

# LOVING GOD

when **life** hurts

saltchurch.

# WHAT IS THIS GUIDE?

This guide is written to help Christians love God in the midst of the sufferings and difficulties we all face in life.

It's written with a particular person in mind – a Christian who is trying to maintain their mental health in the midst of those difficulties – although we hope it's useful for other people in other situations too.

It's general advice so use wisdom, prayer and the help of Christian brothers and sisters to work out what and how to apply it.

There are 4 parts:

1. [Advice from a Christian Pastor](#)
2. [Advice from 2 Christian Psychologists](#)
3. [List of Christian Practitioners in the Illawarra](#)
4. [Other Resources](#)

Our prayer in putting this guide together is that it'll help you or someone you know keep clinging to God, cope better, and even grow as a Christian when life hurts.

*'Now may the God of peace... work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ' (Hebrews 13:20)*

# 1

## ADVICE FROM A CHRISTIAN PASTOR

### A Straightforward Answer?

How do you love God and keep trusting him when you experience mental illness? It seems like the bible's answer is clear and simple: just trust God and obey Him. Or is it? We read things like this:

Jesus said: 'Therefore I tell you do not *worry* about your life' and 'do not *worry* about tomorrow, for tomorrow will *worry* about itself' (Matt 6:25, 34). Paul says 'Do not be *anxious* about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God (Php 4:6).

But the same Paul then says: 'I face daily the pressure of my *concern* (i.e. *anxiety*: it's the same word each time) for all the churches' (2 Cor 11:28).

We're invited to 'rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!' (Php 4:4) – and we have so many reasons to rejoice as Christians.

But the lived experience of God's people seems quite different:

King David says 'All night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. My eyes grow weak with sorrow' (Ps 6:6-7); the Sons of Korah pray 'I cry to you for help, Lord; in the morning my prayer comes before you... darkness is my closest friend' (Ps 88:13-14, 18); and Ethan the Ezrahite cries out 'How long, Lord? Will you hide yourself forever?' (Ps 89:46).

In the Garden of Gethsemane even Jesus 'began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said' (Mk 14:33).

What do we make of all this? At the least, there's more to the picture: more commands, more promises, more truths from God's word to build our lives on.

## Christians Can Experience Mental Illness

Our world is not how it should be. Sin has wrecked it and us. To some extent this affects everything in God's good creation. One way it can affect us is our mental health. Whether it be anxiety or anorexia, despair or depression – or anything in between – many people experience mental illness across their lifetime.

Many *Christians* experience mental illness across their lifetime. And it's really hard when you do! It's not how things are meant to be.

Thankfully, since Jesus has risen from the grave and defeated sin and death, it's not how things *will always* be. We have a 'living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead', and 'an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade...kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power' (1 Pet 1:3-5).

This is the certain living hope we live in light of. It leads us to praise God – *'In all this you greatly rejoice...'* – but it doesn't take away the fact we're not there yet – *'...though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials'* (1 Pet 1:6).

What will help you love God while you wait, and when life hurts? Truths from God to ground your hope and advice to walk the unfamiliar road ahead of you.

## Remember

Many Christians before you and many Christians after you will experience the same things as you. Don't believe the lie that 'real Christians don't experience this', or 'if I had more faith this wouldn't be happening'. Satan will throw these lies at you, but all across scripture and the history of the Church are Christians who felt downcast or oppressed but still held onto Jesus.

So 'put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes', and wield 'the Sword of the Spirit, the word of God' (Eph 6:11, 17) which give us hope-filled truths.

## 4 Hope-filled Truths

### 1. God is with you

When you feel deep despair, are overwhelmed by sadness, anxiety or anger, or when you can't keep track of reality, you can feel so far from God. When you cry out to Him and it seems like your prayers bounce off the roof you can feel so abandoned. But if you trust Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, you never are. God is with you.

There are so many reassuring promises about this.

Our Good Shepherd promises: 'My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand' (Jn 10:27-28).

In a passage about being content and not being afraid of whether ends will meet we're reminded: 'God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" (Heb 13:5)

Paul reminds us: '...neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:38-39)

This is a certain reality that is truer than anything you ever feel or experience: God is with you.

## 2. God loves you more than you'll ever know

Here's an interesting thought about God's love: we need God's help to grasp the size of it. Paul asks God to give the Ephesians:

'...power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide & long & high & deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge' (Eph 3:18-19)

We can't know the size of God's love without His help. That's very relevant to mental illness, where (by definition) our healthy grasp of reality is diminished or skewed by illness – by the complex mix of biology, history, patterns of behaviour and circumstances that make it hard to know, hold onto or feel that truth.

We're never saved by our performance, we're saved by Jesus' death and resurrection. So whether you're full of joy as a Christian or whether your Christian life is a shadow of what it once was, rest in the safety of knowing God loves you more than you'll ever know.

This is also an important truth as you explore *why* you behave the way you do. This is a confronting experience, but whatever you learn about yourself, God already knew that, and still He loves you as his child and nothing will make Him change his mind. So keep clinging to him and ask for His help to grasp the size of His love for you.

### 3. Suffering has a purpose – God is growing you

All Christians suffer, and God has much to say about His purposes in it. As we've already read in 1 Peter:

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. *These have come so that* the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed (1 Pet 1:6-7).

Similarly, James makes this radical statement:

'Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, *because you know that* the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything' (James 1:2-4)

We don't consider it 'pure joy' because it's enjoyable (!) but because it has a purpose: it leads us to become the mature and complete people of God.

Likewise Paul says:

'...we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, *because we know that* suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us' (Rom 5:2-5)

The sufferings that lead to or that come with mental illness are not pointless. God is at work for our good:

'...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose... (Rom 8:28)

This is not a promise that everything we experience in life will be 'good', but that God will work 'for the good', even using sin, evil and suffering for His purpose. What purpose? To make us more like Jesus:

'...For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters' (Rom 8:29)

Christian suffering is never random; God always gives it for a purpose – God is growing you.

#### 4. Suffering has a purpose – God is glorified

There's another purpose in our suffering: God is glorified by it. Everything we have, do and experience is ultimately for God's glory – as Paul says of the Son of God: 'all things have been created through him and for him' (Col 1:16). We exist for God's glory, and strangely, so do our sufferings. How so?

In the midst of them we can glorify God by turning to Him rather than to quick fixes. By showing to those around us that He is the source of our strength to keep fighting and loving Him. By trusting Him and waiting patiently for our new home.

This is exactly the kind of thing Paul does. Paul defends his ministry against some 'super-apostles' not by listing things he's epic at (which are many!) but by listing his sufferings and weaknesses. He rattles off a 2 chapter list, finishing with a 'thorn in his flesh' God gave him, then declares:

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 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 Cor 12:8-10)

He would rather talk about his weaknesses than his triumphs because it glorifies God. Similarly Paul picks up this great contrast between God's life-changing power and our weakness:

'For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us'. (2 Cor 4:6-8)

There's another purpose, a greater purpose, to the difficulties of loving God when you experience mental illness – it brings God glory.

## 2 Bits of Advice

In addition to those truths, here are 2 bits of advice I've picked up along the way. They're not rules or laws you must follow, just some tips that might help you.

### 1. Three people to get on your team: a peer, a pastor, a practitioner

It's not possible to walk this journey alone and God never intended us to do that. Here are 3 types of people you'll want to get on your team to help you love God when you experience mental illness.

- A) A PEER: God places us in a body, his church, so we can love each other. Ask some friends to help you: to help you pray, to spend time with you, to lift your spirits and have fun with you, even to rebuke you when you need that (which we all do from time to time!).
- B) A PASTOR: God works by His Spirit to change us as we read His word, and as we listen to the people He's gifted to teach it. So ask a solid Christian friend that you respect to help you: to help you better understand what God is like, what God says in his word that speaks to your history or current experience, what promises, warnings and encouragements you need to hear.
- C) A PRACTITIONER: Another valuable person to get on your team is a counsellor or psychologist. They can help you understand why you behave the way you do, the impact of your life history, strategies for coping in difficult situations. A good practitioner is also full of empathy and support and can be with you in the pain. In God's kindness people like these can be a great aid in moving forward.

So invite people onto your team and explain *how* you'd like them to help, i.e. what role you want them to take.

Make sure you don't leave 1 of the 3 out team too. Each person brings a different thing and you'll be worse off for their absence. For example, if you connect with a practitioner and a pastor but not peers, it could be a lonely battle.

It's also often good if people only play one role. For example, even if your practitioner is a Christian (more on that below) what they're trained in is counselling / psychology, so they might not speak God's word into your life as well as that pastor person might.

Of course, choose people who are trustworthy and won't gossip about your struggles to others.

## 2. Christian vs. Non-Christian Psychologists

I'd highly recommend seeing a counsellor or psychologist. Personally I think every human would benefit from 3 sessions with a practitioner, mental illness or not. There's a lot of stigma attached to mental illness in our society, but in many ways it's similar to physical illness. If you had a bacterial infection most people would see a GP to get antibiotics. If you broke your leg you'd get an X-Ray and a cast. If you have depression or anxiety that's negatively impacting your life, why not get help for that too?

Seeing someone can be helpful even when life is going well. Similar to how most people service their car once or twice a year, even if there are no problems, you can see a practitioner just to keep growing and developing as a person, to develop strengths or work on growth areas before they become problematic.

But I'm often asked whether it's appropriate to see a *non-Christian* psychologist. I say yes, for 3 reasons.

- A) First, access. Of the limited number of people who've studied to become practitioners, there's a smaller group of *quality* practitioners. Of those, there's a smaller group of *Christian* practitioners. Of those, there's a smaller number of *solid and mature* Christians (by which I mean simply that it's difficult to know for sure if a 'Christian counsellor' will have the same beliefs as you on a range of topics – although of course their beliefs about Jesus are more likely to be in line with yours than a non-Christian practitioner's would be). So if you will only see a Christian psychologist that's totally fine, but it may make it a little more difficult to access someone helpful.
- B) Second, you don't need a Christian practitioner if you've asked a pastor person onto your team. You need to evaluate any advice you're given if you see a non-Christian practitioner, since they don't share your worldview or faith in Jesus. But you need to do the same with a Christian practitioner too, since everything we're taught by anyone needs to be checked against God's word.
- C) Third, it is possible to benefit from time with a non-Christian practitioner. A good ethical practitioner should be working with you to help you understand your worldview and how you wish to think and behave in light of it, rather than making judgements or giving advice based on their own beliefs.

One way to help them is to describe things in a way that's more understandable. For example, say you dislike conflict because of your history, and you're discussing a conflict with someone from church. The practitioner may not understand how to "categorise" church. They might think of church as a community group, like a sports club, in which case their advice may be to 'change clubs'. You can help them see church is more like a family, so you want to respond in this situation like you might to a family member.

Having said all that, there are great Christian practitioners in the Illawarra ([see here for a list](#)), so you could see one of these peoples.

## Lessons from Charles Spurgeon

In 1855, at the age of 19, Charles Spurgeon became the pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, just 4 years after his conversion. He's known as the 'prince of preachers' and with good reason: his church had about 4000 members, his sermons were published in printed form every week and they still remain one of the all-time best selling series of writings published in history. By the time of his death in 1892 he'd preached nearly 3,600 sermons and published 49 volumes of commentaries and devotions.

Yet from the age of 24 Spurgeon battled against what he called 'causeless depression'. This 'shapeless, undefinable, yet all-beclouding hopelessness', he wrote, 'cannot be reasoned with.' Fighting this type of depression is as difficult as 'fighting with mist'.

His depression developed after physical suffering, family pain and intense public criticism. When he first experienced it, he wrote: 'My spirits were sunken so low that I could weep by the hour like a child, and yet I knew not what I wept for'. Describing the depth of his pain he once said: 'In the castle of despair there are dungeons; I know, for I have lived in them'.

But by God's strength he maintained his trust in God to the end. He saw that: 'The iron bolt which so mysteriously fastens the door of hope and holds our spirits in gloomy prison, needs a heavenly hand to push it back'. Understanding the goodness and purposes of God in the midst of his suffering (and referring to a song that describes God as the Rock of Ages) he could confidently say: 'I have learned to kiss the wave that throws me on the Rock of Ages'.

I don't know your story. But you can love God and grow as a Christian when life hurts. And trusting God is always worth it.

- **Geoff Ackman**

Maturity Pastor | Salt Church Wollongong

# 2

## ADVICE FROM CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGISTS

### **When to Access a Practitioner**

*If safety is a concern:* If you or a person you care for is acting or thinking in a way that could pose a risk of harm to themselves or others, it's important to seek appropriate help quickly. Many people are worried they'll lose their friend's trust or upset them if they involve someone else. A helpful way to broach the topic with your friend could be to say: 'I care about you so much that I would risk offending you, to get you to a place of safety', or 'I would rather have a friend who is angry at me and getting help, than a friend who continues to be in pain and I pretend to ignore it'.

*Be proactive, book early:* Wait lists vary from 1-4 weeks. Organise to see someone when you *first* notice you aren't feeling your normal self. Even if you improve while you wait, it's good to be proactive.

**At any stage:** It can be helpful to see someone even when life is going well. You can work on growth areas, patterns of responses, thinking styles, ways to manage stress, enhance your strengths or reflect on your life. You can be preventative and proactive.

**Good fit / a therapeutic relationship:** It's important to have a good fit with your practitioner, so you feel comfortable and safe to be yourself. If you feel like something isn't working tell them, and together you can do things differently or try seeing someone else.

## Should I see a Counsellor or a Psychologist?

Both are helpful and both support people with a wide range of concerns. The main differences are in the training and methods counsellors and psychologists take. There are many different ways to train to be a counsellor, and there are generally no registration regulations in Australia. Psychologists, on the other hand, have undergone a minimum of 6 years training and are registered health practitioners. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who has specialised in mental health, who can prescribe medication and who is more often involved where there are severe difficulties.

The decision for which would be best for you will depend on your needs, i.e. your presenting concern, finances, anticipated length of counselling required. Most non-government organisations provide counselling on a sliding income scale. This makes it easier to access counselling and might enable you to see a counsellor for a longer period. If you need a diagnosis or are experiencing more acute mental illness, then it can be helpful to see a Psychologist instead.

To learn more, see a summary of the differences here:

[www.online.monash.edu/psychology-vs-counselling-infographic](http://www.online.monash.edu/psychology-vs-counselling-infographic)

## How do I Access a Practitioner?

Some counsellors and psychologists will see you without a referral, if you're willing to pay their full fees upfront. You can just contact them and ask for an appointment. There is also a Medicare program that can cover a significant portion of the fees with a psychologist. To access this Medicare rebate, visit your GP and tell them how you are going. They will assess if you need a psychologist, and if so they'll give you a Mental Health Treatment Plan and a referral letter. Take both with you to your 1<sup>st</sup> session with your psychologist.

You can have 6 sessions with a psychologist under this plan, then visit your GP and discuss how you're going. Your GP can refer you for another 4 sessions for that year under the Medicare scheme.

Some psychologists bulk bill but many don't, so you'd pay the gap between what the psychologist charges you and the Medicare rebate. You can find out what that gap will be when you first make an appointment. If you have private health insurance, you may be covered for mental health services as well, so it would be worth contacting your insurer to find that out.

## Common fears:

It can feel daunting to access counselling and talk deeply with someone you don't know. This is normal. You may be wondering what will the person be like? What do I say? What even happens in counselling? The practitioner is there to support you. They want to create a space where you can feel comfortable to be yourself. They will guide the process and together you can talk about what is important to you.

The first session is a chance for you to get to know each other. You can share how life is going and the practitioner will listen and ask some questions to get a sense of the broad picture of your wellbeing. Together you can decide on your general goals for counselling and how often you would like to meet.

Confidentiality is a very important part of the counselling process, and your practitioner should discuss with you your rights to privacy and its limitations in your first session too.

## **Advice to Christians: Being Real with God**

**Share your heart:** Tell God how you are feeling. The Psalms are great examples of this. God is a big God, he can cope with whatever you bring to him. He just wants you to be real with him.

**Be with God's heart:** God wants to be with you in this hard journey. Spend time just being with him. Soak in his love for you. You may feel very distant from him and that's ok. But reflecting on how he sees you and his promises to be with you can be encouraging when he feels far away.

**Remind your heart:** Reflect on what has helped you cope with hard times in the past. Remind yourself of your strengths. Maybe ask those close to you to share what they appreciate about you. Sometimes we forget these aspects and can just focus on where we feel we are falling short.

**Preach to your heart:** In suffering it's easy to focus on the situation and any overwhelming feelings. Remind yourself of God's promises. Reflect on his truth.

***Entrust your heart:*** Share your heart with someone you trust. You don't have to journey this alone. Entrust your heart and struggle to God and to someone close.

***Care for your heart:*** It's ok to not feel ok. Have self-compassion. It's often easy to be kind and compassionate to others, but to be our own harshest critic. Practise self-care. Do things that will help your wellbeing and sustain you. It's not selfish. It's needed. Take some time for you to recharge.

You are a person of great worth. All the best with your journey.

**- Melinda McAlpine**

Christian Psychologist

## ***Mental Health: Feelings and Reality***

Mental health sits in that tricky domain where mind, body and soul intersect. It is important to emphasise that when we experience mental health difficulties, our thought patterns can become distorted, our feelings may be more extreme or dampened in response to typical occurrences, and we may act in ways we would normally not choose to. Mental illness can distort your sense of reality, and that includes your perception of spiritual realities as much as your emotional experiences and thought patterns.

Many Christians experiencing mental health difficulties particularly struggle spiritually. They don't feel close to God when they pray, don't experience a deep emotional connection with God when they sing, and can't seem to build up enthusiasm for reading His word. You may feel like God isn't there, that He can't hear you or that He doesn't care about you. It is so important to remember our salvation and God's grace don't depend on how we feel about him.

Please be encouraged when you feel this way that God has shown himself faithful time and time again to his people. Your relationship with him is based on who *He* is and the forgiveness Jesus has won for you, and no longer on what you have said or done or think or feel. Anchor your soul in this truth.

## **Medication and Mental Health**

Depending on your difficulty, a doctor or psychiatrist may discuss medication as part of helping you manage your mental health. As with all health conditions it's important to consider all information when deciding to undergo a course of treatment, and to consult with a qualified medical professional.

Mental health problems are complex. They can develop and be kept going by a combination of physiological, genetic, personality, environmental, behavioural, cognitive, spiritual and relational factors. Much of the research suggests that for many people the most effective way to manage mental health difficulties may be a combination of treatment types. For example, medication may provide a balancing effect on your brain chemistry, but it won't address negative habits or behaviours, or give you the skills to change the nature of your relationship with someone.

If you feel uncomfortable taking medication as part of your treatment but it has been recommended by a medical professional, it may be beneficial to talk to your pastor or a Christian mentor before making a decision. There's some info about the place of medication in 'What Works for Depression', by Beyond Blue (see the resources section). This is also a helpful quote to consider:

*'Medication is neither a saviour nor adversary, but a tool that may relieve extreme suffering so that spiritual growth may take place'* (Mike Emler, A Biblical Perspective on Psychiatric Diagnoses and Medications).

## **Mental Health and Christian Leaders**

It can be very difficult if you are in a position of leadership – whether a paid pastor, a volunteer bible study leader, the head of a family or anywhere in between – to admit you are struggling. But it's even more important that you address the issue well and quickly, for the sake of your spiritual health and safety, and for those you lead.

Mental health difficulties don't need to disqualify from leadership. Suffering with mental illness is not a sin, and none of us are perfect, even our leaders. However, mental health problems can leave you more vulnerable to developing unhelpful habits, dwelling in negative patterns of thinking, and being more powerfully driven by your emotional state than would be typical for you when you are well.

If left unaddressed your distorted thought patterns may taint your teaching, your hold on your self-control may be diminished, your decision making processes can be altered and your interactions with people may suffer from extremes of emotion. These problems could damage your ministry to such an extent that you *do* disqualify yourself from leadership.

It's wise for all leaders to have someone they can be open and honest with about the difficulties of leading others, whether dealing with mental health problems or not. This someone can act as a check and balance, gently challenging you in areas where you may be veering off course, helping you to reflect on your actions, beliefs and thoughts in light of God's word, and keeping you accountable in the areas you struggle.

Having a support like this is even more crucial when you are not at your best, and fighting a battle that strikes at the core of your spiritual and emotional being. So seek out other Christians to help you trust and love God.

**- Hannah Baker**

Christian Psychologist



# CHRISTIAN PRACTITIONERS

## *General (secular) Crisis Services and Helplines*

Beyond Blue – [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) | 1300 22 4636

Kids Helpline (For people 7-25 years) – [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au) | 1800 55 1800

Lifeline Australia – [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au) | 131114

Men's Line Australia – [www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au) | 1300 78 99 78

**NSW Mental Health Line – 1800 011 511**

## *Illawarra Christian Mental Health Professionals*

Here is a list of Christian mental health professionals. You may need to call around to find someone who is able to see you, and to learn about their specialities and whether they would be a good fit for you.

## ANGLICARE

Wollongong, Campbelltown, Moss Vale, Dapto and Nowra |  
[www.anglicare.org.au](http://www.anglicare.org.au) | 1800 133 373

All Anglicare Illawarra counsellors are experienced qualified professionals and practising Christians. They use a sliding income scale for payments.

## CHRISTIAN COUNSELLORS ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA

[www.ccaa.net.au](http://www.ccaa.net.au) | A network of professionals with qualifications in counselling as well as theological training, and some screening of personal faith and agreement to a "Vision, Values and Faith" statement.

## SOUTHERN COMMUNITY WELFARE

GyMEA | [www.scw.org.au/about.aspx](http://www.scw.org.au/about.aspx)

An outreach service of GyMEA Baptist Church. All practitioners employed at this service are Christians. Some Christians dealing with Mental Health issues, particularly leaders, may feel more comfortable seeking support out of area for confidentiality reasons.



# OTHER RESOURCES

## CHRISTIAN RESOURCES ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

If I'm a Christian then Why am I Depressed | by Robert Sommerville

Be Still My Soul – Classic and Contemporary readings on the Problem of Pain | ed. Nancy Guthrie

Depression – Looking up from the Stubborn Darkness | by Edward T Welch

Suffering and the Sovereignty of God | by John Piper and contributors

Facing Depression Together | Matthias Media MiniZine

Boundaries | by Henry Cloud and John Townsend

Gospel Centred Family | by Tim Chester

Nancy Guthrie talks:

[False Comfort and faulty assumptions: Confronting Misbeliefs in the midst of Grief](#)

[Grieving a loss with hope in God](#)

[6 ways to make your church a safe place for sad people](#)

## SECULAR RESOURCES ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

**Beyond Blue**, 'what works for Depression' |

<http://resources.beyondblue.org.au/prism/file?token=BL/0556>

**NSW Mental Health Association** (with a directory of services available in NSW) | [www.wayahead.org.au](http://www.wayahead.org.au)

**Sane Australia** | [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)

## FOR LEADERS AND PASTORS

**Biblical Counselling Australia** | [www.biblicalcounselling.org.au](http://www.biblicalcounselling.org.au)

A network of 1200+ Christian pastors, chaplains, psychologists, university staff workers, women's workers, kids workers and more, who pursue biblical counselling and discipleship. Their website has more information about their beliefs and approach. Talks from several conferences, including "An Introduction to Biblical Counselling" are available for free on their website.

**Biblical Counselling Coalition** | [www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org](http://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org)

An American organisation who seek to provide relevant biblical resources that equip the Body of Christ to change lives with Christ's changeless truth through the personal ministry of the Word. This can be a helpful place to seek out articles and talks that offer biblical perspectives on mental health topics.