

August 14, 2022

Sour Subjects: Week 6

Today we're continuing our Sour Subjects series. We're stepping into some edgier topics that we could be too afraid, or too embarrassed, to bring up and talk about.

In case you think that only people with...

- Terrible home lives
- Those struggling with poverty
- The plight of the homeless

Are those Suffering from Depression, Anxiety, or Mental Illness...

Warren's pastor is one of America's largest churches, his books have sold in the multi-millions, and his ministry strategies have been replicated in churches thousands of times over. And after doing so much FOR God, an incredible tragedy came to their home in the form of Depression and Mental sickness.

Unfortunately there's often been a stigma attached to these diagnoses—as if having faith in Jesus makes you immune to suffering from mental illness.

The truth is, Believers get depressed, too.

The churches response to "BODY" issues is usually related around "Gluttony" or being careful not to wreck the "Temple of Holy Spirit... with bad stuff"

We've all quoted at some point:

1 Corinthians 6

Don't you realize that your BODY is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself. for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

Yet somehow, the Mind, or the Emotional makeup of our Bodies seems to be lost in these teachings.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization, [nearly 1-in-5 adults in the U.S., or 43 million people] — experience mental illness in a given year.

I. Causes

1.) Personal Pressures

Anxiety, mental pressure, panic attacks... come often when we face issues that seemingly have no resolve or a conclusion that we are struggling to comprehend.

One of the stories Jeff Leake has told about himself was when Allison Park was experiencing growth and beginning to plant churches in North Pittsburgh.

- Big Budgets... Training Leaders
- Buying Properties
- Fighting permits and town ordinances
- Plus there was some resistance from people and the Devil!

One Saturday he was in his office going over final prep for Sunday when he started to go BLIND! And then he was overtaken by debilitating migraines. He had to step away from ministry for a time.

2.) Personal Past

Back in the day... The repeated response to people dealing with issues in their past was to... *pray about it*.

Obviously that's good advice, but often insufficient for people facing *deep issues* from their past!

Mistakes, Abuse, Wounds... we realize today often take more than just a Spiritual approach, but must also be accompanied by an Emotional and Community approach.

Most people can't just Pray their Abuse or Mistake away!

The need for Counseling, Medication and Personal Care may need to be implemented in a person's recovery!

Because You or I may not struggle with Emotional issues, isn't Carte Blanche that nobody else does and they just need to deal with it!

Certain abuse can cause a person to be sent into an alternative trajectory that can be difficult for a non-abused person to come to grips with.

As most of us would take time for someone who is Blind, Deaf, Crippled, or some other obvious Physical Challenge, we need to be equally sensitive to those facing Mental Challenges!

3.) Personal Patterns

In recognizing that many of these issues are REAL, I do understand that some people get stuck because of their unwillingness to make the needed changes to get them on the path to wellness!

They are capable, they're just undisciplined... and we live in the *Age of the Enabler!*

II. Cures

1.) Not Understanding Margins

There's no question our American culture drives us to the ragged edge!

- South America- Work day includes Siesta!
- France- 35 hour max work week, Every full-time worker is guaranteed 5 weeks of vacation by LAW!

A.) The Sabbath is a real thing!

B.) Rest is OK to *talk* about, harder to *implement*

Time Management is very helpful to a stress-induced life!

2.) Not understanding that we're precious to God, and be encouraged to walk in wholeness under the context of Unconditional Love as redeemed Believers.

We want to be MORE accessible than just telling you to...

- Pray About It!
- Spend more time in the Word
- Affirm God's Promises over your life

It may take getting Professional Care, it's okay to be on medication that will help restore the Chemical Imbalance that may be hindering your healing over a specific trauma. And it's not true that in every occurrence that you have to remain on those Meds for life!

3.) Not Understanding God's Forgiveness over our (Past or our Patterns) and how to live in it.

- You have to Believe with me that God is a Past Forgiver and a Past Forgetter!

The Scriptures are extremely limited as to what God will not forgive, and there's a really good chance that what's in your past doesn't qualify!

Ed Stetzer writes...

1.) Mental illness is not a character defect or a spiritual disorder.

Mental illness doesn't equate with laziness, weakness, or lack of willpower; NOR does it automatically imply a demonic attack or spiritual disorder.

Mental illness can result from biological factors such as genetics, physical illness, injury, or brain chemistry. It can also be influenced by life experiences such as trauma or a history of abuse, as well as by a family history of mental health problems.

2.) People with Mental Illness don't just need Prayer.

While personal faith (including prayer) is shown to be a powerful component in helping ease symptoms of depression, studies also show that a combination of treatment options including therapy, spiritual & emotional help, and a family support system, provides the greatest reduction of symptoms and long-term stability.

We would never encourage someone with cancer to forgo medical treatment in favor of prayer alone, so why would we routinely dismiss treatment for those suffering with mental illness?

3.) Mental illness doesn't reveal a lack of faith in God.

Mental illness has no correlation with levels of faith or spiritual maturity.

4.) People with mental illness don't need to 'get fixed' before they can be used by God.