The last time we met, we talked about taking care of ourselves physically, spiritually, and touched on taking care of ourselves mentally. We have to make sure we are taking care of our bodies by eating right and exercising. We also need to take care of ourselves spiritually by reading our bibles and doing devotions, basically feeding ourselves with the word. This also involves incorporating the other spiritual disciples such as prayer and solitude. Getting away and having alone time with yourself and God is never a bad thing. Now tonight we are going to focus on self-care and taking care of our minds and how to deal with certain things. But first I want to pray because this is going to be a little heavier than what I usually teach. *PRAYER*

"Am I a bad Christian because I deal with anxiety or depression?"
This is a popular question that many ask themselves. Some think it is wrong for dealing with these feelings. Some feel that it isn't wrong at all. The truth is that there is nothing wrong with having these feelings at all. Friends of mine who struggle with social anxiety, suicidal ideation or thoughts, shame, depression, trauma, obsessions, and compulsive thoughts. As Christians we seem to tell ourselves we shouldn't have these afflictions, and if we do it somehow translates to a lack of faith. If this adds to our suffering, why do we do it? The easiest answer is that we don't want people to judge us. We hate being judged by others and it makes it worse when we are going through things. People think it's easier to isolate themselves off from people because then there is no way to be judged then if you're alone. I want to call out two lies here though. Lie number one is that Christians don't suffer from depression and anxiety. The second lie is that "I am a bad Christian because I struggle with mental illness." Once we break these norms or lies that are told then real healing can begin. An example I want to use is a common theme to this. I am a bad son. Someone ask me the question, WHAT IS A BAD SON, ANYWAY? We move from choice to choice, making good choices and bad choices, and learn as we go. Are we called good or bad forever? This example basically tells us that that identity is false and that there is hope. Let's kick this notion of "Bad Christian" out when our mental health isn't at its best and then look at the ways that we can get healthier. The truth here is that We all have the ability to improve our mental health. We also have the gift of free will and conscious thought, and with that comes a battle of the mind. We all as humans are waging a war to keep our thoughts healthy and our bodies well, Christian or not. There is freedom in shifting our perspective from being ashamed of our mental health struggles to seeing them as a normal part of being alive. It's not that I'm messed up or less than someone else. That also doesn't mean we need to stay mentally unwell also. Just as we all have the potential to be mentally unwell(Like our bodies can be physically unwell) we all have the ability to improve our mental health. One of the most effective ways is changing our thoughts and actions. We may not be able to change events that happen in our lives, but we can pay attention to our thoughts and redirect them.

This is easy right?

As Laura comes up to play, I want to leave you with two things, if you are in a place where you know your mental health could be better, I urge you to let go of the lie that you should be ashamed. You should seek out social and professional help, and also bring all things to God, Knowing that through your actions, the feelings can change.

I also want to leave you if you are not in a relationship with Christ and you want one, I want you to raise your hand and a leader will help you.

REFRENCES:
4 Encouraging Truths for Christians with Mental Illness (thegospelcoalition.org)

ERLC | What does the Bible say about mental illness?

(883) Andy Mineo - Dealing With Anxiety & Importance Of Self Care (247HH Exclusive) - YouTube