when I was in the fire. “But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness’. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” **(2 Corinthians 12:9-10).**

I wouldn’t have been ready for the hard times if I wasn’t working on my mental health every day. Through regular Bible reading and study, I have learned the importance of loving myself. Combating the thoughts of feeling “less than” and “unworthy” with the Biblical truth that I am a child of God. “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” **(Psalm 139:14)**. By knowing and loving myself, I know when I need to have some alone time or when I need to call a friend and to give myself grace if I make a mistake. Each of you are a broken mess and you will have bad days, but He loves you just as you are.

For me, another key to mental health is to stay in an ongoing connection with my Father. All day, every day. An ongoing conversation, sometimes with words but sometimes it is just spending time in His presence. I wasn’t always good at that (*I keep learning and growing!*), but as I’ve become better at it, time with God has become essential to my survival. When situations arise that try to bring me down, if I’m talking everything through with God, those thoughts can’t take hold.

All this work and effort is important so that when trials come, you have a base on which to fall back. When you are tested, how will you react? You will fall back on what you know. A daily investment of prayer, Bible study, and time with God will become automatic, like breathing. If you are mentally strong and ready for the journey, then who knows how God will use you on His mission field.

READING PLAN
week four

Joshua 1:9 _____

Psalm 73:26 _____

Psalm 121 _____

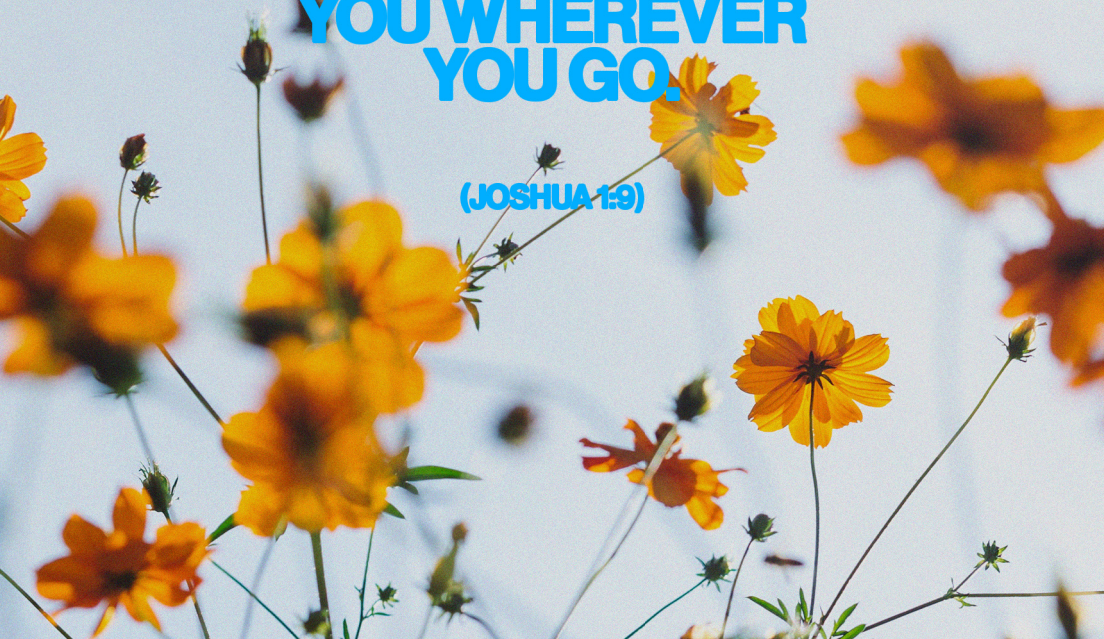
Romans 8 _____

Hebrews 11 & 12 _____

*Be strong &
courageous!*

**DO NOT BE AFRAID
OR DISCOURAGED.
FOR THE LORD
YOUR GOD IS WITH
YOU WHEREVER
YOU GO.**

(JOSHUA 1:9)



Dig deeper

1. Share about things that bring you hope. Talk about a time when God brought you hope and help in a difficult moment. What did you learn about Him through that experience?

2. How do you distinguish between "being sad/stressed" and "clinical depression"? How are either addressed differently?

3. Four root causes of depression are psychological, biological, environmental, and spiritual. Is there one cause that resonates with you the most? How could you start addressing that issue with God's truth?

4. **Read Lamentations 3:21-23.** What are some things that help you remember God's love and goodness in the midst of difficult seasons?

5. How do you typically handle negative or depressing thoughts and feelings? What would it look like to validate your emotions and label your feelings while also remembering they aren't permanent?

6. Do you struggle with depression? How can you find support or move toward healing? Pray for each other.

Even In Depression.

———— Personal Reflection

When you strive to maintain a healthy and Godly perspective during times of anxiety, anger, fear, or depression, it can be easy to lose track of the difference between happiness and joy. You may ask yourself, “If I’m trusting God, why don’t I feel happy?” Happiness is a temporary state of contentment based heavily on events in our life. Its source is generally external factors in your life that are temporary. Your happiness can fade as you face difficult circumstances. Joy on the other hand, gives you consistent strength to persevere through difficult times. Joy comes from knowing your loving, Heavenly Father, abiding in Christ, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. **Nehemiah 8:10b** reminds you, “The joy of the Lord is your strength.”

When your emotions rise and fall, God’s joy remains a constant for those who seek Him. **Psalms 73:26** also encourages you as you find joy in God’s constant strength when it says, “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” How amazing it is to know when you face difficult emotions or challenges you are not alone. You can have joy knowing it is with God’s strength you will walk through and out of a difficult period in our life. So, how do you stay focused on the joy of the Lord? Here are some journal prompts to encourage you today as you invest intentional time with the Lord to hear His leading and rest in His Joy.

- God, as I work through these emotions with your strength and joy, I think of these things in my life I am grateful for...
- God, one way I will remind myself to rest in your joy and live in your strength every day this week is to...
- God, the verse I will keep in my mind this week to remind me you are my joy and strength is...

- God, as I've listened today, thank you for revealing the area in my life where I have to turn my focus from my temporary emotions to your constant joy. That area for me is...

One amazing way to grow in your joy is to focus on serving others even as you walk through challenging times. Write down a person God has put on your heart and commit to praying for him/her daily.

May you feel God's never-failing love, joy, and peace as you pursue God this week!

READING PLAN
week five

Lamentations 3:21-23 ———

Romans 5 —————

Psalms 23 —————

Philippians 4 —————

Psalms 147 —————

The background of the image is a gradient of warm colors, transitioning from a deep orange at the bottom to a darker, almost black, at the top, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. Numerous small, dark silhouettes of birds are scattered across the sky, some in flight, adding a sense of movement and depth to the scene.

Yet
I STILL
DARE TO
hope

(LAMENTATIONS 3:21)

Resources

Celebrate Recovery:

Celebrate Recovery (CR) is a national Christ-centered, 12-step recovery program that offers support for individuals struggling with a variety of hurts, habits, and hang-ups, including mental health issues, through a structured program of group meetings and personal accountability. You are invited to participate, especially if you feel a need for additional support during this series. CR meets on Thursday nights in the Chapel at the Mount Pleasant Campus at 6pm (dinner) & 6:30 pm the program starts. There is no cost to attend and all are welcome!

1400 W. Broomfield St, Mount Pleasant, MI 48858
communitymi.org/celebraterecovery

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:


Through the 988 Lifeline, you have access to free one-on-one assistance. With skilled, judgment-free counselors available to provide compassionate support. Whether you're facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns, or just need someone to talk to.

988lifeline.org *or call: 988*

We've also put together some additional resources for you to use. However, use your own judgment and discretion when utilizing these services. While we have found them to be reliable and highly recommended, we cannot guarantee the quality of service or results, as with any resource or entity.

These resources are available at:

communitymi.org/eveninthis

A scenic photograph of a lake with a wooden dock on the left. Several people are on the dock, and a person is in a canoe on the water. The background is filled with tall evergreen trees under a clear blue sky. The text 'Rejoice IN THE LORD always!' is overlaid in a bright green color. 'Rejoice' and 'always!' are in a cursive font, while 'IN THE LORD' is in a bold, blocky font.

Rejoice
IN THE
LORD
always!



COMMUNITY
CHURCH