



ENDURING THE RACE

GOD'S PRESENCE IN OUR MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES

MAIN IDEA

During this month of Endurance, we will see trials — including anxiety, depression, burnout, and emotional exhaustion — not as evidence of weak faith, but as places where God grows endurance, character, and hope.

Icebreaker

If life were a race today, which word fits you best: sprinting, jogging, limping, or sitting on the curb? Why?

What is one healthy coping strategy that has helped you through a hard season?

Normalize that many are “limping” or “walking by faith” rather than running. This bridges into conversations about energy, capacity, coping, and support systems.

JAMES 1:2-4 (AMP) – WHAT GOD DOES IN TRIALS

“Consider it nothing but joy... whenever you fall into various trials. Be assured that the testing of your faith produces endurance... And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and completely developed, lacking in nothing.”

1. NAMING THE TRIAL

If James were writing today, 'trials of many kinds' might include anxiety, depression, burnout, grief, financial stress, relationship strain, and emotional exhaustion. Naming the struggle reduces shame and opens space for healing.

2. REFRAMING THE TRIAL

James teaches that testing develops perseverance, not perfectionism. Endurance is not about never struggling; it is about remaining faithful through struggle. In mental health terms, manageable stress builds resilience over time.



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3. THERAPEUTIC AND SPIRITUAL INSIGHT

Romans 5:3-5 presents a progression: suffering produces endurance; endurance produces character; character produces hope. Pain is not pointless. God may be growing something within us during our symptoms, not abandoning us in them.

HEBREWS 12:1-2 (AMP) – RUNNING WITH SUPPORT

"Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us... fixing our eyes on Jesus..."

1. WE ARE NOT RUNNING ALONE

The 'cloud of witnesses' reminds us that others have run hard races before us. Many knew fear, grief, and pressure, yet God remained faithful.

2. THROWING OFF HINDRANCES

Mental-health related weights may include shame, unrealistic expectations, overcommitting, isolation, comparison, negative self-talk, and spiritual bypassing. Laying down these weights helps us run lighter and freer.

3. FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS

Jesus endured the cross and despised its shame. Shame often clings to mental illness ('I should be stronger'), but Christ has already borne our shame. Fixing our eyes on Him relocates our identity from diagnosis to belovedness.

CLOSING REFLECTION:

Because of Christ, we are not defined by our struggle. We are growing, developing, and becoming whole through the endurance God is producing within us.