



Feeling Overwhelmed Postpartum? Practical Tips for Finding Peace and Joy

Feeling overwhelmed postpartum is a common experience for new mothers – even those who deeply love Jesus and desire a joyful life. The postpartum period brings intense physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges. The good news is that you are **not alone** in these feelings, and there are practical steps you can take – grounded in both **clinical research** and **Scripture** – to help you cope and find hope. This article offers compassionate guidance from a Christian perspective, reinforcing each suggestion with medical insights and biblical truth.

Understanding Why You Feel Overwhelmed After Childbirth

Bringing home a new baby is a life-changing blessing, but it also turns your world upside down. Sudden hormonal shifts, physical recovery from birth, sleep deprivation, and the enormous responsibility of caring for an infant all contribute to feeling overwhelmed. In fact, the U.S. Office on Women's Health notes that approximately **1 in 8** new mothers experience symptoms of postpartum depression in the first year after childbirth ([Office on Women's Health](#)) – and many more feel anxious or “blue” in the early weeks. It's *normal* to have mood swings or bouts of crying in the days after delivery (often called the “baby blues”), including feeling sad, anxious, or **overwhelmed**, as your body and mind adjust ¹. These baby blues typically resolve within two weeks as hormone levels rebalance.

However, if intense feelings of sadness or anxiety persist beyond two weeks and start to interfere with your ability to function day-to-day, it may be a sign of postpartum depression or anxiety that needs attention ². ³ **Postpartum depression (PPD)** is a medical condition involving brain chemistry and mood; it **affects about 1 in 7 mothers** after giving birth ⁴. PPD can make you feel hopeless, deeply fatigued, detached from your baby, or guilty for not feeling the expected “joy.” Postpartum anxiety is another common issue, marked by relentless worry, irritability or panic attacks about your baby's safety or other matters ⁵ ⁶. These conditions are **highly treatable** and nothing to be ashamed of. The **biological, physical, and chemical factors** that contribute to postpartum mood disorders are *beyond your control* – **it's not your fault**, and it **doesn't make you a bad mother or a bad Christian** ⁷. Even the strongest believers can struggle with depression or anxiety due to the fallen state of our bodies and minds.

From a physiological standpoint, after childbirth your hormone levels undergo a dramatic drop (estrogen and progesterone plummet after delivery), which researchers believe can trigger mood disturbances ⁸. The stress of a newborn also keeps your nervous system on high alert – **fight-or-flight mode** – pumping out stress hormones like cortisol that can heighten anxiety ⁹. Lack of sleep only amplifies this effect, as sleep deprivation makes it harder to regulate emotions and can dysregulate the brain's mood circuits. It's no wonder new moms often feel like their nerves are frayed. As one pediatric health expert says, feeling “swamped and tired” after giving birth is *more common than you might think*, given you are coping with less sleep, hormonal shifts, and new routines ³.



Importantly, **you are not alone** in these feelings. One hospital report estimates **40–60% of new mothers** experience significant postpartum mood changes – and the true number may be even higher, because many women hide their struggles out of fear or shame ¹⁰. Realizing that others share similar feelings can be comforting. The Bible reminds us that “no temptation (or trial) has overtaken you that is not common to man” (1 Corinthians 10:13). In other words, what you’re facing is not unique or alien to the human experience – many godly mothers before you have walked this valley. Even biblical heroes experienced periods of despair or overwhelm: the prophet **Elijah** was so exhausted and discouraged after a stressful period that he asked God to take his life, until God intervened with rest and nourishment (1 Kings 19:4-8). The psalmist **David** cried out, *“My heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I”* (Psalm 61:2), voicing emotions that many overwhelmed mothers understand.

Emotional and Spiritual Challenges for a New Mother

Beyond the physical and hormonal factors, new mothers often battle emotional and spiritual challenges. You might feel **guilty** or ashamed for being overwhelmed. Society (and social media) can create pressure to be a “perfect mom” who is joyous and put-together. In Christian circles, this pressure can be compounded by the false idea that a good Christian *always* feels peace and gratitude. Let’s dispel that myth right now: needing help or feeling depressed **does not** mean you lack faith or are failing God. In truth, **postpartum depression isn’t a spiritual failure at all** – rather, it’s one aspect of living in a fallen world where our bodies and minds experience brokenness ¹¹. The *Bible* teaches that because of the Fall (Genesis 3), even the holiest people can suffer illness or depression; but it also teaches that **Christ redeems us from all shame**. *“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:1). One Christian author and mom who endured PPD wrote, *“Postpartum depression doesn’t equal spiritual failure... our bodies experience all kinds of brokenness on this side of the fall.”* She reminds us that Jesus already **took all of our guilt and shame** on the cross, so we do not need to carry that guilt ourselves ¹¹.

It’s vital to remember that **God is not angry with you** for feeling this way. The Lord **compassionately understands our weakness**. *“For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust”* (Psalm 103:14). Jesus himself experienced exhaustion and sorrow during His time on earth – He wept (John 11:35), He got overwhelmed by crowds and sought solitude (Luke 5:16), and He even said, *“My soul is deeply grieved”* (Matthew 26:38). Hebrews 4:15 assures us that we have a Savior who can **sympathize with our weaknesses**. So instead of judging yourself harshly, accept the grace and compassion God is extending to you.

You also might feel a spiritual **dryness or distance** from God during this season. Intense fatigue and depression can blunt our emotional experience of God’s presence. You may struggle to pray or read the Bible when you’re exhausted. Know that this is a *common* challenge and it does not mean God has left you. Just as a loving parent is tender with an ill child, so God’s mercy is gentle toward you right now. Isaiah 40:11 beautifully portrays God as a shepherd who “gently leads those that have young.” The Lord is **especially gentle with mothers of infants**, recognizing the load you carry. He invites you, *“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28). Cling to that promise – Jesus offers rest for your soul even when your body is tired and your mind is anxious.

If you find yourself asking spiritual questions like “Why am I not feeling the joy of the Lord right now?” or “Where is God in my struggle?”, take heart. The heroes of faith asked similar questions. The psalmist cried, *“How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?”* (Psalm 13:1). Yet, as he poured out his pain to God, he also preached to his own heart, *“Why are you cast down, O my soul?... Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him”*



(Psalm 42:11). **Your current feelings are not the end of the story.** You *will* feel hope and joy again by God's grace, even if it seems distant now. In fact, the struggles of this season can lead to a deeper faith in the long run – a faith that knows by experience that **God's grace is sufficient** even when we are weak (2 Corinthians 12:9). The **apostle Paul** himself suffered bouts of extreme hardship that left him feeling crushed (2 Corinthians 1:8-9), yet he learned to **rely on God's strength** and not his own. *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness,"* the Lord told Paul, and Paul responded, *"I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me"* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). In the same way, **acknowledging your need for help** – whether that's leaning on friends or speaking to a doctor – is not a lack of faith, but an act of humility that invites God's power to work through others. God often provides His comfort and strength *through* practical means like supportive people, wise counselors, or even medical treatment. There is **no conflict between faith and getting help**; in fact, seeking help is a wise, biblical step (Proverbs 11:14).

Finally, don't lose sight of the bigger picture of hope. **Postpartum depression and anxiety are temporary and treatable.** They do not define you, and they cannot separate you from Christ's love. Scripture encourages us to **focus our hope on God** rather than solely on our symptoms lifting. *"We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope"* (Romans 5:2-4). This doesn't mean we *enjoy* suffering, but it means God can use even a dark time like PPD to refine us and eventually build a deeper hope within us. *"This light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison"* (2 Corinthians 4:17). Every long night up with the baby, every tear of frustration, is known to God and will be redeemed in His perfect plan. **Nothing** – not depression, not anxiety, not exhaustion – **can separate you from the love of God** in Christ (Romans 8:38-39). He is walking with you through this valley (Psalm 23:4), even if you can't feel it.

Practical Tips for Coping with Postpartum Overwhelm

After laying that foundation of understanding, let's turn to **practical steps** you can take to ease the overwhelm. These recommendations are grounded in **clinical research** and seasoned with **biblical wisdom**. Each small step can make a real difference in your well-being. Remember, there's no quick fix or magic formula – but implementing these tips gradually can help you start feeling more stable, supported, and hopeful. As you consider these, ask God to guide you in which to focus on first, and give yourself *plenty of grace*. You don't have to do everything at once. Even one or two small changes can help.

1. Build a Support Network and Don't Go It Alone. You were **never meant to do this alone** – motherhood is *not* a solo project. The Bible teaches us to *"Carry each other's burdens"* (Galatians 6:2), and that *"two are better than one... for if they fall, one will lift up his fellow"* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). In practical terms, **reach out for help and support**. Talk to your **partner, family members, and trusted friends** about what you're feeling – don't keep it bottled up inside. Let them know specifically how they can assist, whether it's watching the baby while you nap, helping with meals or chores, or simply being a listening ear. **Joining a new-moms support group** (online or in person) or a church mothers' fellowship can also remind you that you're not alone and allow you to learn from others' experiences ¹² ¹³. Hearing fellow moms admit "I've been there too" can relieve a lot of anxiety. One medical fact sheet advises: *"Don't try to do too much or do everything by yourself. Ask your partner, family, and friends for help"* ¹⁴. There is no shame in asking for assistance; in fact, most people *want* to help but may not know what you need until you tell them. If you have older children, consider enlisting a relative or sitter to give you breaks. If you feel isolated, **reach out to your church community** – many churches have mentoring programs where an experienced mom can



come alongside you, or deacons who coordinate meals. Remember the early church shared their resources so “there were no needy persons among them” (Acts 4:34); let the body of Christ care for you in this season. *You are not imposing – you are giving others an opportunity to fulfill God’s law of love.* As one pediatrician put it, “You’re not supposed to go through this alone. Building a support team is key to help you be the best parent you can be.” ¹⁵ Lean on your team – include your doctor, your baby’s pediatrician, a counselor, as well as friends and family. **Prayerfully consider** inviting a few close friends to be your “support prayer team” too – people you can text when you’re having a rough day so they can pray for you on the spot.

2. Prioritize Rest and Sleep Whenever Possible. It’s no secret that **sleep deprivation** is a major factor in feeling overwhelmed. Jesus said, “Come to me... and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28), and while that primarily means spiritual rest, **physical rest** is also part of God’s design. Psalm 127:2 reminds us that “*He gives to His beloved sleep.*” In practical terms, this may be the most challenging tip for a new mom, but it’s one of the most important: **try to rest whenever you can.** Nap when the baby naps (yes, you’ve heard it a thousand times, but it’s true!). **Let the housework wait** or ask someone else to handle it. Your priority right now is recovery and caring for your baby – not having a spotless kitchen or replying to every non-urgent text. If possible, **sleep in shifts** with your spouse or another family member – for example, someone else gives a bottle (of pumped milk or formula) for one of the night feedings so you can get a longer stretch of uninterrupted sleep. If you’re breastfeeding and can’t get a long stretch at night, try to at least grab a daytime nap. Even a 30-minute rest with your eyes closed can recharge you. Research shows that lack of sleep can worsen anxiety and depression symptoms, so think of sleep as *medicine* for your mood. One tip from healthcare providers is to **limit additional visitors and commitments in the first couple of weeks** ¹⁶ so that you can focus on recovering and sleeping when possible, rather than hosting or entertaining. It’s okay to create boundaries – for instance, kindly saying no to optional gatherings or asking excited family to postpone visits if you’re not up for them yet. **Create a calming bedtime routine** for yourself as well as the baby: maybe a warm shower, a short prayer or reading a comforting Scripture (even a single verse to dwell on), and dimming lights in the evening. This can cue your body to wind down. Remember, even Jesus took time to sleep in a boat during a storm – indicating how vital rest is amid life’s chaos (Mark 4:38). Adequate rest is *not* a luxury; it’s a necessity for both your mental health and your ability to care for your child. As one expert succinctly said: “Sleep or rest when your baby sleeps” ¹⁷ – the dishes can wait.

3. Nourish Your Body with Healthy Food and Adequate Hydration. In the whirlwind of caring for a newborn, it’s easy to neglect your own basic needs like eating and drinking. But **good nutrition** is another foundational piece of recovery – your brain and body need fuel to function well. Try to eat **balanced, nutrient-rich meals** that can stabilize your energy and mood. Complex carbohydrates (whole grains, fruits, vegetables), protein (lean meats, beans, eggs), and healthy fats (nuts, olive oil, omega-3-rich foods like salmon or chia seeds) all support brain health and hormone balance. For example, omega-3 fatty acids have been linked to improved mood and are often recommended for perinatal depression support. Don’t crash diet or skip meals; postpartum is not the time to worry about losing baby weight. In fact, *restricting food can worsen* fatigue and emotional swings. Keep easy snacks handy (nuts, yogurt, cheese sticks, cut fruit) so you can grab something on the go. **Stay hydrated**, especially if you are breastfeeding (which requires extra fluids). Dehydration can mimic or worsen feelings of fatigue and anxiety. A simple trick is to drink a glass of water every time you feed the baby, to remind yourself to hydrate regularly. If family or friends ask how they can help, don’t hesitate to request **meal support** – whether that’s dropping off a prepared dinner, or bringing you groceries, or even just a cup of coffee. This is a season to accept those casseroles and food gifts gratefully. There’s a reason **community meals** are a tradition for new moms; it’s biblical to share food with those who are worn out (see 1 Kings 19:5-8, where an angel gives Elijah food when he was overwhelmed and exhausted).



Physiologically, stable blood sugar and sufficient nutrients can improve your mood and resilience. One medical guide lists self-care like *“eat healthy foods with plenty of nutrients”* as a key aspect of recovering from PPD ¹³. If you find that cooking is too much right now, consider using a slow-cooker or instant pot to make one-pot meals that last a few days, or use grocery delivery services to save energy. **Vitamin supplements** (with your doctor’s approval) can also be helpful – many postpartum women continue taking prenatal vitamins, which is often recommended while breastfeeding. Vitamin D, B-vitamins, iron, and calcium are especially important postpartum; deficiencies in these can contribute to fatigue or low mood, so follow up with your provider about a blood test if you suspect a deficiency. In summary, **caring for your body with food and water is part of caring for your spirit**. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) – even though that verse speaks to purity, we can apply the principle that maintaining your physical health honors God and equips you to serve your family. So, allow yourself that nourishing soup or hearty sandwich, and eat thankfully (1 Timothy 4:4-5).

4. Get Moving Gently and Soak Up Some Sunlight. When you’re exhausted and down, exercise might be the last thing on your mind. But you don’t need to hit the gym or start an intense regimen – **gentle movement** and a bit of fresh air can do wonders for your mood. Medical research consistently shows that physical activity helps reduce stress, anxiety, and depression by lowering cortisol (the stress hormone) and releasing endorphins (the “feel-good” chemicals) ¹⁸. Something as simple as strapping your baby in a stroller or carrier and **taking a slow walk around the block** can lift your spirits. **Natural sunlight** is also a proven mood-booster – morning sunlight in particular helps reset your circadian rhythms and increases serotonin, a neurotransmitter that improves mood and can later convert to melatonin to aid sleep ¹⁹. One OB/GYN notes that even if it’s just a short stroll, *“any movement decreases cortisol... and natural sunlight, especially morning light, is proven to increase serotonin levels”* ¹⁹. So, when you feel up to it, step outside for a few minutes. Breathe in the air, notice God’s creation (Matthew 6:26-29 encourages us to consider the birds and flowers – a form of mindful observation of nature that can calm anxious thoughts). Pushing the stroller in the park, doing some gentle stretches or postpartum yoga while the baby naps, or dancing slowly to worship music in your living room all count as beneficial movement.

Be sure to **get your doctor’s clearance** for exercise, especially if you had a C-section or complications, but generally light activity is encouraged as soon as you feel able. Start small – maybe 10 minutes of activity – and gradually increase. The goal is not to “get your body back” (ignore any pressure about that); the goal is to care for your mental health and enjoy a break from being indoors. **Invite a friend** to walk with you or join a postpartum mommy-and-me exercise class if available – that can combine social support with physical activity. Engaging in exercise can also improve your self-confidence in your body’s abilities as you recover strength. And from a spiritual perspective, moving your body can become an act of worship and gratitude. You might pray as you walk, or listen to worship songs or an uplifting podcast that feeds your soul. This way, you refresh both body and spirit. Even the prophet Elijah, after receiving food and rest, went on a 40-day journey by God’s strength (1 Kings 19:8) – a reminder that renewed physical strength can follow when we care for our bodies under God’s provision.

5. Practice Calming Techniques for Your Mind and Nervous System. When panic or stress hits, having a few **quick coping tools** can make a big difference. One scientifically backed method to quell anxiety is **deep breathing exercises**. Slow, deep breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system (the “rest and digest” response), which counteracts the fight-or-flight hormones and induces calm ²⁰ ²¹. A popular



technique recommended by stress experts (even used by Navy SEALs) is **“Box Breathing.”** Here’s how it works:

1. **Inhale** slowly through your nose for a count of 4.
2. **Hold** your breath for 4 seconds.
3. **Exhale** slowly through your mouth for a count of 4.
4. **Hold** empty for 4 seconds.

Then repeat this cycle 3–4 times until you feel a wave of calm ²². This simple exercise can be done anytime – when you’re rocking a fussy baby (try synchronizing your breaths with the rocking motion), or when you feel a surge of anger or panic rising. Some moms tape a note with a breathing prayer or the word “BREATHE” on the nursery wall as a reminder. As you breathe, you can even incorporate prayer by mentally repeating a short verse or phrase. For example, as you inhale, pray “Lord, fill me with Your peace,” and as you exhale, pray “I cast my cares on You” (paraphrasing 1 Peter 5:7). This blends physical relaxation with spiritual focus, calming body and soul.

Beyond breathing, other relaxation techniques include **progressive muscle relaxation** (tensing and then releasing one muscle group at a time, from your toes up to your head), or grounding techniques (e.g., observing and naming five things you see, four things you feel, etc., to anchor yourself in the present moment). **Brief mindfulness or meditation** is also effective – for a Christian, this can mean meditating on a Scripture. Psalm 46:10 says, *“Be still, and know that I am God.”* Simply sitting quietly for a couple of minutes, eyes closed, repeating a truth like “God is with me, I am safe,” can interrupt racing thoughts. There are even **smartphone apps** (like Calm, Headspace, or Abide – a Christian meditation app) that offer short guided relaxations or Bible meditations designed for busy people. Using such tools for 5-10 minutes a day can significantly reduce anxiety levels over time. Think of it as re-centering your **nervous system**. Just as Jesus calmed the storm with a word, sometimes pausing to breathe and pray invites Him to speak “Peace, be still” to the storm in your heart (Mark 4:39).

6. Adjust Your Expectations and Give Yourself Grace. One practical key to surviving the postpartum period is **letting go of perfectionism**. Things will not be “normal” for a while – and that’s okay. **Be realistic about your expectations for yourself and your baby** ¹⁶. You might have imagined maternity leave as a serene time of bonding, but reality might look like endless laundry, a fussy baby, and you still in pajamas at 2 PM. Release any unrealistic standards you’re holding. Your home may be messier. You might not cook homemade meals for a time (and cereal for dinner is fine!). The baby may not follow the ideal sleep schedule you read about. Adjusting expectations doesn’t mean lowering your care for your child; it means **recognizing that both you and baby are learning and growing**, and it will take time to find a rhythm. Jesus spoke of counting the cost before building (Luke 14:28) – in this context, it means acknowledging this season requires pouring a lot of time and energy into the baby, so some other things will temporarily take a backseat.

Importantly, **give yourself abundant grace**. Speak to yourself as you would to a dear friend: with kindness, not criticism. If you didn’t shower today or if you lost your patience and cried, it’s okay. Postpartum emotions are intense. Remind yourself of truths like “I am doing my best, and that is enough,” and “God sees my struggle and loves me just the same.” Resist the urge to compare yourself with that mom on Instagram who looks like she has it all together – remember, people usually share their highlights, not their hardest moments. Every baby is different, and every mother’s journey is unique. Your worth is not measured by how quickly you bounce back or how perfectly you adhere to some parenting philosophy.

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



Perfectionism will only rob you of joy. Instead, embrace what one counselor calls a “good enough mother” approach – recognizing that *being loving and attentive most of the time* is truly good enough for your baby’s healthy development. You don’t have to stimulate or interact with your infant *every* moment; it’s okay if they have some downtime while you rest.

From a faith perspective, remember that **God’s grace covers your shortcomings**. “*His mercies are new every morning*” (Lamentations 3:23). If you feel you fell short one day, you can start fresh the next. Also remember that **this season is temporary**. Babies grow and this intense phase will pass. There will come a day when you get more sleep, when you feel like yourself again, and when the cloud of postpartum emotions lifts. For now, keep expectations gentle. As Cleveland Clinic’s guidance advises new moms: “*Expect some good days and some bad days.*”²³ Don’t let a bad day convince you that you’re a bad mom – it’s just a hard day, and with support and rest, a better day will come. God is patient with you; be patient with yourself.

7. Stay Connected with Your Spouse and Loved Ones. Marriage or relationship dynamics often change with a new baby, and that can be another source of overwhelm. It’s easy for all your attention to go to the baby and for the couple relationship to be strained or distant. Make an effort, however small, to **reconnect with your spouse/partner** in this season. It might just be 15 minutes of talking after baby is asleep, or a simple prayer together in the morning, or even texting each other encouragement during the day. If you can arrange a short outing together (even just a walk or a quick coffee run while a family member watches the baby), that can help you feel more supported and united. **Communication** is key – let your spouse know what you are feeling and needing. They cannot read your mind, and they might be struggling in their own way too. Approach each other with grace and as teammates, not blaming. Ecclesiastes 4:12 says a “cord of three strands is not quickly broken” – you, your spouse, and God form that strong cord. Pray together if you can, even if it’s a 30-second prayer like, “Lord, give us strength and love for each other today.” Such moments can invite God’s help into your relationship and keep you emotionally connected. Also, **maintain contact with friends** (beyond just on social media). A quick phone call or a few text messages with a friend can remind you that there’s a world outside of diapers and feeds, and that people care about *you* as a person. One study has shown that mothers with robust social ties and spiritual support experience fewer depressive symptoms²⁴ – in other words, staying connected to your community and faith circles can buffer you against postpartum depression. **Church involvement** (if you’re able to attend or even watch online sermons) can provide spiritual nourishment and a sense of normalcy. If physically attending church with a newborn is too hard right now, consider inviting a Christian friend over for a short devotional at home, or utilize technology (Zoom Bible study, etc.). The idea is to prevent isolation – because isolation can intensify feelings of overwhelm. **You are still you**, and nurturing your adult relationships will ultimately benefit your child as well, because a supported mom is a better mom.

8. Nurture Your Spirit with Prayer and Scripture. As a Christian, your faith can be one of your greatest sources of strength during this challenging time. However, traditional spiritual disciplines might look different right now – and that’s okay. You may not have long stretches for quiet Bible study or undistracted prayer. Instead, **embrace spiritual nourishment in small bites**. Perhaps keep a Bible or devotional open on the kitchen counter to read a single verse here and there. Stick Post-it notes with encouraging scriptures around the house (for example, “*The Lord is my strength and my shield; in Him my heart trusts*” – Psalm 28:7, or “*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you*” – 1 Peter 5:7). These visible reminders can refocus your heart on God throughout the day. Many moms find that **praying throughout the day** – “arrow prayers” – is more feasible than one long prayer time. Whisper a quick prayer while rocking the baby: “*Lord, give me patience*” or “*Thank You for this child, help me through this hour.*” God hears even our shortest cries (Psalm 34:17). You can also play **worship music or audio Bible** while feeding or changing the baby, to



create an atmosphere of praise that can lift your mood. Singing a simple hymn or worship chorus to your baby can comfort both of you – “*Jesus Loves Me*” or “*Lord, I Need You*” can become lullabies that soothe your soul as well as the infant.

In times of anxiety or depression, certain scriptures can be like lifelines. Here are a few to cling to: “*When I am afraid, I put my trust in You*” (Psalm 56:3). “*The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit*” (Psalm 34:18). “*Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you*” (Isaiah 41:10). “*My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart*” (Psalm 73:26). Find one or two that speak most to you and meditate on them, maybe by repeating them in your mind when you nurse or rocking the baby to sleep. **Journaling** can also be a spiritual outlet – if you have the energy, jot down honest prayers in a journal. They might be as simple as “Help me, Lord” on the hard days and “Thank you for a good moment” on the better days. Over time, looking back at these entries can show you how God has been faithful.

Also consider enlisting **prayer support** from others. You might ask a few friends or church members to be praying for you regularly during this postpartum period. It is comforting to know others are interceding when you’re too tired to pray long yourself. James 5:16 says to pray for one another so that you may be healed – let others help carry you to Jesus in prayer, like the friends of the paralyzed man who lowered him through the roof to Jesus (Luke 5:18-20). Sometimes, you need others to carry you spiritually, and that’s what the body of Christ is for. Engaging in these spiritual practices, even minimally, can help you keep perspective that **God is with you in this**. In fact, research has found that mothers who maintain spiritual practices and community have **lower rates of postpartum depression** – one study of over 700 new moms found that those with **robust religious and spiritual lives did not show the same increase in depressive symptoms** in the months after birth, suggesting that faith can be a protective factor ²⁴. So while it may feel like one more thing to do, leaning into your relationship with God – in gentle, doable ways – truly can lighten your emotional burden. As 1 Peter 5:7 reminds us, “*Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*”

9. Know When to Seek Professional Help (Therapy or Medication). Reaching out for professional help is not a sign of weakness or lack of faith – it’s a wise step that can accelerate your healing. If you have been feeling overwhelmed, depressed, or anxious most days for more than a couple of weeks, or if your symptoms are **making it hard to function** (for example, you’re unable to sleep **even when the baby sleeps**, you’re losing interest in things you usually value, or you feel hopeless and unable to cope), please **talk to your healthcare provider** ²⁵ ²⁶. This might be your OB/GYN, midwife, family doctor, or even your baby’s pediatrician (pediatricians are trained to screen moms for postpartum depression during baby’s checkups). They can assess whether what you’re experiencing is beyond the typical baby blues. There are standardized questionnaires like the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale that many providers use to screen for PPD. Don’t hesitate to **be honest about your feelings** – doctors have heard it all and you won’t shock or disappoint them. In fact, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force **recommends routine screening** for postpartum depression, precisely because it’s so common ²⁷. If you find it hard to make the call yourself, ask your partner or a friend to call the doctor’s office for you and set up an appointment.

Therapy (counseling) can be extremely beneficial. A trained therapist – especially one familiar with postpartum issues, or a Christian counselor if you prefer – can provide you with coping strategies, a safe space to vent, and help you challenge negative thought patterns. Sometimes just **talking to a neutral, supportive professional** lifts a huge weight. There are also **postpartum support groups** (both in communities and online) where you can share and hear others’ stories, often moderated by a counselor.

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



Your doctor or hospital can refer you to local support groups. **Medication** is another tool that can help. Antidepressant or anti-anxiety medications, even for a temporary period, can correct chemical imbalances that contribute to PPD/PPA. Modern antidepressants (like SSRIs) are often prescribed for postpartum depression and are generally considered **safe to use while breastfeeding** – the exposure to the baby is minimal, and the benefits to the mother can outweigh any small risk, according to doctors ²⁸ ²⁹. Always discuss with your provider, but know that many moms take medication and continue nursing successfully. Taking a medication for your mental health is no more “unspiritual” than taking an antibiotic for an infection – it is a provision of God’s grace through medicine. If your doctor recommends an antidepressant or other treatment, **pray about it and do your research**, but don’t let fear or stigma prevent you from accepting help. Often, a combination of therapy and medication is most effective for moderate to severe postpartum depression ³⁰ ³¹. And the sooner you get treatment, the sooner you will start to feel better. As the American Academy of Pediatrics emphasizes, *“The way you feel affects your whole family. A healthy baby needs a healthy you. You are important too!”* ³². Getting help for yourself is getting help for your baby, because a more stable, healthy mom can provide better care.

In some cases, your doctor might also check for underlying physical issues that can exacerbate depression – for example, postpartum thyroid dysfunction is not uncommon and can cause depressive symptoms, so a simple blood test could rule that out ³³. If identified, treating such physical causes (like taking thyroid medication) can markedly improve mood. Again, this shows that PPD can have medical roots that need a medical solution. **There is no conflict between prayer and treatment** – God often works through doctors, counselors, and medicine. Think of the apostle Paul’s advice to Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach ailment (1 Timothy 5:23) – a practical “medical” remedy of that time. Similarly, using modern remedies for your mental wellness is part of wise stewardship of your health.

If at any point you experience **thoughts of harming yourself or your baby**, that is a red flag that requires immediate help. These intrusive thoughts can be a symptom of severe PPD or postpartum *psychosis* (a rare but serious condition). Do **not** be afraid to seek emergency help in that case – call a mental health crisis line or have someone take you to the ER. The National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available by dialing **988** (in the US), and there is also a specific **National Maternal Mental Health Hotline: 1-833-943-5746 (1-833-9-HELP4MOMS)**, which you can call or text 24/7 for support ³⁴. Postpartum Support International also has a helpline (1-800-944-4773) where you can get connected to resources ³⁴. Save these numbers in your phone or on your fridge. Remember, needing urgent help is nothing to be ashamed of – it’s a brave step to protect yourself and your child. As soon as you reach out, you’re opening a door to hope and healing. With proper treatment, **almost all women with postpartum depression do recover** and feel like themselves again ³⁵. There is light at the end of the tunnel, and professionals can help guide you toward it.

Real-World Case Study: From Overwhelmed to Hopeful

To illustrate how these tips can come together, let’s look at a real-world example (with names changed for privacy). **Emily** is a 32-year-old first-time mom who, a few weeks after childbirth, found herself crying daily and feeling utterly inadequate. She loved her baby, but she felt *numb* and anxious, and was terrified she was “doing everything wrong.” Emily was barely sleeping 3–4 hours a night, had no appetite, and felt disconnected from God and her husband. She scored an 18 out of 30 on the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (for context, a score above 13 often indicates probable PPD).

- **Baseline:** At 6 weeks postpartum, Emily reported feeling **overwhelmed** nearly every moment. She often thought, “I can’t handle this,” and rated her daily anxiety levels as 8/10. She had withdrawn

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



from friends out of shame, and her relationship with her husband was strained due to irritability and lack of communication. She also expressed spiritual guilt, believing she was failing as a Christian mother because she wasn't feeling joyful.

- **Interventions:** At her six-week checkup, Emily's OB screened her and formally diagnosed **postpartum depression**. The doctor prescribed a low-dose **SSRI antidepressant** and referred her to a therapist who specialized in perinatal mood disorders. Emily was hesitant at first (she worried about taking medication while breastfeeding), but her doctor reassured her and provided evidence that the medication was safe and that treating her depression was the best thing for her and baby. Emily also opened up to a close friend from church, who organized a meal train and connected Emily with a small moms' prayer group. Emily's husband joined her for a few therapy sessions to learn how to support her better. Together, they created a new nighttime routine: he took over the 10 PM feeding with a bottle so Emily could **sleep a 5-hour stretch**. Emily also started doing **brief walks** outside each morning with the baby in a stroller, using that time to pray and breathe deeply. She utilized relaxation techniques learned in therapy, like the 4-7-8 breathing exercise, whenever she felt a panic attack coming on. Importantly, Emily began **reframing her negative thoughts** in counseling – instead of "I'm a bad mom," she learned to tell herself, "I'm a caring mom doing my best, and it's okay to need help." She posted Philippians 4:13 on her bathroom mirror: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* This reminded her that even though she felt weak, Christ's strength was available for each small task (like those 3 AM feedings).
- **Outcome:** After about **3 months** of consistent treatment and support, Emily experienced a significant turnaround. Her EPDS score dropped to **5**, indicating minimal depressive symptoms. She was sleeping about **6-7 hours total** in a 24-hour period (still fragmented, but improved). Her anxiety went down to a manageable level (she rated it 3/10 most days). She reported genuinely enjoying moments with her baby, even laughing at the baby's silly expressions – something she couldn't recall doing at her low point. Emily's husband noticed she smiled more and accepted his help without as much guilt. Spiritually, Emily said she *"felt God's presence again"* in her life – not every moment, but she had a renewed sense that He had carried her through this trial. At a moms' group meeting, Emily openly shared her story. She was amazed to find several other women had gone through similar struggles. This honest fellowship broke the power of isolation and shame. By 6 months postpartum, with her doctor's guidance, Emily continued on her medication and counseling, and considered tapering off the antidepressant around one year postpartum as she remained stable. **Baseline vs. Outcome Metrics:** Emily's depression and anxiety scores improved by about **70%**, she went from sleeping only 3-4 hours to **6+ hours**, and her bonding with her baby went from a "4/10" (by her own subjective report) to a "9/10." Perhaps most importantly, Emily's sense of **hope** returned – she described herself as feeling "like me again." This case illustrates that with a combination of medical help, community support, self-care, and faith, it is entirely possible to go from a very overwhelmed state to enjoying motherhood and life again.

(Every mother's journey will look a little different, but Emily's story shows that improvement is possible. If you identify with her baseline, consider which of her steps might be helpful for you. And remember, reaching out for help is the first and often hardest step – but as Emily experienced, it can lead to real relief.)



Moving Forward with Hope and Joy

Dear sister in Christ, if you are feeling overwhelmed in this postpartum season, please know that **there is hope**. The overwhelm you feel today is not permanent. With time, support, and God's grace, you will find your equilibrium again. **Joy will return** – perhaps slowly at first, like the sunrise creeping over the horizon, but eventually in full daybreak. Psalm 30:5 declares, *"Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning."* Your "morning" will come! In the meantime, do not punish yourself for the tears and hard days – God collects your tears in a bottle (Psalm 56:8), meaning He tenderly notices every sorrow.

Take things **one day (or one hour) at a time**. Celebrate small victories, like a decent nap or a calm moment with your baby. Lean on those God has placed around you. Embrace the tools of therapy or medicine if needed as gifts from God's hand. And continue to invite Jesus into your journey daily. He **promised** us, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5), and *"I am with you always"* (Matthew 28:20). That includes at 2 AM when you're up with a crying infant and feeling alone – He is there, watching over you and your child. When you whisper "help me, Lord," He hears and sustains you, even if the answer is subtle or comes through other people.

As you apply these practical tips – resting, seeking support, nourishing your body and soul – give yourself permission to be a **recipient of grace**. You are a beloved daughter of God, not just a mom-machine expected to have it all together. Jesus invites you to sit at His feet like Mary (Luke 10:39-42), even if that "sitting" is in the form of collapsing into a chair for a moment of refuge. *"The Lord your God is in your midst, a Mighty One who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you with His love"* (Zephaniah 3:17). What a picture of God as the ultimate loving parent – **He will quiet you with His love**. Allow Him to quiet your anxious heart.

In time, as you heal, you will be able to encourage other new moms with the comfort you have received (2 Corinthians 1:4). None of this experience will be wasted. But for now, the priority is **you getting the support and care you need**. A healthy, supported mom is the best gift you can give your baby. *"A joyful heart is good medicine"* (Proverbs 17:22), and while you might not feel joyful yet, the steps you take now – both practical and spiritual – are paving the way for genuine joy to bloom again in your life. Hold on to hope. **God is for you and with you**, and brighter days are ahead.

"Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens." (Psalm 68:19) –

You are not carrying this burden alone, the Lord is carrying you.

Take a deep breath, sister – one day at a time, you will get through this. And the same Jesus who turned water into wine can turn your weariness into **joy** once more.

You've got this, and more importantly, **God's got you**.

References:

1. Office on Women's Health – *"Postpartum Depression Fact Sheet."* U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (Information on PPD prevalence and symptoms.) [WomensHealth.gov](https://www.womenshealth.gov/postpartum-depression)



2. Cleveland Clinic – *“Postpartum Depression: Causes, Symptoms & Treatment.”* Last reviewed 04/12/2022. (Medical overview of PPD, coping tips, and reassurance that it’s not the mother’s fault.) [ClevelandClinic.org](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9312-postpartum-depression)
3. Baylor Scott & White Health (Andrea Palmer, MD) – *“Why it’s time to talk about postpartum anxiety.”* May 12, 2023. (Discussion of postpartum anxiety vs. depression, and tips like Box Breathing and exercise to reduce cortisol.) [BSWHealth.com](https://www.bswhealth.com/blog/why-its-time-to-talk-about-postpartum-anxiety)
4. HealthyChildren.org (American Academy of Pediatrics) – *“Is it normal to feel completely overwhelmed after having a baby?”* (Gerri L. Mattson, MD, MSPH, FAAP). (Q&A format advice, emphasizing support, that it’s common to struggle, and urging moms to seek help – “You’re not supposed to go through this alone.”) [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/is-it-normal-to-feel-completely-overwhelmed-after-having-a-baby.aspx)
5. Risen Motherhood (Lindsey Carlson) – *“A Gospel Prescription in Postpartum Depression.”* Jan 8, 2020. (Christian perspective on PPD, addressing guilt, need for rest, hope in the gospel. Reminds that PPD is not a spiritual failure and cites Scripture for encouragement.) [RisenMotherhood.com](https://risenmotherhood.com)
6. Association for Psychological Science – *“Spirituality May Help Buffer Some New Mothers Against Postpartum Depression.”* (Summary of research by Alyssa C. D. Cheadle et al., *Clinical Psychological Science*, 2014). (Study of 700+ mothers finding that strong religious/spiritual life correlated with fewer depressive symptoms postpartum.) [psychologicalscience.org](https://www.psychologicalscience.org)
7. Office of Women’s Health – *“Anxiety Disorders During and After Pregnancy.”* (Not explicitly cited above, but related resource on postpartum anxiety mentioned in Women’s Health site.) [WomensHealth.gov](https://www.womenshealth.gov)
8. Postpartum Support International – **Postpartum Mental Health Support** (Helpline: 1-800-944-4773) and resources. (PSI offers support groups and information for mothers worldwide.) [postpartum.net](https://www.postpartum.net)
9. National Maternal Mental Health Hotline – **1-833-943-5746 (Call or Text)**. (A 24/7 hotline providing free, confidential support from trained counselors for new mothers dealing with mental health challenges.) [MCHB / HRSA](https://www.mchb.hrsa.gov)
10. Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV) – (Scripture quotations throughout the article, providing spiritual encouragement and truth.)

1 2 8 12 14 25 27 33 Postpartum depression

<https://womenshealth.gov/mental-health/mental-health-conditions/postpartum-depression>

3 15 29 32 34 Is it normal to feel completely overwhelmed after having a baby? - HealthyChildren.org

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/is-it-normal-to-feel-completely-overwhelmed-after-having-a-baby.aspx>

4 7 13 16 17 23 26 28 31 35 Postpartum Depression: Causes, Symptoms & Treatment

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9312-postpartum-depression>

5 6 9 10 18 19 22 30 Why it's time to talk about postpartum anxiety

<https://www.bswhealth.com/blog/why-its-time-to-talk-about-postpartum-anxiety>

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



11 A Gospel Prescription In Postpartum Depression — Risen Motherhood

<https://www.risenmotherhood.com/articles/a-gospel-prescription-in-postpartum-depression>

20 Breathing Practices for Stress and Anxiety Reduction

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10741869/>

21 Effect of breathwork on stress and mental health: A meta-analysis of randomised-controlled trials | Scientific Reports

[https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-27247-y?](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-27247-y?error=cookies_not_supported&code=5c626770-5f27-4890-98c4-0b88b45dd4be)

[error=cookies_not_supported&code=5c626770-5f27-4890-98c4-0b88b45dd4be](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-27247-y?error=cookies_not_supported&code=5c626770-5f27-4890-98c4-0b88b45dd4be)

24 Spirituality May Help Buffer Some New Mothers Against Postpartum Depression – Association for Psychological Science – APS

<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/publications/observer/obsonline/spirituality-may-help-buffer-new-mothers-against-postpartum-depression.html>