

# Strong in Spirit: A Six-Week Bible Study on Men's Mental Health

## Finding Strength, Hope, and Healing in God's Word

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### Introduction: Stepping into Strength

Welcome to *Strong in Spirit*, a six-week journey designed specifically for men to explore mental health through the lens of God's Word.

In a world that often tells men to "be strong," "suck it up," or "handle it alone," discussing mental health can want to admit weakness. Yet, the Bible, far from promoting stoicism, openly acknowledges the depth of human emotion, the reality of suffering, and the profound need for God's presence and community in our lives.

This study aims to dismantle the myths and stigmas surrounding men's mental health, revealing a God who understands our struggles, invites our vulnerability, and provides the path to holistic well-being. Over the next six weeks, we will delve into scripture, engage in honest

discussion, and discover practical steps to strengthen our minds, bodies, and spirits.

This is not a quick fix or a substitute for professional help when needed. Instead, it is an invitation to:

- **Acknowledge:** It is okay to not be okay, and it is courageous to admit it.
- **Explore:** What does the Bible say about our inner struggles, our thoughts, and our emotions?
- **Connect:** Build genuine brotherhood where vulnerability is welcomed and burdens are shared.
- **Grow:** Develop spiritual disciplines and healthy habits that foster resilience and peace.
- **Hope:** Anchor ourselves in God's unfailing love, even when the path is difficult.

Join us with an open heart and a willingness to engage. May this study be a source of encouragement, healing, and a deeper understanding of God's incredible care for every part of who you are.

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## How to Use This Study

This study is designed for group discussion but can also be adapted for individual reflection.

### For Group Leaders:

- **Preparation is Key:** Read through each week's material in advance. Pray for your group members.
- **Create a Safe Space:** Emphasize confidentiality and a non-judgmental atmosphere from Week 1. Model vulnerability where appropriate.
- **Listen Actively:** Encourage deep listening among group members. Remind them the goal is not to "fix" but to support.
- **Manage Time:** Be mindful of the suggested timings but be flexible if a discussion is particularly rich.
- **Know Your Limits:** You are a facilitator, not a therapist. Have resources for professional help available if a group member indicates a need beyond the scope of a Bible study.
- **Lead by Example:** Your willingness to be authentic will encourage others.

### For Participants:

- **Be Present:** Commit to attending each session and engaging in the discussions.
- **Be Honest:** This is a safe place to share your true thoughts and feelings.
- **Listen Actively:** Give others your full attention and respect their vulnerability.

- **Reflect Personally:** Use the journaling prompts and application challenges throughout the week.
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** What is shared in the group stays in the group.
- **Seek Support:** Do not hesitate to reach out to a trusted brother from the group, your pastor, or a professional if you need additional support.

### Each Week Includes:

- **Theme:** The core idea for the week.
  - **Core Passage:** The primary biblical text for study.
  - **Teaching Points:** Key insights from the scripture.
  - **Discussion Questions:** Prompts for group conversation.
  - **Personal Application/Challenge:** A practical step to take during the week.
  - **Journaling Prompt:** Space for individual reflection.
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## Week 1: Breaking the Silence – Acknowledging Our Inner World

**Theme:** Addressing the stigma around men's mental health and establishing that it is okay to not be okay. The Bible validates emotional struggle.

**Opening Prayer (5 min):** "Heavenly Father, we come before You today, acknowledging Your sovereignty and Your love for us. We pray for this time of study, asking that You would open our minds and hearts to Your truth regarding mental health. Help us to speak openly, listen empathetically, and find strength and healing in Your Word. Guide our discussions and deepen our trust in You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

### Check-in & Recap (10 min):

- Briefly share how the introduction resonated with you or any initial thoughts on men and mental health.

### Core Passage & Teaching (20-25 min):

**Read: Psalm 42:1-11 (NIV)** "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng. Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior, and my God."

My soul is downcast within me; therefore, I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. By day, the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life. I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by my enemy?" My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?" Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

**Read: Psalm 43:5 (NIV)** "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

### Teaching Points:

- **The Unseen Burden:** Men are often conditioned from a young age to suppress emotions, to "man up," and to handle difficulties independently. This leads to a heavy internal burden and an unwillingness to seek help or even acknowledge inner turmoil.
- **Biblical Honesty:** The Psalms, particularly, provide a powerful counter-narrative. The psalmists, often revered figures of faith, openly express raw, unfiltered emotions: deep sadness ("tears have been my food"), disturbance ("my soul is downcast, disturbed"), feelings of abandonment ("Why have you forgotten me?"), and despair.
- **God Welcomes Our Whole Selves:** These psalms show us that God welcomes our authentic selves, not just our "put-together" facade. He invites us to bring

our pain, confusion, and brokenness to Him. He does not expect us to "suck it up" for Him.

- **The Path to Hope:** The psalmist, despite his deep struggle, actively directs his soul to hope in God. Acknowledging "I am downcast" is the crucial first step towards remembering God's faithfulness and proclaiming, "I will yet praise Him."

#### **Discussion Questions (20-25 min):**

1. What messages did you receive growing up (from family, media, culture) about expressing emotions, particularly sadness, fear, or vulnerability? How have these messages impacted you?
2. Read Psalm 42 and 43 again. What specific emotions does the Psalmist express? Which of these resonate with your own experiences?
3. How does it challenge the idea that "real men don't cry" or "real men handle it alone" to see the Psalmist openly struggling yet also passionately seeking God?
4. What does it mean for you personally to be truly honest with God about how you feel, even when those feelings are difficult or uncomfortable?
5. What is one small step you can commit to taking this week to acknowledge an emotion or inner struggle you might usually suppress?

#### **Personal Application/Challenge (5-10 min):**

- **Challenge:** Commit to journaling honestly for 5-10 minutes each day this week. Write down whatever thoughts and feelings come to mind, no matter how

messy or difficult, and intentionally bring them before God in prayer.

- **Journaling Prompt:**

- *What am I truly feeling right now (beyond "fine")?*
- *What thoughts are weighing on my mind?*
- *How does Psalm 42 or 43 speak to what I am experiencing?*
- *What do I want to honestly say to God about this?*

**Closing Prayer (5 min):** "Lord, thank You for the honesty of Your Word, which reminds us that it's okay to struggle. We confess that we often try to hide our pain, even from You. Forgive us. Help us to embrace vulnerability and to bring our whole selves before You. May we find the courage to acknowledge our inner world and always turn our hope towards You, our Savior, and our God. Amen."

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## Week 2: The Battle for the Mind – Overcoming Negative Thought Patterns

**Theme:** Understanding the power of our thoughts and learning to align them with God's truth.

**Opening Prayer (5 min):** "Father, we ask for Your Spirit to illuminate our minds this week. Help us to understand the power of our thoughts and to surrender them to Your truth. Guard our hearts and minds and grant us Your peace. In Jesus' name, Amen."

### Check-in & Recap (10 min):

- Share briefly: What was it like to journal honestly this past week? Did you gain any new insights?

### Core Passage & Teaching (20-25 min):

**Read: Philippians 4:6-9** (NIV) "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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."

**Read: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5** (NIV) "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

### Teaching Points:

- **The Mind as a Battleground:** Our minds are often primary battlegrounds. Anxiety, worry, rumination, self-condemnation, and fear can become entrenched "strongholds" of negative thought patterns that dominate our internal landscape.
- **Divine Peace is Possible:** God's desire is for us to experience "the peace of God, which transcends all understanding." This peace is not just a feeling; it is a divine sentinel that "guards our hearts and our minds" from the onslaught of worry and negativity.
- **Active Engagement Required:** Overcoming these strongholds is not passive. Philippians 4:6-7 instructs us to actively engage: "by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." We bring *everything* to Him.
- **Taking Thoughts Captive:** 2 Corinthians 10:5 gives us a powerful command: "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." This means consciously identifying thoughts that contradict God's truth and replacing them. It is an ongoing discipline.
- **Focusing on Truth:** Philippians 4:8 provides a roadmap for healthy thinking: intentionally focusing on "whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable,

excellent, or praiseworthy." This is not just positive thinking; it is *truth*-based thinking, rooted in God's character and Word.

### Discussion Questions (20-25 min):

1. What are some common negative thought patterns or worries you experience (e.g., "I'm not good enough," "I am a failure," "Everyone's judging me," catastrophic thinking)? How do these thoughts typically impact your emotions and actions?
2. Read Philippians 4:6-9. What specific actions does Paul encourage as an alternative to anxiety? Why is "thanksgiving" so important in this process?
3. According to 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, what does it mean that our spiritual "weapons have divine power to demolish strongholds"? How does "taking every thought captive" look in your daily life?
4. When you identify a negative thought, what do you usually do? How might actively "taking it captive" and replacing it with something "true, noble, right" change your response?
5. What is one specific lie or negative thought you want to challenge this week with God's truth? What specific truth can you use to counter it?

### Personal Application/Challenge (5-10 min):

- **Challenge:** This week, when a negative or anxious thought arises, try to pause. Identify the thought. Then, consciously counter it with a biblical truth (e.g., from Philippians 4:8, or a verse about God's love/provision)

or a specific grateful thought. Write down these counter-truths.

- **Journaling Prompt:**

- *What is a recurring negative thought I need to challenge?*
- *What specific Bible verse or truth can I use to counter it?*
- *How can I practice taking thoughts captive today?*

**Closing Prayer (5 min):** "Lord, we confess that our minds can often be filled with worry and negativity. Forgive us for allowing these thoughts to take root. We pray for Your peace, which transcends all understanding, to guard our hearts and minds. Empower us by Your Spirit to take every thought captive, making it obedient to Christ, and to fix our minds on what is true and excellent. Amen."

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## Week 3: Carrying Burdens – The Power of Vulnerability and Community

**Theme:** Breaking isolation by embracing vulnerability and finding strength in Christian brotherhood.

**Opening Prayer (5 min):** "Father, thank You for designing us for relationship. Soften our hearts and open our spirits to trust each other. Help us to embrace vulnerability and to truly carry one another's burdens, reflecting Your love. Amen."

### Check-in & Recap (10 min):

- Share briefly: What was your experience like trying to take thoughts captive this past week? What did you learn about your thought patterns?

### Core Passage & Teaching (20-25 min):

**Read: Galatians 6:1-2** (NIV) "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ."

**Read: Hebrews 10:24-25** (NIV) "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

**Read: Proverbs 27:17** (NIV) "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

### Teaching Points:

- **The Weight of Isolation:** Men often feel immense pressure to be self-sufficient, strong, and to project an image of having it all together. This pressure can lead to profound isolation, where struggles are kept secret, festering and growing heavier in solitude.
- **God's Design for Community:** The Bible consistently shows us that God designed us for relationship, not isolation. We are part of a body, interconnected and interdependent.
- **The Command to Carry Burdens:** Galatians 6:2 gives a direct command: "Carry each other's burdens." This is not about sharing practical help (though that's part of it); it is about empathetic listening, emotional support, and walking alongside someone in their struggle. It implies that we *have* burdens to share.
- **Vulnerability is Courage:** True strength is not found in never needing help, but in the courage to admit when you do. Vulnerability is the pathway to genuine connection and allows others to fulfill Christ's law by ministering to you.
- **Mutual Encouragement and Sharpening:** Hebrews 10:24-25 highlights the need for consistent fellowship to "spur one another on" and "encourage one another." Proverbs 27:17 beautifully illustrates this dynamic: we sharpen each other through honest interaction, challenge, and support.

### Discussion Questions (20-25 min):

1. What makes it particularly difficult for men to share their struggles or admit they need help, even with close friends or family?
2. Read Galatians 6:1-2. What does it truly mean to "carry each other's burdens"? How is this different from just offering quick advice or trying to "fix" someone's problem?
3. How can we, as a group, cultivate a safer and more welcoming space for men to be truly vulnerable with each other? What does that look like in our interactions?
4. Think about a time when someone genuinely listened to you without judgment. How did that experience impact you? How can you offer that kind of listening to another man?
5. What is one specific burden you are currently carrying that you might be willing to share, either briefly with the whole group or privately with a trusted brother here, or another friend/mentor? (Optional: Share with the group if comfortable or encourage private sharing after the meeting.)

### Personal Application/Challenge (5-10 min):

- **Challenge:** This week, intentionally reach out to one brother in the group (or another trusted Christian friend/mentor). Do not just talk about sports or work. Share a small, manageable burden you are carrying or simply express that you would appreciate their prayer. Be prepared to listen empathetically if they share something in return.

### • Journaling Prompt:

- *What is a burden I have been carrying alone?*
- *Who is one person I could share this with, even in a small way?*
- *How can I be a better listener and burden-carrier for others?*

**Closing Prayer (5 min):** "Lord, we confess our tendency to isolate ourselves and carry our burdens alone. Forgive us for not trusting You and our brothers enough. We pray for courage to be vulnerable and for a deeper sense of community among us. Teach us to truly carry one another's burdens, reflecting Your love and fulfilling Your law. Strengthen our bonds of brotherhood for Your glory. Amen."

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## Week 4: Seeking Help – God's Grace Through Professionals and Wisdom

**Theme:** Understanding that seeking professional help (counseling, medical) is a wise and God-honoring step, not a sign of failure.

**Opening Prayer (5 min):** "Father, we recognize that You are the ultimate Healer. We pray for wisdom and discernment in all things, especially when navigating challenges to our mental health. Show us the various ways You provide help, including through skilled professionals. Remove any shame or fear that prevents us from seeking the support we need. Amen."

### Check-in & Recap (10 min):

- Share briefly: What was your experience like reaching out to a brother this past week? Did you feel more connected or supported?

### Core Passage & Teaching (20-25 min):

**Read: Proverbs 11:14** (NIV) "For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers."

**Read: Proverbs 15:22** (NIV) "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."

**Read: Luke 5:31-32** (NIV) "Jesus answered them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'"

**Read: James 1:5** (NIV) "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."

### Teaching Points:

- **God's Multifaceted Help:** While God is our ultimate source of healing and strength, He often works through various means and people. Just as we seek doctors for physical ailments, seeking professional help for mental health challenges is a wise and often necessary step.
- **Wisdom in Counsel:** The Proverbs consistently highlight the value of seeking counsel and guidance from many advisers. This principle extends to all areas of life, including our mental and emotional well-being. Counselors, therapists, and medical doctors are often those "advisers" whom God has gifted with specific knowledge and skills.
- **Jesus' Compassion for the Hurting:** Jesus clearly stated, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." He modeled compassion for those who were suffering and in need of healing. There is no shame in acknowledging a need for help.
- **Mental Health is Real Health:** Mental health issues are not a sign of spiritual weakness or lack of faith. They are legitimate health concerns that can have biological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. A holistic approach to health often involves addressing all these areas.
- **Courage and Humility:** It takes courage and humility to admit that one needs help beyond what friends or family can provide. It is a sign of strength to proactively

seek the resources and support necessary for healing and thriving.

### **Discussion Questions (20-25 min):**

1. What are some common misconceptions or fears that men have about seeking professional mental health help (e.g., "It means I'm crazy," "It is for weak people," "My faith should be enough")?
2. Read Proverbs 11:14 and 15:22. How do these verses apply to seeking professional advice or counseling for mental health struggles? How is this a sign of wisdom, not weakness?
3. How does Luke 5:31-32 demonstrate Jesus' approach to those who are "sick" – whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually? How can this encourage us to seek help without shame?
4. If you have sought professional mental health help, what was your experience like? What did you learn? (Only share if comfortable). If you have not, what might hold you back from considering it?
5. When might it be appropriate or even necessary to consider seeking professional help for mental health challenges (e.g., persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities, difficulty functioning, changes in sleep/appetite, suicidal thoughts)?

### **Personal Application/Challenge (5-10 min):**

- **Challenge:** Take time this week to research local Christian counselors, mental health organizations, or reputable online resources. Familiarize yourself with options available. If you are currently struggling

significantly, commit to a confidential conversation with a trusted leader, friend, or your doctor about potentially seeking professional help. (This is a courageous step and demonstrates wise stewardship of your well-being).

- **Journaling Prompt:**

- *What are my preconceived notions about professional mental health help?*
- *What specific "advisers" (Proverbs) might God be leading me to consider for support?*
- *If I needed help, what would be my first step?*

**Closing Prayer (5 min):** "Lord, we pray for those among us, and for men everywhere, who are suffering in silence with mental health struggles. Give them the courage and humility to seek the help they need. Guide them to wise counselors and compassionate doctors. Remove all shame and stigma and show us how to be a church that champions holistic healing. Amen."

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## Week 5: Holistic Health – Nurturing Body, Mind, and Spirit

**Theme:** Exploring the interconnectedness of our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, and how to cultivate healthy habits in each area.

**Opening Prayer (5 min):** "Gracious God, You are the Creator of our bodies, minds, and spirits. Help us to understand how interconnected these aspects of our being are. Grant us wisdom and discipline to care for ourselves holistically, as an act of worship to You. Amen."

### Check-in & Recap (10 min):

- Share briefly: What did you discover or feel as you explored the idea of seeking professional help this past week?

### Core Passage & Teaching (20-25 min):

**Read: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20** (NIV) "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies."

**Read: 1 Corinthians 9:27** (NIV) "No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

**Read: Romans 12:1-2** (NIV) "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

**Read: 3 John 1:2** (NIV) "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well."

### Teaching Points:

- **Interconnectedness:** Our physical health, mental health, and spiritual health are not isolated silos; they are deeply interconnected. What affects one area often impacts the others. For example, poor sleep can exacerbate anxiety, and neglecting spiritual disciplines can lead to emotional emptiness.
- **Our Bodies as Temples:** 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 reminds us that our bodies are not our own; they are "temples of the Holy Spirit." This elevates physical self-care from mere vanity to an act of worship and stewardship. We honor God when we care for our bodies.
- **Discipline for God's Glory:** Like an athlete disciplines his body (1 Corinthians 9:27), we are called to spiritual discipline and self-control over our habits for the sake of glorifying God and effectively living out our faith.
- **Renewing the Mind:** Romans 12:2 calls us to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." This is not about avoiding worldly thoughts, but actively filling our

minds with God's truth, which positively impacts our emotional and mental state.

- **God Desires Our Wholeness:** 3 John 1:2 expresses a desire for overall well-being: "good health" (physical) and "all may go well with you" (circumstantial/mental/emotional) *even as* your "soul is getting along well" (spiritual). This reflects God's holistic concern for us.

### Discussion Questions (20-25 min):

1. How do you personally experience the connection between your physical health (e.g., sleep, diet, exercise), your mental health, and your spiritual health? Can you think of an example where one impacted the others?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. What practical ways can we honor God with our bodies in terms of diet, exercise, and rest? What are some common challenges men face in prioritizing these?
3. According to Romans 12:1-2, how do we prevent being "conformed to the pattern of this world" and instead be "transformed by the renewing of your mind"? What does a "renewed mind" look like in daily life?
4. What are some "disciplines" (like an athlete trains, 1 Corinthians 9:27) that are important for your spiritual health (e.g., consistent time in God's Word, prayer, worship, fellowship)? How do these impact your mental and emotional state?
5. What is one specific habit you can establish or improve in your physical, mental, or spiritual life this week to promote holistic well-being?

### Personal Application/Challenge (5-10 min):

- **Challenge:** Choose one area (e.g., getting 7-8 hours of sleep, taking a 30-minute walk three times this week, replacing one unhealthy snack with a healthy one, dedicating 15 minutes to Bible reading and prayer each morning, limiting screen time before bed). Commit to a specific, measurable goal for improvement in this area. Share your goal with an accountability partner from the group if you are comfortable.
- **Journaling Prompt:**
  - *In which area (physical, mental, spiritual) do I feel weakest right now?*
  - *What is one small, manageable step I can take this week to strengthen that area?*
  - *How will this act of self-care honor God?*

**Closing Prayer (5 min):** "Lord, we thank You for the incredible gift of our bodies, minds, and spirits. Forgive us for often neglecting to care for them as You desire. Grant us discipline, wisdom, and strength to honor You in every aspect of our lives. Help us to cultivate habits that lead to holistic health, for Your glory and our good. Amen."

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## Week 6: Hope and Resilience – Resting in God's Unfailing Love

**Theme:** Building long-term resilience by anchoring our hope in God's faithfulness and enduring love, even amidst ongoing challenges.

**Opening Prayer (5 min):** "Father, we thank You that Your mercies are new every morning and that Your faithfulness is great. As we conclude this study, anchor our hearts firmly in Your unfailing love. Grant us true hope and resilience to navigate life's challenges, knowing You are always with us. Amen."

### Check-in & Recap (10 min):

- Share briefly: What new habit did you try to implement this past week? What was challenging or encouraging about it?

### Core Passage & Teaching (20-25 min):

**Read: Lamentations 3:21-23 (NIV)** "Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

**Read: Isaiah 40:28-31 (NIV)** "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the faint. Even youths grow

tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint."

**Read: Romans 8:28, 38-39 (NIV)** "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ...For I am convinced that 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."

**Read: Joshua 1:9 (NIV)** "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

### Teaching Points:

- **Mental Health is a Journey:** Life, and our mental health journey, is rarely a straight line. There will be good days, challenging days, and periods of both growth and struggle. Resilience is not the absence of struggle, but the ability to bounce back and persevere.
- **Hope in God's Character:** Even in profound lament, the prophet Jeremiah recalls the unchanging character of God: His "great love," unfailing "compassions," and "great faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:21-23). This unwavering hope anchors us when our feelings fluctuate.

- **God Renews Strength:** Isaiah 40:28-31 paints a picture of God as the inexhaustible source of strength. He "gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the faint." Our reliance on Him leads to renewed strength, enabling us to "soar," "run," and "walk" without fainting.
- **Unbreakable Love:** Romans 8:28, 38-39 provides ultimate assurance. Even when things feel overwhelming, we are secure in the knowledge that "in all things God works for the good" and that absolutely "nothing... will be able to separate us from the love of God."
- **Courage Through Presence:** Joshua 1:9 encapsulates the core of Christian resilience: "Be strong and courageous... for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Our courage comes not from our own might, but from His abiding presence.

#### Discussion Questions (20-25 min):

1. What does "resilience" mean to you in the context of mental health? Why is it important to understand that mental health is a journey, not a destination?
2. Read Lamentations 3:21-23. During such profound sorrow and lament, what is Jeremiah's source of hope? How can remembering God's mercies and faithfulness encourage you on challenging days?
3. According to Isaiah 40:28-31, what does God promise to those who "hope in the Lord"? What does it look like to "renew your strength" by hoping in Him?
4. How do Romans 8:28 and 38-39 provide ultimate assurance and security when facing life's difficulties, including mental health struggles or setbacks? How

does knowing you are loved and inseparable from God impact your resilience?

5. Looking back at these six weeks, what is the most significant truth about God or yourself that you have learned regarding mental health? What is one way you feel more "strong in spirit" than when we started?

#### Personal Application/Challenge (5-10 min):

- **Challenge:** Write down a personal "declaration of hope" or a "resilience verse" based on one or more of these passages (or others that resonate with you). Place it somewhere visible (e.g., on your mirror, at your desk, in your wallet) as a daily reminder of God's faithfulness. Identify one person from this group or another trusted Christian you can commit to continuing to walk alongside and encourage in their mental and spiritual journey.
- **Journaling Prompt:**
  - *My declaration of hope/resilience verse is:*
  - *What does it mean for me to "be strong and courageous" (Joshua 1:9) in my mental health journey, knowing God is with me?*
  - *What is one way I can continue to pursue holistic health in the months ahead?*

**Closing Prayer (5 min):** "Lord, we thank You for this journey of discovery and growth. We thank You for Your unfailing love, Your new mercies every morning, and Your promise to be with us always. As we go from here, empower us to live with resilient hope, to continue seeking Your wisdom, to lean on our brothers, and to honor You with our whole beings. May

our lives be a testament to Your strength in our weakness. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen."

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May you continue to grow *Strong in Spirit*, reflecting the peace, resilience, and love of Christ to those around you.

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## Conclusion: A Continued Journey of Strength

Congratulations on completing *Strong in Spirit*! This study has been a starting point, a foundation for a lifelong journey of understanding and nurturing your mental health in God's light.

Remember, the path to holistic well-being is ongoing. There will be seasons of strength and seasons of challenge. The key is to:

1. **Stay Connected to God:** Continue to root yourself in His Word, in prayer, and in worship. He is your ultimate source of peace and strength.
2. **Stay Connected to Community:** Do not walk alone. Continue to foster deep, authentic relationships with other men who can uplift, encourage, and challenge in love.
3. **Prioritize Holistic Health:** Be intentional about caring for your body, mind, and spirit. These are gifts from God to be stewarded.
4. **Seek Help When Needed:** There is no shame in reaching out to a pastor, a mentor, or a professional counselor or doctor. It is a sign of wisdom and strength.
5. **Embrace Hope:** Anchor your hope in God's unfailing love and faithfulness. His mercies are new every morning.

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