

MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHEET SERIES
VOLUME 2

soul
full *steps*

Therapy & Theology: Speaking the Same Language

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Thank you for honoring the work and the care behind it.

While it can be used as a tool to supplement an existing therapeutic relationship with a licensed mental health professional (LMHC, LCSW, LMFT, LPC, or a Licensed Psychologist), this resource should NOT be used as a substitute for therapy.

If you find that this resource brings up feelings and thoughts that are challenging to deal with on your own or with a trusted person, I encourage you to seek therapy to continue your healing journey.

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Introduction

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As both a therapist and a woman of Christian faith, this partly shapes how I see the world and how I serve others. In that space, I have often witnessed tension between the faith community and mental health. Too often, this tension is fueled by misconceptions that seeking therapy signals weak faith, or that spiritual practices have no place in the healing journey.

But here's what I've discovered for myself: faith and therapy aren't enemies. In fact, they often walk hand in hand. I can't tell you how many times I've been listening to a sermon, or reading my Bible, and thought, "That sounds just like [insert a therapeutic concept]." Or I'll be reading a mental health resource, listening to a podcast, or engaging in professional training, and I'll pause and think, "That's basically what Scripture has been saying all along."

Those moments have taught me that the language of faith and the language of therapy may sound different, but they are often naming some of the same human experiences—our struggles, our resilience, our longing for wholeness. That realization is what inspired me to create this worksheet.

Soulfull Note to Self:

Your faith is not decreased by your need for support. Building and remaining rooted in community is Biblical, and is modeled through the life of Jesus Christ.

My hope is that as you read, you'll find connections that resonate with your own journey. Maybe you'll see your faith in a new light, or discover that therapy feels less intimidating, or find language that helps you explain your experiences more clearly. Whether you're an individual seeking balance between faith and mental health challenges, a mental health professional serving clients, or a faith leader guiding your community, this worksheet is for you.

Big Conceptual Overlaps

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Across theories used in therapy, and Scripture, several shared themes emerge:

- Transformation of mind and identity
- Healing through relationship
- Meaning-making in suffering
- Community and belonging
- Justice and liberation
- Hope and future orientation
- Integration of inner life

On the next pages, you will find tables that outline these overlaps between some commonly used therapy/counseling theories, and theological themes in more detail.



Big Conceptual Overlaps

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Counseling Theory	Core Clinical Idea	Theological Theme	Biblical Examples and Scripture References
Narrative Therapy	Identity shaped through story; re-authoring; problems are externalized	Redemption story; new identity	• The Bible itself is narrative-centered: identity shaped through story. • Psalms: reframing suffering through testimony. • Romans 8:28: reinterpretation of hardship. • 2 Corinthians 5:17: new identity (“new creation”). • Biblical name changes: (Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel) = rewritten identity narratives.
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	Thoughts shape behavior and emotions	Renewed mind	• Romans 12:2: “renewing of your mind.” • Philippians 4:8: focus thoughts on what is true. • Proverbs 23:7: thoughts shape reality. • 2 Corinthians 10:5: take thoughts captive.
Adlerian	Purpose, belonging, contribution	Community and calling	• Humans created for community (Genesis 2:18). • 1 Corinthians 12: body of Christ = space for interdependence. • Servant leadership teachings of Jesus Christ. • Philippians 2:3-4: Humility vs. superiority

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Gestalt	Present awareness, integration	Self-awareness before God	• Psalm 46:10: “Be still...” • Psalm 139:23-24: Confession and awareness • Embodied faith practices (fasting, prayer, lament).
Womanist	Healing from intersecting oppression	God hears the oppressed	• Stories of marginalized women (Hagar — Genesis 16; Esther; Ruth). • Liberation themes in Exodus. • Luke 4:18: good news to the oppressed. • God’s concern for the marginalized (widows, poor, outsiders).
Attachment	Secure relationships create safety	Secure love removes fear	• Psalm: 23; Isaiah 49:15-16: God as secure base • Covenant relationship language. • Parental metaphors for God’s care. • 1 John 4:18: love removes fear.

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Internal Family Systems (IFS)	Multiple inner parts need harmony	Inner transformation	• Romans 7:15–25: Inner conflict • Galatians 5:17: Flesh vs spirit tension • Purification of heart and inner transformation.
Solution-Focused (SFT)	Strengths and future orientation	Hope and restoration	• Jeremiah 29:11: Hope orientation • Faith in future restoration. • Jesus' healing often future-focused ("Go and sin no more").
Emotionally Focused (EFT)	Emotional bonding heals	Relational repair	• Emotional honesty in Psalms (lament, anger, joy). • John 11:35: Jesus' emotional expression (weeping, etc.). • Reconciliation and relational repair teachings.

Big Conceptual Overlaps

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Liberation Psychology	Mental health tied to justice	Structural justice	- Prophetic justice tradition (Isaiah, Amos). - Exodus liberation narrative. - Jesus confronting power structures.
Person-Centered	Unconditional acceptance	Grace and acceptance	John 8:1-11: Radical acceptance by Jesus Matthew 22:37-40: Love ethic - Grace over condemnation
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)	Accept suffering; live by values	Meaningful endurance	James 1:2-4: Endurance of suffering. Luke 9:23: Carrying one's cross. Romans 5:3-5: Meaning in suffering. - Value-centered living.

To make these connections practical and accessible, I've organized them into a table that outlines:

- **Christian Language** often heard in the Black church (not always directly Scriptural, but deeply cultural and influential).
- **Therapeutic Language** that captures the same theme in clinical terms.
- **Shared Understanding** that highlight where we might see some overlap between sacred and secular wisdom, and provide encouragement grounded in Scripture.
- **Practical Action & Application** for living out these truths in everyday life.

Christian Language	Therapeutic Language	Shared Understanding	Practical Action/Application
"Battling demons"	Trauma, intrusive thoughts, PTSD, addiction, maladaptive behaviors	Acknowledges struggles that feel overwhelming and painful. Ephesians 6:10-12; James 4:7	Journaling intrusive thoughts, seeking therapy with a licensed professional, naming fears, grounding exercises
"The flesh"	Impulses, maladaptive coping, dysregulated nervous system	Recognizes our human tendencies toward survival strategies that may not serve us well in the long run. Galatians 5:16-17	Mindfulness, emotional regulation exercises, habit tracking, practicing delayed gratification
"Renewing of the mind"	Cognitive reframing, building new thought patterns	Both encourage shifting perspective for healing and growth. Romans 12:2	Thought journaling, replacing negative self-talk with affirming truths, meditation on Scripture
"Confession"	Processing, self-disclosure in therapy	Healing begins when struggles are brought into the light. James 5:16	Talking with a trusted friend, therapist, or support group; private journaling; prayerful reflection

Christian Language	Therapeutic Language	Shared Understanding	Practical Action/Application
“Fellowship/Body of Christ”	Support networks, group therapy, community care	Healing is not meant to happen in isolation. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27	Join support groups, therapy groups, church small groups; create accountability partnerships
“Peace that passes all understanding”	Emotional regulation, nervous system calm, resilience, mindfulness	The experience of deep inner calm beyond circumstances. Philippians 4:7	Breathing exercises, meditation, prayer, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery
“Bearing burdens”	Empathy, co-regulation, shared emotional load	Both affirm the healing power of shared struggle, and caring for one another. Galatians 6:2	Partner with a friend, mentor, or therapist to share emotional load; mutual aid and communal support practices
“Calling/Purpose”	Values, meaning-making, life goals	Both provide direction, hope, and motivation. Ephesians 2:10	Create vision boards, identify strengths and gifts, set achievable life goals aligned with values
“The devil is busy”	Stress, persistent negative patterns, triggers	Recognizing challenges that seem to come from all directions. 1 Peter 5:8	Identify triggers, plan responses, practice boundary-setting, prayer or meditation to regain focus

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"I'm in the wilderness"	Life transitions, grief, uncertainty	Feeling lost or in a period of reflection and growth. Isaiah 43:9	Radical acceptance, journaling, mindfulness, finding small sources of joy and routine
"Carrying a cross"	Chronic stress, trauma burden	Acknowledging ongoing struggles and responsibilities. Luke 9:23	Stress-reduction techniques, pacing tasks, support networks, prayer or meditation, therapy for trauma
"Guard your heart"	Healthy boundaries, self-care	Protecting emotional and mental well-being. Proverbs 4:23	Emotional awareness exercises, assertive communication, setting boundaries, journaling
"Laying it at the altar"	Acceptance, release work	Letting go of what cannot be controlled. Romans 12:1	Mindfulness, letting go practices, journaling, prayer, surrendering control through reflective meditation
"Generational curses"	Intergenerational trauma, family patterns	Recognizing patterns passed down in families. Exodus 20:5	Family therapy, journaling patterns, developing new healthy communication strategies, boundary-setting, prayer or spiritual reflection

Christian Language	Therapeutic Language	Shared Understanding	Practical Action/Application
“Praying through”	Persistence, emotional processing	Continuing in hope and effort through challenges. Luke 18:1	Journaling, Scriptural meditation, introspection
“Deliverance”	Recovery, breaking cycles, healing	Moving out of destructive patterns into wholeness. Psalms 34:17	Behavioral change plans, therapy, affirmations, replacing negative habits with positive routines
“Dying to self”	Ego work, unlearning maladaptive habits	Releasing unhelpful behaviors or thoughts for growth. Galatians 2:20	Self-reflection, journaling, meditation, therapy to unlearn maladaptive behaviors, practicing humility and surrender
“Anointed/Gifted”	Strengths-based perspective, unique talents	Recognizing personal abilities and calling. 1 Peter 4:10	Identify strengths and passions, develop skills, goal-setting aligned with gifts, gifts assessment
“Waiting on the Lord”	Patience, delayed gratification, mindfulness	Sitting with uncertainty while trusting a process. Psalms 37:7	Mindfulness, meditation, reflective journaling, goal-setting with flexible timelines

Key Takeaways/Practical Tips for Holistic Care

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1 Spiritual Practices & Mental Health Tools: Prayer, Scripture meditation, and journaling complement therapy exercises like cognitive reframing, emotional regulation, and boundary-setting.

2 Community & Support: Fellowship and co-regulation amplify healing—don't isolate your struggles.

3 Mind-Body-Spirit Integration: Techniques such as mindfulness, stress reduction, and journaling align with Biblical principles like “guard your heart” and “renew your mind.”

4 Self-Reflection: Use Scripture as a mirror for self-awareness, understanding emotional patterns, and discerning God's guidance in your healing.



“Seeking therapy does not mean I lack faith. It means I am using a resource God has given me for healing.”

Exercise: Take a moment—either in the space below or in your own journal—and write down any Christian sayings or phrases that feel meaningful to you and connect with your mental health journey. Let your heart speak as you reflect:

- How might this saying relate to your emotional or mental well-being?
- What is God revealing to you through these words?
- Is there a Scripture that speaks to this saying, and what is God whispering to your heart as you read it?

Take your time, and let this be a space of gentle reflection, insight, and connection between your faith and your healing. If you feel safe in doing so, it might be helpful to review these reflections with your trusted friends, pastor, mentor and/or therapist.

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About THE CREATOR

I'm a Midwestern girl raised in a home adorned in Black art, music, literature, and culture. From Faith Ringgold on the walls, to Toni Morrison on the shelves, and old-school R&B spinning through the house, my upbringing instilled a deep pride in my heritage, and a love for storytelling, creativity, and community that still guides me today.



My academic path took a few turns—Nursing, and then Psychology at Fisk University, a master's in Sociology, and ultimately a second master's in Counselor Education—each step clarifying my calling to become a therapist. Through personal experiences, faith, and growth, I felt led toward soul-centered, culturally grounded mental health work.

When I'm not in session, I'm creating, coloring, crocheting, listening to music, podcasts or audiobooks, or watching historical and sociocultural documentaries and classic Black sitcoms. I'm a proud member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., a wife to my best friend, a mama to one radiant daughter, a dog mom, and a caregiver in the sandwich generation—held up by strong women, deep friendships, and a whole lot of love.