



Emotional Exhaustion: Coping Strategies for Moms

Motherhood is a profound blessing – yet it often comes with intense **emotional exhaustion**. Many moms find themselves **weary, overwhelmed, and running on empty**, struggling to feel the joy that their faith promises. If you're a mom who loves Jesus but feels drained instead of joyful, know that you are *not alone* and not a failure. Modern research recognizes “**parental burnout**,” a condition characterized by overwhelming exhaustion in one's parenting role, emotional distancing from children, feeling “fed up” with parenting, and a contrast between the parent you envisioned and your current reality ¹. Surveys across 42 countries indicate about **5-9% of parents** experience full parental burnout ² – and many more report significant fatigue and stress. This exhaustion can lead to guilt and shame, as you might feel you're *not measuring up* to the “supermom” ideal. In truth, feeling burned out **does not mean you're a bad mom or a bad Christian** – it means you're human and carrying a heavy load. Even biblical heroes grew weary: the prophet **Elijah**, after great spiritual victories, was so exhausted and discouraged that he prayed for death. God's response was not anger, but to **let him sleep and send an angel with food and water** for renewal (1 Kings 19:4-8). The Bible acknowledges our frailty and offers hope and help for the weary.

In this article, we'll explore *evidence-backed strategies to cope with emotional exhaustion*, grounded in both **scriptural wisdom** and **psychological research**. As a Christian theologian familiar with the human nervous system and mental health, I want to equip you with practical tools – from Bible-based encouragement to medical insights – to help restore your strength and joy. “**The joy of the Lord is your strength**,” Scripture says (Nehemiah 8:10). Let's discover how, through God's grace and wise action, you can move from feeling drained to **renewed**.

Biblical Encouragement for Weary Moms

Before diving into strategies, take heart: **God deeply cares about your exhaustion**. Jesus tenderly invites, “*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*” (Matthew 11:28). Far from condemning tired moms, **Jesus offers rest** – both for your soul and, by extension, wisdom for your life. In the Gospels, we even see Him care for His disciples' need for downtime: “*Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest*,” He said, when ministry became too busy (Mark 6:31). Our faith does not demand relentless activity; it encourages **rhythms of work and rest**. God Himself ordained the **Sabbath**, a day of rest (Exodus 20:8-10), knowing that we need regular restoration.

Throughout Scripture, God promises strength to the worn out. “*He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak... those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength*” (Isaiah 40:29-31). **Refreshing your hope in God is crucial**: when you're running on fumes, remember that God's Spirit can refill your tank. Prayerfully reading encouraging passages – like Psalms of comfort (e.g. “*My soul finds rest in God*”, Psalm 62:1) or Jesus' words about not worrying (Matthew 6:34) – can breathe life into a tired heart. “*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you*,” 1 Peter 5:7 assures. You were never meant to carry motherhood's burdens alone.

Importantly, **caring for yourself is not selfish – it's biblical**. Jesus taught, “*Love your neighbor as yourself*” (Mark 12:31), implying you must also show appropriate care for your own well-being. When you nurture



your health, you're better equipped to love your family. Even the psalmist notes that God *"grants sleep to those he loves"* (Psalm 127:2), showing that rest is part of His good design. Embracing these truths will free you from the false guilt of "I should be able to do it all." God remembers **we are dust** (Psalm 103:13-14) – finite and frail – and He invites us to find rest and strength in Him. With this biblical foundation, let's look at practical steps you can take.

Practical Strategies to Overcome Mom Burnout

Modern psychology, medicine, and biblical wisdom together provide a powerful toolkit to cope with emotional exhaustion. Below are seven proven strategies – each backed by research and compatible with a life of faith. As you consider them, remember that **small steps** can lead to big improvements. You don't have to implement everything at once; even one or two changes can start refilling your emotional tank.

1. Share Your Struggles and Seek Support

Isolation fuels exhaustion. One of the most effective antidotes is to **open up about your feelings** to someone you trust. Psychologists have found that *"open sharing about feelings of burnout can facilitate social support, a much-needed resource for stressed-out parents"* ³. In other words, talking to a friend, spouse, or support group can break the cycle of feeling alone and overwhelmed. This might mean confiding in a fellow mom from church, joining a moms' fellowship or parenting class, or simply telling your husband/close friend, "I'm really struggling right now."

It can be hard to admit you're running on empty – many burned-out mothers feel **ashamed** or that they should "handle it" themselves ³. But carrying burdens alone is not God's plan. Scripture urges believers to *"carry each other's burdens"* (Galatians 6:2). Reaching out for help is an act of wisdom and humility, not weakness. By letting a trusted person inside your world, you gain encouragement, advice, and often practical help. For example, being honest with your spouse or family about your exhaustion might lead to adjustments in responsibilities (perhaps your spouse can take over bedtime duties some nights, or a relative can babysit occasionally so you can rest).

Also consider connecting with a **mom support group** – whether a local meetup, a church small group for parents, or even an online community. Knowing others are facing similar challenges and hearing their coping tips can greatly relieve stress. Fellowship with other believers can refresh your spirit: *"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another"* (Proverbs 27:17). Simply *venting* your anxieties in a safe space can lighten their weight. Don't underestimate the power of a compassionate listener to help you process your emotions.

Real-World Example: Sarah, a 35-year-old mother of two preschoolers, secretly felt like she was falling apart. She was exhausted, irritable, and believed "good moms don't complain." Finally, after a particularly hard week, she opened up to a women's group at church about her constant fatigue (rating her stress 8/10) and feelings of failure. To her surprise, several moms empathized and shared similar struggles. They began checking in on her, and one even offered to swap babysitting once a week. With this support, Sarah started taking a weekly afternoon "off," during which she rested and prayed. Within two months, her self-rated stress dropped to 4/10, and her constant sense of isolation lifted. By sharing her burden, she found practical help and felt God's love through others.



Research confirms that **social support is critical** for stressed parents. The **American Psychological Association** notes that speaking up about burnout can normalize the experience and unlock much-needed support ³. So, reject the lie that you must suffer in silence – instead, *“encourage one another and build each other up”* (1 Thessalonians 5:11). God often provides His comfort through the **presence of friends and community**.

2. Reframe Your Expectations and Let Go of Perfection

One major source of mom exhaustion is the relentless **pressure to be perfect** – a pressure that often comes from ourselves. It's time to give yourself grace and adjust those expectations. Psychologist Dr. Susan Sullivan advises mothers to *“let go of the ‘Superwoman’ label,”* noting that **no one excels in every area of life** and that's normal ⁴ ⁵. Constant self-comparison (to that seemingly perfect mom on Instagram or the neighbor who cooks organic meals nightly) will only breed guilt. **Comparison is the thief of joy**. Remind yourself that for every mom who appears to “have it all together,” there are hidden struggles. You only need to do what's right for *your* family, by God's grace – not measure up to someone else's standards ⁶.

Practically, *reframing expectations* means recognizing where you can ease up on yourself. **Prioritize the essentials and let the rest slide** when needed. For example, maybe the living room is cluttered with toys and you haven't vacuumed in a week – but the kids are fed and loved. That's okay! Dr. Sullivan encourages moms to *“accept that the dishes or vacuuming can be put off for a day”* and even that your child's outfit can be comfy rather than perfectly matching ⁷ ⁸. Embrace a mantra: *“Done is better than perfect.”* Your home does not need to resemble a Pinterest board; it needs to be a place of love and grace. Some nights, serving cereal or PB&J for dinner is absolutely fine – *“yes, that's ok, and probably preferred by your child,”* as one clinical article wryly notes ⁴ ⁹. Lowering unrealistic standards in housekeeping or gourmet cooking can free up energy for what truly matters (and reduce resentment).

Stop “Shoulding” on Yourself. Psychologists have observed that burnt-out parents often torture themselves with **“should” statements** – *“I should be spending more quality time with the kids... I should keep the house spotless... I should always be patient”*. These thoughts add shame and make you feel like a constant failure. In fact, Christian counselor Natalie Dattilo recommends mothers deliberately **avoid “should” self-talk**, because it heaps on guilt when you don't measure up ¹⁰. Replace “I should do XYZ” with more realistic and gracious wording. For example, instead of “I *should* play with my kids more (and I'm awful if I don't),” say, “It would be great to have more energy to play with the kids; I'll do what I can, but it's okay if I can't do everything” ¹⁰. This subtle shift acknowledges your good intentions *without* condemning yourself for human limitations. It aligns with the biblical truth that *“there is no condemnation for those in Christ”* (Romans 8:1) – God is not standing over you with a checklist saying “you should do more.” Give yourself the same grace God gives you.

Another powerful mental shift is to **reappraise your stressors**. Research during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that parents' *perception* of their situation influenced burnout as much as the hard circumstances themselves ¹¹. While you can't eliminate every stress (you can't exactly “quit” being Mom!), you *can* change how you think about challenges. Try to view difficult seasons through a lens of growth or meaning, rather than defeat. For instance, caring for a fussy baby at 3am is exhausting – but reminding yourself “This is temporary; my child is upset, not trying to hurt me; I am helping them feel secure” can reduce the mental burden. **Gratitude** also helps reframe your mindset. When you catch negative comparisons or “shoulds” spiraling in your head, intentionally list a few things you're thankful for (healthy children, a supportive



friend, God's provision today). Gratitude has been shown in studies to lower stress and improve mood, acting almost like a reset button for the brain.

Finally, **challenge all-or-nothing thinking**. Moms often feel if they can't do something 100%, they've failed. Not true! Doing things *"well enough"* is sometimes the healthiest approach. Maybe you can't volunteer at school *and* cook homemade meals *and* lead the church committee – so prayerfully choose what to say **"no"** to (more on that next) and know that saying no to one thing is saying yes to something more important. Embrace being a *"good enough" mom* who loves her kids, even if the birthday party is store-bought cake at the bowling alley instead of an elaborate handmade affair. Your kids will remember your love and fun far more than perfection. As the Apostle Paul learned, *"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances"* (Philippians 4:11) – contentment grows when we stop striving for a flawless life and accept the season we're in, doing our best with God's help.

3. Set Boundaries and Prioritize Rest

Burnout often creeps in when moms are **overcommitted and under-rested**. Setting healthy boundaries – with your time, responsibilities, and even with your own impulses – is critical to regain balance. Remember, even Jesus, who had limitless compassion, didn't say "yes" to everyone; He withdrew regularly to pray and rest, and He allowed Himself time to sleep (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, Mark 4:38). Following His example, give yourself permission to **say "no"** to extra demands that will overload you. As one expert succinctly puts it: *"No" is a complete sentence... You don't need to qualify your answer or give any rationale.*" ¹² You can graciously decline that additional volunteer task or skip a social event if you're at capacity. Every time you say "yes" to something, you are saying "no" to something else – possibly your own rest or family peace ¹³ ¹⁴. It's okay (and often very wise) to choose the *better yes* of margin and sanity.

Evaluate your weekly routine and identify one or two areas where you can **let something go or ask for help**. For example, if you're working full-time and feeling maxed out, maybe this season you **bow out of the PTA** or a church committee to free up margin ¹⁵. At home, consider **outsourcing or delegating** tasks: could your spouse handle the grocery shopping or bedtime a few nights? Can the kids (if they're old enough) take on simple chores like folding laundry or setting the table? Many moms struggle with delegating, thinking "It's easier if I just do it" – but long-term, that mindset leads to burnout. Handing off even a couple of tasks can significantly lighten your load. As Dr. Sullivan advises, *"re-evaluate your to-do list and outsource some house tasks to your partner, kids, or a service, if that's an option."* ¹⁶ ¹⁷ Remember, your family is a team; it's healthy for everyone if Mom isn't doing everything. If budget allows, there's no shame in hiring help for cleaning or childcare occasionally. **Your well-being is worth it.**

Beyond saying no to new commitments, implement **mini-boundaries** in daily life that protect pockets of rest. For instance, enforce a cutoff at night – e.g. "I won't do chores past 9pm, I will wind down." The laundry can wait till tomorrow; your sleep cannot. Set a boundary with technology if needed: constant phone notifications or social media scrolling can frazzle your mind ("doom-scrolling" news or parenting forums late at night often increases anxiety). Perhaps decide to put your phone on do-not-disturb and not respond to non-urgent messages after a certain hour. By carving out those quiet times, you allow your mind and body to recover.

Schedule regular breaks and breathers. Research shows that even short respites – **"microbreaks"** of a few minutes – can help reset your stress. One APA article emphasized that since moms can't exactly take long vacations from parenting, doing **small rebalancing acts** daily is key ¹⁸ ¹⁹. That might mean



stepping outside for 5 minutes of fresh air while the baby is safe in the crib, or enjoying a cup of tea on the porch during the kids' nap – guilt free. One mom of three shared that she instituted a daily “quiet time” in the afternoon where everyone, even her toddler, has to play quietly or rest for 20–30 minutes. This gave her a short window to read Scripture or close her eyes, and it made a big difference in her patience by evening.

If possible, **claim a Sabbath period** each week – maybe Sunday afternoons or another time – where you truly rest from “productivity.” Use that time to nap, enjoy low-key family time, or engage in something that rejuvenates you (a nature walk, journaling, or family movie night). Jesus taught that *“the Sabbath was made for man”* (Mark 2:27) – rest is God's gift to us, not a burden. By planning for rest, you won't feel as guilty when you take it. In fact, you can view rest as part of your obedience and trust in God. It's saying, “Lord, I acknowledge I'm not infinite; I pause and trust You to run the world while I recharge.” **Rest is sacred:** it was God's idea from the beginning (Genesis 2:2-3).

Finally, recognize that adequate **sleep** is non-negotiable for your health. Emotional exhaustion is magnified by physical sleep debt. Adults generally need 7–8 hours of sleep for optimal functioning. Moms with infants or special situations may not get that continuously, but consider strategies to improve your sleep quality: earlier bedtime instead of late-night tasks, swapping nights off with a partner for feeding duty, or even occasional naps (yes, naps can be lifesavers!). If anxiety or racing thoughts keep you up, try a calming bedtime routine – a warm bath, reading a calming Psalm, deep breathing (more on that soon). **God designed our bodies for sleep restoration**, and Psalm 4:8 reminds us we can *“lie down and sleep in peace, for the Lord makes [us] dwell in safety.”* You will cope with daytime stress **much better on a refreshed brain**.

4. Care for Your Body to Soothe Your Mind

There is a strong mind-body connection in burnout. Caring for your physical health can dramatically improve emotional resilience. When you're exhausted, basic self-care often falls by the wayside – you might skip meals, neglect exercise, or survive on caffeine. Yet these habits can create a vicious cycle, leaving you more depleted. By tending to your body's needs, you equip your nervous system to handle stress better. Think of it as making sure your “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19) is in good working order so that your mind and spirit can thrive.

Nutrition and Hydration: First, don't forget to nourish yourself. It's common for busy moms to prepare balanced meals for the kids but then nibble on scraps or grab junk food on the go. Try to eat regular meals with some protein, whole grains, fruits/veggies – steady blood sugar can prevent energy crashes and mood swings. Keep healthy snacks (nuts, yogurt, fruit) handy for quick fuel. Also, **stay hydrated**; even mild dehydration can cause fatigue and foggy thinking. A simple habit like drinking a glass of water each morning and carrying a water bottle throughout the day can combat that. Remember Elijah: when he was exhausted, the first remedy God provided was **food and water** (1 Kings 19:5-8). Our physical needs matter!

Exercise and Movement: When you're drained, exercise might be the last thing you feel like doing, but it's one of the best stress relievers. Physical activity releases endorphins (feel-good chemicals) and reduces stress hormones. You don't need a heavy regimen; gentle, enjoyable movement is enough. This could mean a 20-minute walk with the stroller, a short dance session in your living room, or a beginner yoga video while the kids nap. One health article notes that even taking the baby *“around the block a few times”* in the stroller can help you destress and confer health benefits ²⁰ ²¹. Choose something you like – if the gym isn't your thing, maybe gardening or playing tag with the kids. **Exercise also improves sleep quality** and overall energy in the long run, creating a positive cycle instead of a downward spiral.

The information presented is for educational and inspirational purposes only, it is not intended as medical advice.



Deep Breathing and Relaxation: Emotional exhaustion often means living in “fight-or-flight” mode – your sympathetic nervous system is constantly revved up, pumping out stress hormones like **cortisol**. Over time, excess cortisol wreaks havoc, contributing to memory problems, irritability, and even physical issues like weight gain ²² ²³. To counteract this, you can activate your body’s **calming system** (the parasympathetic “rest and digest” response) through simple relaxation techniques. One of the quickest is **deep breathing**. Taking slow, deep, abdominal breaths signals your brain to relax. Medical experts advise practicing “*grounding breaths throughout the day*” – even a minute or two of deep breathing can lower your heart rate and cortisol levels ²⁴. You might inhale for a count of 4, hold for 4, exhale for 6-8, and repeat several times. Breathing exercises are easy to do anywhere – in the car, in the shower, even in the middle of a toddler tantrum (it might prevent *you* from having a tantrum!). Research shows that such breathwork shifts the nervous system into a more relaxed state ²⁴.

Related to breathing is **mindfulness or prayerful meditation**, which we’ll discuss more in the spiritual section. From a physiological standpoint, learning to calm your racing thoughts and stay present can greatly reduce stress. The Cleveland Clinic highlights “*mindfulness is a stress management technique where the goal is to stay in the present moment*” – not worrying about future “what-ifs” or past regrets ²⁵ ²⁶. By focusing on “right now,” you prevent your mind from amplifying stress with endless anxieties. You can practice mindfulness in a Christian way by focusing on a simple truth (e.g., breathing in thinking “Be still,” breathing out “and know that He is God” from Psalm 46:10). Physical relaxation methods like progressive muscle relaxation (tensing and releasing muscle groups) or a warm bath can also help release tension your body is holding.

Guard your health: Don’t forget routine health needs. Sometimes exhaustion has medical contributors like thyroid issues, anemia, or hormonal imbalances (especially post-partum). If your fatigue is severe or persistent despite lifestyle changes, see a doctor for a checkup. Additionally, if you suspect depression or anxiety is at play (e.g. constant sadness, loss of interest in things, intense worry), reaching out to a health professional is very important (more on this in strategy 7). Taking care of your body by staying on top of medical and dental appointments, and taking vitamins or medications prescribed to you, is part of stewarding the gift of life God gave you. The **bottom line**: when you nurture your physical well-being, you’re not indulging yourself – you’re equipping yourself to better fulfill your God-given role as a mother. As 3 John 1:2 says, “*I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.*” Body and soul are connected.

5. Nurture Your Spirit with Prayer and Scripture

Spiritual renewal is a powerful antidote to emotional burnout. As a Christian mom, your faith is not just another item on your to-do list – it’s a source of *supernatural strength and peace*. However, when you’re exhausted, prayer and Bible time often get squeezed out, precisely when you need them most. Reconnecting with God can recalibrate your perspective, bring inner calm, and even produce measurable benefits to your brain and body.

Prayer – whether crying out in desperation or sitting quietly in God’s presence – is a direct line to the One who loves you infinitely. God invites us to “*pour out [our] hearts to Him*” (Psalm 62:8). So be honest in prayer about your exhaustion: “*Lord, I’m so tired and I feel empty. Please carry me and give me strength for today.*” Such prayers both acknowledge your need (humbling yourself before God) and activate your trust that He cares. Remarkably, **research has found physiological benefits to prayer**. When prayer is heartfelt and brings a sense of peace or surrender, it can trigger the relaxation response in the body – lowering blood



pressure, slowing breathing, and even reducing stress hormones like cortisol ²⁷. One review from the University of Minnesota noted, *“when prayer uplifts or calms, it inhibits the release of cortisol and other hormones, thus reducing the negative impact of stress on the immune system and promoting healing.”* ²⁷ In short, prayer not only connects you with God spiritually, it also helps soothe your frazzled nervous system. This is a beautiful instance of science catching up with spiritual truth: *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition...present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:6-7). Many beleaguered moms can testify that after spending even 10 minutes praying or reading Scripture, they feel a tangible increase in peace and perspective.

Consider incorporating **mini-devotions** into your day. If lengthy Bible studies aren't feasible right now, that's okay – feed on bite-sized portions of God's Word. Perhaps post a meaningful verse on your bathroom mirror or fridge and meditate on it while brushing your teeth or washing dishes. Verses about God's strength in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10), His ever-present help (Psalm 46:1), or His promise to give wisdom when we ask (James 1:5) can anchor your soul when you feel like you're sinking. One mom shared that playing worship music in the background was a game-changer for her mood – songs based on Scripture lifted her spirit even as she went about chores. Singing along or simply letting truth-filled lyrics soak into you can “reframe” your mind heavenward.

Breath prayers or short moments of scripture meditation can be especially potent under stress. For example, when you feel panic rising, you might breathe in saying in your mind, *“Jesus, give me rest,”* breathe out, *“I cast my cares on You.”* This combines deep breathing with spiritual focus. It's both a physiological calming technique and a faith exercise, entrusting your burdens to God. Techniques like these blend well with mindfulness: rather than emptying your mind (as secular meditation might teach), you're *filling* your mind with God's promises while calming your body. The result is holistic peace.

Don't overlook the value of **journaling or lamenting** to God either. The Psalms are full of honest cries of exhausted souls – *“I am worn out from my groaning”* (Psalm 6:6). Writing down your feelings in a prayer journal – your fears, frustrations, and also evidences of God's faithfulness – can be cathartic. It externalizes the swirl in your head and offers it up to God. Some mothers keep a thankfulness journal as well, noting one or two things each day that they're grateful for. This practice has a double benefit: it's a form of prayer (thanking God) and it trains you to notice the **glimmers of grace** in your day, even if the day was hard. Gratitude is strongly associated with improved mental health in psychological studies, and Scripture exhorts us to *“give thanks in all circumstances”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18) – not *for* all circumstances, but *in them*, acknowledging God's presence and gifts amidst the chaos.

Finally, consider making **worship and fellowship** part of your coping strategy. Attending church (or tuning in online if you can't go in person) might seem routine, but corporate worship often re-energizes a weary heart. The act of praising God lifts our eyes off ourselves and reminds us of His greatness and care. It can restore joy – *“The joy of the Lord is your strength”* (Nehemiah 8:10) truly applies here. Likewise, taking Communion or participating in a small group can renew you spiritually. You might even combine fellowship with self-care by doing a Bible study or prayer walk *with* a friend – feeding your soul and getting social support simultaneously.

In summary, **don't neglect your soul**. Carve out even small moments to reconnect with Jesus throughout your day. He said, *“If you remain in me...you will bear much fruit”* (John 15:5). One of those fruits is joy, even in trials. As you abide in Him through prayer and Scripture, He replenishes your inner reserves. Imagine your



heart as a cup – life's demands are constantly pouring out from it. Prayer and God's Word are like a faucet refilling that cup from an infinite source. When you're spiritually replenished, you'll find you have more patience, more hope, and even more physical energy to face your tasks.

6. Rediscover Meaning and Joy in Small Moments

Emotional exhaustion often comes with a loss of the *joy* and *meaning* that originally accompanied motherhood. You might feel you're just slogging through endless tasks with no sense of accomplishment or delight. A powerful way to counter this is to **intentionally seek out small moments of joy and remember the bigger purpose** behind what you're doing. This is both a psychological strategy and a spiritual one: it's about shifting focus from burnout to blessing, from surviving to occasionally *thriving*.

Psychologists refer to this as **finding meaning** or **behavioral activation** – basically, re-engaging with positive activities and recalling why they matter. One evidence-based tip is to **plan a low-stakes fun activity** with your kids or for yourself, even when you feel overwhelmed ²⁸. For instance, decide that tomorrow afternoon you'll all go to the park for half an hour, or have a living-room dance party, or bake cookies together (letting the process be messy and silly). Such minor activities can break the monotony and create pockets of enjoyment. As you do them, **soak in the positives**: notice your child's laughter on the swings, or how the sun feels on your face, or the fact that you're laughing too. After the activity, reflect for a minute on it – what went well, what you appreciated. The APA's research on parental burnout suggests that *"remembering the meaning you've felt in the past as a parent can provide a resource when exhaustion returns."* ²⁸ In other words, recalling happy or meaningful moments in parenting can buffer you against the hard moments. Consider keeping a little list (mental or written) of *"Mom highlights"* – times you felt proud of your kids, times you genuinely enjoyed them, funny things they said, or milestones achieved. On tough days, revisit that list to remind yourself *why* this effort is worth it.

From a Christian perspective, **remember that motherhood has profound meaning in God's eyes**. You are raising eternal souls, modeling Christ's love in everyday ways. Your labor – though mundane and unseen by the world – is *not in vain*. Jesus said giving even a cup of water in His name matters (Mark 9:41). Changing the 50th diaper or helping with homework for the 100th time can be acts of service to Christ (*"whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord,"* Colossians 3:23). Ask God to give you glimpses of His perspective on your role. Perhaps journal about how each child is a gift (Psalm 127:3 calls children "a reward from Him"), and how God is using motherhood to shape *you* as well – developing your character, patience, and reliance on Him. Sometimes reframing parenting as part of your *spiritual journey* brings renewed purpose: it's not an interruption to your spiritual life – it *is* your spiritual life, your calling in this season.

Also, **celebrate small victories**. Did you make it through a week of school drop-offs on time? Treat yourself to a special coffee on Friday and thank God for sustaining you. Did you handle a toddler meltdown without yelling (when last week you lost your cool)? That's growth – acknowledge it and maybe share the win with a friend who can cheer you on. These little celebrations train your brain to notice progress rather than only failures. They also infuse some positivity and fun into the grind.

Incorporating **playfulness and hobbies** can also rejuvenate your joy. What's something that used to make you feel alive before kids (or before burnout)? Maybe it's painting, or playing guitar, or sports, or reading novels. It might feel like you have zero time for those now, but even squeezing in 20 minutes here and there for a beloved hobby can remind you that you're *more than just a mom-machine*. You're a person with



passions. Doing something you love sparks joy that carries over into your parenting. Plus, it models to your children that life is about growth and enjoyment, not just duty. If you've lost interest in everything (which can be a sign of depression), push yourself gently to re-engage with one activity you used to enjoy – the interest often rekindles after you start doing it again.

Gratitude and worship are also joy-restorers. We mentioned gratitude under reframing, but it bears repeating: thanking God for even the simplest positives (a good cup of coffee, a child's hug, strength for this morning) can shift your mood profoundly. Some moms combat the evening blues by writing down three things they're grateful for each night. Over time, this trains you to see God's hand and choose joy. Worship, similarly, lifts your spirit to see the beauty of God which puts your daily struggles into perspective. When King David was overwhelmed, he often turned to praising God's faithfulness, which in turn renewed his confidence (read Psalm 13 for a great example of moving from despair to trust and praise within a short prayer).

Nehemiah 8:10 says, *"Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."* Joy is not merely a byproduct of everything going smoothly; it's something we can cultivate even in trial, and it gives us strength. Ask God to restore your joy in motherhood step by step. Joy doesn't mean constant happiness or that you never feel tired – it means a deeper sense of contentment and hope even as you acknowledge the challenges. It might show up as more frequent smiles, or a lighter heart, or the ability to laugh at a mess rather than cry. These little shifts are signs of God renewing you. Remember Jesus' promise in John 15:11, *"I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."* Jesus wants to share His joy with you, and He can do that as you walk closely with Him and practice finding the good in each day.

7. Know When to Seek Professional Help (and Don't Hesitate to Use It)

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, **emotional exhaustion can tip into more serious territory** – such as clinical depression, anxiety disorders, or health issues that require professional intervention. There is **no shame in needing outside help**. In fact, recognizing you need help is a courageous and wise step, very much in line with a faithful life. God often works through people – including doctors, counselors, and support programs – to answer our prayers for relief.

If you find that your burnout is **impairing your ability to function** day-to-day – for example, you're unable to get out of bed, having frequent breakdowns, feeling numb toward your children, or experiencing hopeless thoughts like "my family would be better off without me" – **seek help immediately**. These can be signs of major depression or extreme burnout. The **American Psychological Association** advises that if parental burnout causes thoughts of self-harm or inability to cope, it's critical to reach out to a mental health provider ²⁹. This could mean talking to your doctor, a licensed counselor/therapist, or calling a hotline or pastoral counselor for guidance. There is also the condition of **postpartum depression** for newer moms, which is not a character flaw but a medical condition that needs treatment. Reaching out is not a lack of faith – it's using the tools God has provided for healing.

Christians sometimes wonder, *"Shouldn't I just pray more and trust God rather than go to therapy or take medication?"* Prayer is vital, as we've emphasized, but God also gifted us the field of psychology and medicine as means of common grace. **Modern medicine and counseling are not at odds with faith**. In fact, getting professional help *is often an answer to prayer*. If you had a broken leg, you'd pray *and* go to the doctor for a cast; if you have a broken spirit or chemical imbalance, praying *and* seeing a doctor or therapist is equally appropriate. One Christian author puts it well: *"Medicines, at their best, are gifts from God, tools to*



counteract some effects of the Fall... Diagnosed physical disorders [of the brain] should be treated like any physiological disease, by seeking medical advice from trained physicians.” ³⁰ ³⁰ The Bible does not forbid using medical help for mental health – “*Medicines are not sinful, and there is no biblical restraint against using them,*” affirms a Christianity.com article on faith and mental illness ³¹ . It points out that we wouldn’t accuse a diabetic on insulin of lacking faith, and likewise a believer who takes an antidepressant or anti-anxiety medication under doctor’s care is not “less spiritual.” They are simply addressing the physical aspect of their condition ³¹ . If a medication or therapy helps restore your ability to experience stable moods and function, that frees you to better love God and others – truly a good outcome.

Therapy can provide a safe space to process your feelings and learn tailored coping skills. A professional counselor (especially one who shares or respects your Christian values) can help you challenge negative thought patterns, set boundaries, heal from past traumas, or improve communication in your family. They can also screen for conditions like clinical depression or anxiety which might need specific treatment. Sometimes even a short course of counseling (a few months) can give you tools that benefit you for a lifetime. **Support groups** or group therapy for moms is another resource – hearing others’ stories and solutions in a guided setting can reduce stigma and inspire change.

Family or marital counseling might be useful if relational dynamics are a big source of your stress. For example, if you’re feeling burnt out largely because of marital conflict or lack of spousal support, a marriage counselor could help both you and your husband find better ways to share duties and understand each other’s needs. Or if you have a child with special needs or behavioral issues adding to your exhaustion, family therapy or parent training programs (often available through community services or school referrals) can equip you with strategies and connect you to resources.

Sometimes **medication** is warranted, and that’s okay. Antidepressants or anti-anxiety medications, prescribed by a doctor, can correct underlying biochemical issues that exacerbate exhaustion and mood problems. These medications are not “happy pills” that make problems vanish, but they can lift the heavy fog enough for you to cope and implement the other strategies we’ve discussed. Many Christians take such medication as a temporary support or long-term management, just as one would take thyroid medication for a thyroid issue. As a Desiring God ministry article noted, **psychoactive medications can be viewed as a gift of God’s grace** – one of the “lawful means” to pursue relief from suffering, as long as we don’t place our ultimate hope in them alone ³² ³³ . In using these tools, we keep in mind that God works through both spiritual and physical means. We both **pray for healing and take the practical steps** (James 2:26 reminds us that faith and actions work together).

If you’re unsure where to start in seeking help, you might begin with your **primary care physician** – they can do an initial evaluation, rule out medical causes for fatigue, and refer you to therapists or support services. Some OB/GYN offices have screening for postpartum moms. Many churches have pastoral counselors or can recommend Christian counselors. There are also national hotlines and text lines for mothers in distress (such as Postpartum Support International or others) – a quick internet search can yield these resources, and they often can connect you to local help.

Importantly, **don’t wait until you’re in crisis to seek help**. If you’ve tried lifestyle changes and still feel constantly depressed or anxious, or if you simply feel you need an unbiased person to talk to, reaching out sooner can prevent a worse crash later. As one Cleveland Clinic psychologist said, “*A psychologist or social worker can help you put one foot in front of the other... They can also recognize signs of stress in women and*



guide you on how to recover from mom burnout.” ³⁴ Sometimes just a few sessions can give you a fresh game plan and much-needed encouragement from a professional perspective.

Finally, remember that using outside help is **fully compatible with trusting God**. The Lord can work through a compassionate therapist, a helpful doctor, or a well-prescribed medication just as He can through prayer and miracles. By accepting help, you are stewarding your health so that you can better fulfill the roles God has given you. Your family will benefit from a healthier you. As Proverbs 11:14 says, *“in an abundance of counselors there is safety.”* Seeking wise counsel (whether spiritual or medical) is a biblical principle. So, give yourself permission to use all the resources God has put at your disposal.

Conclusion: Finding Hope and Strength in Christ

Dear exhausted mom, take a deep breath – you have taken in a lot of information! Coping with emotional exhaustion is a journey, not an overnight fix. But **there is real hope**. By applying these strategies step by step – leaning on community, adjusting your mindset, carving out rest, caring for your body, renewing your spirit, reclaiming joy, and getting extra help when needed – you can gradually emerge from burnout into a place of greater balance and peace. Remember that **God is with you each step**. He sees every tear (Psalm 56:8), every late-night feeding and early morning scramble. *“He gently leads those that have young”* (Isaiah 40:11) – what a comforting image of our God carrying the lambs and guiding mother sheep. You are not parenting alone; **the Good Shepherd is by your side**.

As you implement changes, celebrate each bit of progress. Maybe this week you told a friend how you’re really feeling – that’s courage. Maybe you prayed honestly for the first time in a while, or went for a walk, or turned down an extra obligation to rest – those are victories. **God’s grace is sufficient for you** (2 Corinthians 12:9). On days you stumble or feel you’re back at square one, don’t despair. Recovery from exhaustion is often two steps forward, one step back. Be patient and kind to yourself, as God is patient and kind with you.

In Galatians 6:9 we’re encouraged, *“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”* As a mother, you *are doing good* – an incredibly important good – in caring for your children. There will be a harvest to this season of sowing (even if now it looks like a mess of Cheerios and toys). Do not lose heart. **Your investment in your family and in your walk with Christ will yield fruit**. In the meantime, you have every right to also invest in *yourself* – to rest, to heal, to grow – without guilt.

Take Jesus at His word when He says *“My yoke is easy and my burden is light”* (Matthew 11:30). Exchange the crushing yoke of unrealistic expectations and solo striving for **His yoke of grace**. That might look like praying, “Lord, I give You this burden of exhaustion. Teach me to live in Your rhythms of grace, depending on You.” He promises *“you will find rest for your souls”* (Matthew 11:29). Soul-rest in Christ can coexist with a sink full of dishes and a noisy house – it’s a rest that comes from knowing you’re loved by God and He will strengthen you to do what you need to do today (and that He forgives you where you fall short).

In the end, overcoming mom burnout isn’t just about mental hacks or schedules – it’s about a **transformed heart** that learns to draw on Jesus’ strength daily. *“I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength,”* Paul wrote from a place of great need (Philippians 4:13). That can be your declaration too. As you apply these coping strategies, do so **prayerfully and dependently**. You’re doing your part, and trust God with His

The information presented is for educational and inspirational purposes only, it is not intended as medical advice.



part. Over time, you'll likely find your emotional cup filling up again – perhaps slowly, but surely. You'll experience more moments of genuine joy, and your relationship with Jesus will deepen because you've walked with Him through the valley of weariness.

Keep in mind that this season is not forever. Kids grow, circumstances change, and with healthy practices, **your strength will renew**. Isaiah 40:31 paints the picture: *“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary.”* Imagine that – running and not being weary! Our ultimate hope is in eternity with Christ where all exhaustion will vanish. But even now, He can give you “eagle's wings” in spirit – lifting you above the immediate struggles, granting perspective and resilience.

As you finish reading, I encourage you to pause and **take one actionable step**. Maybe text a friend to watch the kids for an hour this week so you can nap (and reciprocate for her later). Or maybe open your Bible to Matthew 11:28-30 and meditate on Jesus' invitation to rest. Perhaps decide on an early bedtime tonight instead of tackling one more chore. Whatever the step, commit it to God and trust Him with the outcome.

You are a loving mom, and with God's help, you *will* get through this weary time. **Better days are ahead**. The same Lord who multiplied loaves and fish can multiply your energy and joy as you seek Him and apply wisdom. Lean on His promise: *“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever”* (Psalm 73:26). In His strength, you can find rest for your body, renewal for your mind, and restoration for your soul.

Hang in there – you're doing holy work, and **God's got you**. One day, you'll be able to comfort another exhausted mom with the comfort you've received (2 Corinthians 1:4), telling her of how God brought you through. Until then, may the Lord bless you, keep you, and make His face shine upon you as you take these steps toward healing. **You are not alone, and you are deeply loved.**

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... You will find rest for your souls.” – Matthew 11:28-29

References:

1. **Children's Health Council / APA Monitor** – *“The Impact of Parental Burnout”*. Excerpt highlights four dimensions of parental burnout (exhaustion, feeling fed up, etc.) and recommends coping steps like sharing feelings, cognitive reappraisal, and taking microbreaks. (American Psychological Association, 2021) [\[Source\]](#)
2. **BMC Public Health (2024)** – *“A systematic review of parental burnout and related factors”*. Reports global surveys showing about 5% of parents experience parental burnout (rising to 9% in Western countries as of 2020). Highlights the prevalence and serious consequences of burnout if unaddressed (e.g. health issues, family conflicts). [\[Source\]](#)
3. **Cleveland Clinic Health Essentials** – *“Depleted Mother Syndrome: How to Manage It.”* Dr. Erin K. Sullivan offers practical tips: let go of perfection (“learn to live with the mess”), stop comparing, say no to extra obligations, delegate tasks, practice deep breathing and exercise to counteract cortisol, be mindful in the present, prioritize self-care (using the “oxygen mask” analogy), and seek help when needed. (Cleveland Clinic, 2023) [\[Source\]](#)

The information presented is for educational and inspirational purposes only, it is not intended as medical advice.



4. **University of Minnesota – Taking Charge of Your Wellbeing** – “*Prayer and Health.*” Explains physiological benefits of prayer: it triggers the relaxation response, lowering stress markers like cortisol, and it’s associated with positive emotions (gratitude, hope) that improve wellness. Also cites research by Dr. Harold Koenig that people with regular religious practice have better mental health and adapt more quickly to stress ³⁵ . [\[Source\]](#)
5. **Christianity.com** – “*Should Christians Take Medication for Mental Illness?*” Affirms that using medication or other treatments for mental health is not unbiblical. “*Medicines are not sinful, and there is no biblical restraint against using them... We would not condemn a diabetic for taking insulin... Believers can take advantage of physicians’ and researchers’ wisdom.*” Emphasizes a balanced approach of faith and medical care. [\[Source\]](#)
6. **Desiring God** – “*Prozac and the Promises of God.*” Article by a Christian counselor (Dr. Michael Emlet) discussing a biblical view of psychoactive medications. Notes that relief of suffering through appropriate means is part of God’s mercy – “*medications can certainly be one of those lawful means*” for relief, as long as we also seek spiritual growth. Encourages a both-and perspective: pursue symptom relief *and* Christlike growth. [\[Source\]](#)
7. **American Psychological Association** – “*Advice on how parents can avoid burnout.*” (APA Monitor, Oct 2021). Recommends strategies like openly talking about burnout to reduce stigma, cognitive re-framing of stress, making small changes (e.g. delegate chores), avoiding “should” statements that cause guilt, taking short breaks for self-care, and finding meaning by focusing on positive aspects of parenting. [\[Source\]](#) (Accessible via CHC Library [1])
8. **Bible References** – (Not hyperlinked due to format, but for reader study) Key scriptures that offer comfort and guidance for exhausted moms include: **Matthew 11:28-30, Isaiah 40:29-31, Galatians 6:2, 1 Peter 5:7, Psalm 127:2, Mark 6:31, Philippians 4:6-7, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 46:10, Colossians 3:23, Isaiah 40:11, Psalm 73:26, and Galatians 6:9**, among others discussed above. These affirm God’s care for the weary, the importance of rest, sharing burdens in community, and the promise of renewed strength through the Lord.

¹ ³ ¹⁰ ¹¹ ¹⁸ ¹⁹ ²⁸ ²⁹ The Impact of Parental Burnout - Childrens Health Council

<https://www.chconline.org/resourcelibrary/the-impact-of-parental-burnout/>

² A systematic review of parental burnout and related factors among parents | BMC Public Health | Full Text

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-024-17829-y>

⁴ ⁵ ⁶ ⁷ ⁸ ⁹ ¹² ¹³ ¹⁴ ¹⁵ ¹⁶ ¹⁷ ²⁰ ²¹ ²² ²³ ²⁴ ²⁵ ²⁶ ³⁴ Depleted Mother Syndrome: How To Manage It

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/depleted-mother-syndrome-and-mom-burnout>

²⁷ ³⁵ Prayer | Taking Charge of Your Wellbeing

<https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/prayer>

³⁰ ³¹ Should Christians Take Medication for Mental Illness? | Christianity.com

<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-life/should-christians-take-medication-for-mental-illness.html>

³² ³³ Prozac and the Promises of God | Desiring God

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/prozac-and-the-promises-of-god>