



Nervous Breakdown: What It Feels Like Physically and Finding Hope in Christ

Understanding “Nervous Breakdown” – A Crisis of Body and Mind

The term “**nervous breakdown**” is not an official medical diagnosis, but it describes a very real mental health crisis. It generally refers to a state of being **overwhelmed by extreme stress or emotional anguish** to the point of being unable to carry out daily life ¹ ². In a nervous breakdown (sometimes called a *mental breakdown*), a person feels they simply “**cannot carry this load any longer**” – the mind and body’s way of signaling total exhaustion ³. This often happens after **prolonged stress or trauma** – for example, the death of a loved one, an unrelenting workload, family turmoil, or other major life pressures ⁴. It’s important to understand that a nervous breakdown is **not a sign of personal or spiritual failure**. Even though it’s not a specific disorder in manuals like the DSM-5 ⁵, it is a **serious health crisis** where someone’s normal coping abilities collapse under weighty stress. As the Cleveland Clinic notes, “*your feelings, reactions and symptoms are very real... These are not signs of personal weakness or failure*” ⁶. In other words, **Christians are not exempt** from such struggles – faithful people can and do experience breakdowns, just as they might suffer other illnesses ⁷. Recognizing this truth sets the stage for compassion and hope rather than shame.

Nervous Breakdown: What It Feels Like Physically

One of the defining features of a nervous breakdown is how it **manifests in our bodies**. Those who have gone through it often describe intense physical symptoms that can be frightening. During a breakdown, your body’s natural “**fight-or-flight**” stress response is in overdrive – stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol surge, producing a cascade of bodily reactions. **Heart rate spikes and pounds**, breathing becomes rapid or difficult, and you may feel chest pain or tightness. **Trembling, shaking, or dizziness** are common, as the nervous system is on high alert. People often experience **sweaty or clammy hands**, maybe even hot flashes or chills, as if the body doesn’t know whether to fight or flee. The stomach may churn – leading to **nausea or an upset stomach** (some get butterflies; others might vomit) ⁸ ⁹. It’s not unusual to feel **lightheaded** or faint, and some suffer tension headaches or migraines. Muscles throughout the body tense up, which can cause aches, especially in the neck or shoulders. In short, a nervous breakdown can *feel like a whirlwind inside your body*: a racing heart, knotted stomach, shaky limbs, and breathless panic all at once.

Real-world example: One pastor recovering from severe burnout described his breakdown’s physical toll this way: “*Fitful sleep was invaded with panic attacks involving adrenaline rushes, heart spasms, and phobic thoughts... the struggle was equal in intensity to awakening from a nightmare only to discover it is real*” ¹⁰. This vivid account shows how intensely **frightening and exhausting** the physical experience can be. In fact, many people going through a breakdown fear they’re having a heart attack or “going crazy” because the **symptoms are so intense**. It becomes nearly impossible to relax – the body’s alarm system refuses to shut off. Often there is **extreme fatigue** as well: you feel bone-tired, yet you may be unable to sleep (or sleep is restless and non-refreshing). **Insomnia** can worsen the cycle, as exhaustion



further erodes the ability to cope ¹¹ ¹² . On the other hand, some experience the opposite – sleeping far more than usual as their system crashes. Appetite might change too; chronic stress can either shut down hunger or drive emotional overeating. In essence, a nervous breakdown is **not just an emotional experience – it’s intensely physical**. Our bodies and minds are deeply connected, so severe emotional distress triggers very real physiological reactions. The “*gas pedal*” of the sympathetic nervous system is stuck down, flooding the body with stress signals, while the “*brakes*” that normally calm us (the parasympathetic system) fail to engage ¹³ ¹⁴ . No wonder it feels like being trapped in high gear – heart racing, engine revving, but running on empty.

Why do these physical symptoms happen? God designed our bodies with a built-in survival system for danger – the fight-or-flight response. When you face a threat, the brain’s alarm (the amygdala and hypothalamus) triggers the release of adrenaline, preparing you to fight or run ¹⁵ ¹⁶ . Your heart pumps faster to supply muscles with blood, your breathing quickens to get more oxygen, and energy-supplying glucose floods your bloodstream ¹⁷ ¹⁸ . This response is incredibly useful if you’re facing a true danger. But in a nervous breakdown, **chronic stress** or trauma has effectively jammed your “alarm” in the *on* position. Your body reacts as if *everything* is an emergency. Over time, this **chronic activation** wears down your physical health – contributing to issues like high blood pressure, weakened immunity, and exhaustion ¹⁹ ²⁰ . It’s as if the “**motor**” of your stress response has been idling too high for too long, and the engine begins to falter ²¹ .

For the person experiencing it, **physical symptoms of a breakdown can be terrifying**, but they are a natural consequence of severe stress. It’s important to remember you’re *not* going crazy. These sensations – rapid heartbeat, sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, etc. – are your body’s cry for help, a signal that **you’ve been under far too much for too long**. Even the **fatigue and collapse** that often come after the adrenaline is spent are part of the picture – your body essentially forcing you to stop and rest. In a way, it’s like a circuit breaker tripping to prevent further damage.

Emotional and Spiritual Dimensions of Hitting “Rock Bottom”

Alongside the physical storm, a nervous breakdown involves **deep emotional pain and mental turmoil**. It often feels like “*hitting rock bottom*” internally – an overwhelming sense of **despair, anxiety, or depression** that one cannot simply shake off. You may feel intensely **anxious and fearful**, or alternately utterly numb and drained. Emotions swing erratically; one moment you’re on the verge of tears, the next you’re irritable or angry over small things, then back to hopelessness. People in this state commonly withdraw from normal life: **avoiding social contact, skipping work or responsibilities**, and perhaps even neglecting basic self-care because coping with daily tasks feels impossible ²² ²³ . Concentration and memory often falter – the mind feels hazy or overloaded (“brain fog”). In severe cases, thoughts of self-harm or wanting to escape life can emerge, signaling **urgent need for help** ²⁴ ²⁵ .

For a Christian, these emotional symptoms carry a heavy spiritual weight as well. Believers might wrestle with **guilt or confusion**: “*Why do I feel this way if I trust God?*” or “*Is God angry with me for not having joy?*” In truth, experiencing a breakdown **does not mean you’ve lost your faith or that God has abandoned you**. The Bible presents a realistic picture of human frailty – even among great men and women of faith. **Elijah**, after a mighty victory over the false prophets, fell into despair and told God “*I have had enough, Lord... Take my life*” (1 Kings 19:4). **King David** wrote of his own anguish, “*My soul is in deep anguish... I am worn out from my groaning. All night long I flood my bed with weeping*” (Psalm 6:3,6 NIV). In another psalm he describes “*my*

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heart throbs, my strength fails me... the light has gone from my eyes" (Psalm 38:10 NIV), language that echoes the darkness of depression. Even **Jesus** experienced overwhelming distress in the Garden of Gethsemane. He confided in His disciples, *"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death"* (Matthew 26:38 NIV), and He prayed in such agony that His sweat fell like drops of blood (Luke 22:44). These examples remind us that **faithful people can reach their limit**. Feeling broken-hearted or mentally crushed doesn't disqualify you from God's love – in fact, Scripture says *"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit"* (Psalm 34:18 NIV).

When you're in the throes of a breakdown, it can be extremely **hard to sense God's presence or to recall His promises**. In such moments, the mind is often flooded with negativity and fear. A Christian counselor described it aptly: *"the body is often in high fight/flight, and the rational mind is offline... it is so difficult in such a state to remember what is true"* ²⁶. This is where **spiritual truth must gently permeate our overwhelmed minds** – not as platitudes or quick fixes, but as lifelines. It may help to remember that our human makeup is both **physical and spiritual**. We are **body-and-soul beings**, and both aspects need care ²⁷. There may be **biological factors** to your breakdown (such as neurotransmitter imbalances, hormonal exhaustion, etc.), and there are certainly **spiritual and emotional factors** (like despair, hopelessness, maybe lies you're believing about yourself or God). **Attending to both** is key. The Church hasn't always done a good job of this – sometimes mental health struggles were stigmatized, as if a strong Christian "shouldn't" feel depressed or anxious. But that perspective is neither realistic nor biblical ²⁸ ²⁹. In fact, denying or hiding mental pain can make it worse. King David, when he kept silent about his inner anguish, said *"my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long"* (Psalm 32:3 NIV). We are encouraged instead to **pour out our hearts**. God already knows our thoughts (Psalm 139:2-4), and He invites us to come to Him with our burdens rather than bear them alone.

If you are in this dark valley, know that **you are not alone in Scripture or in life**. Many believers through history – from biblical figures to respected modern Christians – have walked through depression, anxiety, or breakdowns. For example, renowned preacher Charles Spurgeon battled recurring depressions and spoke of *"the mind [having] its sick and its weary hours"*. Contemporary author **Sheila Walsh** is a poignant case: in 1992, at the height of a successful Christian music and TV ministry, Sheila hit a wall. She later revealed that she had a **complete nervous breakdown on national television**, after which she spent a month in a psychiatric hospital for severe clinical depression ³⁰. She felt immense shame, thinking she had "let God down." Yet in that lowest moment, she experienced God asking her one penetrating question: *"Do you believe that I love you?"* ³¹. This realization – that **God's love was still holding her even in her breakdown** – became a turning point in her healing. Sheila went on to describe that season not as the end of her ministry, but the beginning of a deeper understanding of grace. Today she often shares her story to encourage others, testifying that seeking professional help *alongside* fervent faith saved her life.

The emotional and spiritual takeaway is this: **Having a breakdown does not mean God has abandoned you, nor that you are a "bad Christian."** It means you are human. The promise of God for His children is not that we'll never walk through dark valleys, but that *"even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me"* (Psalm 23:4 NIV). When you are "at the end of yourself," as painful as that is, it can also become the place where **God's grace meets you most intimately**. The Apostle Paul experienced a tormenting trial that wouldn't lift and pleaded with God repeatedly to remove it. God's answer was, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness."* Paul then wrote, *"For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NIV). In a mysterious way, our utter weakness can open us to God's strength like never before.



Finding Strength and Hope During a Breakdown

When you're in the middle of a breakdown, **hope may feel beyond reach**. Yet the Christian faith offers real hope precisely for times like this. **Jesus Christ is intimately acquainted with suffering** and invites us to come to Him in our weariness. He says, *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28 NIV). Note that Jesus doesn't specify *what* burden – whether spiritual oppression, physical illness, or mental anguish. *All* who are weary are invited. In Christ, you have permission to be honest about your pain. Far from condemning you for it, He **sympathizes with our weaknesses** (Hebrews 4:15) because He walked through the full range of human suffering. The shortest verse in the Bible, *"Jesus wept"* (John 11:35), shows that our Lord is not distant or dispassionate about our pain; He enters into it with compassion.

So what can you hold onto when it feels like your world is falling apart?

- **God's Nearness:** *"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted"* (Psalm 34:18) – even if you don't *feel* Him, He is near. Sometimes we have to choose to trust His promise of presence over our perception. Remember, feelings come and go (especially in a breakdown when our emotions are in turmoil), but God's character and His promises remain steadfast. He has said, *"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5 NIV). **You are not alone**, even when you feel lonely.
- **God's Understanding:** Jesus understands exactly what overwhelming sorrow feels like (see Matthew 26:38 again). Hebrews 4:15 reminds us that in Jesus, we have a High Priest who *"has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin."* That means He empathizes; He doesn't scold you for feeling anxious or depressed. In fact, 1 Peter 5:7 tells us to *"cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."* Picture that: God inviting you to offload your anxious thoughts onto *His* shoulders. **Prayer** becomes not just a religious duty but a lifeline – an open line to the One who cares deeply about every fear and tear. *"I pour out before Him my complaint; before Him I tell my trouble,"* wrote the psalmist (Psalm 142:2 NIV). You too can pour out your heart. It's okay if your prayers are messy sobs and honest pleas – God would rather have your honest pain than a pious facade.
- **Purpose in Pain:** While it might not feel like it now, God can **redeem this season of suffering** for good. Psalm 30:5 says, *"Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning."* Your breakdown can become a breakthrough in time. Many who endure these dark nights of the soul emerge with greater empathy, humility, and reliance on God. Romans 5:3-5 speaks of suffering producing perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope – a hope that doesn't disappoint us because of God's love poured into our hearts. This doesn't mean *we seek* suffering or call bad things good; rather, we trust God to bring beauty from ashes (Isaiah 61:3) as only He can. One Christian counselor noted that for believers, a breakdown *"can mark the beginning of restoration... God turns ashes into beauty"* ³². It may be hard to see now, but cling to the promise that **God is at work in you even through this** (Philippians 1:6).
- **Identity in Christ:** Mental health issues can make us feel "damaged" or worthless. You might think, *"I'm just broken. I'm a burden to others. I'm a failure."* These are painful lies that often accompany depression and anxiety. The truth is, **your worth in God's eyes has not changed one bit**. You are still His beloved child. *"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"* (1 John 3:1 NIV). Nothing – not even a breakdown – can separate you from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:38-39). It's notable that when Sheila Walsh was at her lowest, God's

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challenge to her was not about what she had *done* or *not done*, but whether she truly believed she was loved ³¹ . That is the bedrock question for all of us: do we believe God loves us, right now, in our messy state? If we can embrace that truth, it **changes everything** ³³ . Even if your emotions can't grasp it yet, let your mind be reminded of it daily through Scripture: *"I have loved you with an everlasting love"* (Jeremiah 31:3), *"He will take great delight in you... He will rejoice over you with singing"* (Zephaniah 3:17). Such verses are love letters from God to your wounded soul.

During a breakdown, **clinging to hope** might look like repeating these promises to yourself even when you don't feel them – a form of *"self-talk"* that echoes God's truth. The Psalmists often did this, essentially preaching to their own souls: *"Why, my soul, are you downcast?... Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him"* (Psalm 42:11). It's not a quick fix, but over time, feeding your mind with truth can counter the despair. In therapeutic terms, this aligns with techniques from **cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)**, where you challenge and replace negative thought patterns – something the Bible has spoken of as *"renewing your mind"* (Romans 12:2) and *"taking every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ"* (2 Corinthians 10:5). In fact, Christian counselors sometimes call this approach *"spiritual warfare thinking"*, using God's Word to combat the lies of hopelessness ³⁴ . By **leaning on God's promises** and the presence of Christ with you, you can find a glimmer of light even in the valley. As one sufferer put it, *"Hope isn't in pretending everything is fine; it's in surrendering to the One who carries us when we cannot walk"* ³⁵ .

Healing and Recovery: An Integrated Approach

While spiritual hope is vital, **recovering from a nervous breakdown typically requires an integrated approach** – addressing the physical, emotional, and spiritual facets of your life. As a Christian, you can confidently pursue **multiple avenues of healing** without feeling that it betrays a lack of faith. God is the source of all wisdom and healing, whether it comes *directly* through prayer and spiritual practices or *indirectly* through doctors, counselors, and lifestyle changes. In fact, **modern medicine and psychology can be seen as instruments of God's grace**. Dr. Brian Briscoe, a Christian psychiatrist, notes that antidepressant medications can be *"an agent of mercy"* in God's hands for those who need relief ³⁶ . Similarly, Christian thinkers remind us that *"medication is a blessing, when it helps, but recognize its limits... It can change physical symptoms, but not spiritual ones"* ³⁷ ³⁸ . In other words, using medical help is a **wisdom issue, not a faith issue** ³⁹ . There should be no guilt in taking steps to restore your mental health, just as you wouldn't feel guilty treating a broken bone or diabetes. **God cares about your whole person.**

Here are key components of an integrated recovery plan, woven together with biblical wisdom:

- **Physical Self-Care and Lifestyle:** After (or during) a breakdown, your body needs time to heal from stress. Like the prophet Elijah, who after his collapse was first instructed to *"get up and eat"* and rest (1 Kings 19:5-8), you too may need a season of basic physical replenishment. Ensure you are **getting adequate rest and sleep** – sometimes medical professionals may prescribe short-term sleep aids if insomnia is severe ⁴⁰ . **Nutrition** is important: high stress can deplete certain nutrients, so eating a balanced diet fuels your brain and body for recovery ⁴¹ . (Even something as simple as stabilizing blood sugar with healthy meals can improve mood and anxiety levels.) Regular **exercise** is one of the best natural stress relievers – even brisk walks release endorphins and can lift your mood ⁴² . The Bible affirms the value of caring for our bodies; we are *"fearfully and wonderfully made"* (Psalm 139:14) and our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). Treating your body kindly – through rest, nutrition, and exercise – is part of good stewardship and **helps combat the physical fallout of stress**. Other practical steps include **reducing stimulants** that amp anxiety: for example,

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excessive caffeine can exacerbate palpitations and jitters ⁴³ . Cutting down on alcohol and avoiding any illicit drugs is crucial, as these can worsen depression/anxiety in the long run. Instead, **cultivate calming habits**: gentle stretches, taking relaxing baths, spending time in nature, or breathing exercises. Deep breathing and relaxation techniques actually counter the stress response by engaging the parasympathetic “calming” system ⁴⁴ . Even Scripture encourages stillness: *“Be still and know that I am God”* (Psalm 46:10). Practices like breathing prayers (inhaling God’s peace, exhaling your worry) combine physical calm with spiritual focus.

- **Supportive Relationships and Community: Don’t walk through this alone.** One of the worst things you can do in a breakdown is isolate yourself completely. We all need some downtime to heal, yes, but prolonged isolation fuels despair. The Bible emphasizes *“two are better than one... if either falls, one can help the other up”* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). **Reach out to safe, supportive people** – a close friend, a family member, a pastor or elder, or a support group. Simply sharing what you’re going through with a compassionate listener can lighten the burden. Galatians 6:2 urges believers to *“carry each other’s burdens”*, which is exactly what empathetic friends or a church community can do during this time. It might be wise to connect with a **Christian support group** for anxiety/depression (many churches have ministries, or organizations like Celebrate Recovery or Fresh Hope groups for mental health). These can remind you that you’re not the only Christian facing this and can offer practical tips and prayer support. If you don’t have a strong local support, consider seeking out a **Christian counselor** who can walk with you (many offer tele-counseling if needed). Sometimes just having someone regularly assure you *“You’re going to get through this, and I’m here with you”* provides immense comfort. Sheila Walsh, reflecting on her experience, highlighted how **true community** involves sharing not just “the good news” but also “our own lives – our struggles and hope” with one another ⁴⁵ . Let trusted people *into* your struggle rather than hiding. It might feel humbling, but it’s part of God’s provision for healing.
- **Professional Therapy (Psychological Help):** Engaging in therapy, especially with someone who respects your faith, can be a game-changer. One commonly recommended approach is **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**, which has a strong track record for treating anxiety and depression ⁴⁶ . CBT helps you identify negative thought patterns (e.g. “I’m a failure, nothing will ever get better”) and reframe them into healthier thoughts. It’s essentially training your mind to respond to stress differently – a very biblical concept (Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:8). A skilled therapist provides practical tools for coping: how to ground yourself during panic, how to break tasks into manageable steps when you’re overwhelmed, how to set boundaries and say “no” to prevent overload, etc. **Christian counselors** can also integrate prayer and Scripture in sessions if you desire, but even a competent secular therapist will help with skills to manage the emotional storm. Talk therapy can uncover underlying issues too – perhaps unresolved grief, past trauma, or deep-seated fears that have contributed to your breakdown. Working through these in a safe space brings long-term healing. **Don’t hesitate to seek professional help.** As Proverbs 11:14 says, *“in an abundance of counselors there is safety.”* It’s wise, not weak, to get counsel. And if you’re worried about stigma – remember, your mental health is as legitimate as your physical health. If you had a crippling physical injury, you’d see a doctor; so for a psychological injury, see a therapist or psychologist. Many churches can refer to trusted Christian therapists, or organizations like the **American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC)** offer directories.
- **Medication (When Appropriate):** In some cases, especially where clinical depression or severe anxiety disorder underlies the breakdown, medication can be very helpful. **Antidepressants or anti-**

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anxiety medications prescribed by a doctor (typically a primary care physician or psychiatrist) can address the biological side of the crisis. For example, antidepressant medication might help reset imbalanced serotonin levels, gradually lifting the intense despair or providing a platform of stability so you can engage in therapy and life again. As a Christian, using medication is **not “cheating” or showing lack of faith**. It’s utilizing a gift of God’s common grace. One biblical perspective put it this way: *“It is not a sin to use a God-given means of relief. There is nothing inherently wrong with seeking relief from present suffering”* ⁴⁷ ⁴⁸ . We see this principle even in Proverbs 31:6-7, which acknowledges giving *“strong drink to one who is perishing”* to dull pain (not advocating alcohol abuse, but recognizing the mercy of easing suffering). Of course, medications are not cure-alls and should be used under proper medical guidance. They usually take a few weeks to kick in, and there can be side effects, so discuss concerns with your doctor. But many Christians have found that a season of taking an antidepressant or anti-anxiety drug **enabled them to heal** – it calmed the physical symptoms enough for them to pray, read Scripture, and function again. If your brain were low on a critical chemical (like a diabetic is low on insulin), would taking a supplement be wrong? Not at all. In the same way, if your brain chemistry is depleted by stress, taking a medication to restore balance can be seen as receiving God’s provision. The key is not to put your ultimate hope in the pill – our hope remains in the Lord (Psalm 42:5) – but to be grateful that He can work through Zoloft or Prozac just as He works through penicillin or blood pressure meds. Use medication **with prayer**: pray for God to make it effective and to guide your doctor’s wisdom. And continue addressing spiritual needs (as meds can’t fill those). But know that **choosing to take medication is a matter of wisdom and personal discernment** ³⁹ . As one Christian counselor advises: *“Wise people seek counsel...and approach decisions prayerfully. They don’t put their hope in medicine but in the Lord”* ⁴⁹ . If it helps clear the fog of despair so you can experience God’s peace, it’s a positive tool.

- **Spiritual Practices and Renewal**: While addressing the physical and psychological, **do not neglect the spiritual renewal of your heart and mind**. This is not about legalism or checking religious boxes; it’s about healing your wounded spirit and reconnecting with the source of life. Engage in spiritual disciplines that bring you closer to God’s presence, at a pace that is gentle and not overwhelming. Here are a few: **Prayer**, even when you have no words – the Holy Spirit intercedes with groans when we cannot articulate our needs (Romans 8:26). Some days your prayer might just be, “Help me, Lord.” That’s okay. **Meditation on Scripture** is powerful – find verses that speak to your situation (the Psalms are a treasure trove for those in distress, as are passages in the Gospels where Jesus comforts the weary). Even reading one verse and **breathing it in** can start to calm your anxious heart. For instance, try breathing slowly while repeating “Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you” (Psalm 55:22) – a promise directly related to breakdowns ⁵⁰ . **Worship and music** can also soothe the soul – listening to hymns or worship songs about God’s faithfulness can bypass intellectual barriers and minister peace to you. King Saul in the Old Testament found relief from distressing spirits when David played the harp (1 Samuel 16:23). Many have likewise found that playing gentle worship music in their home or headphones brings calm. **Journaling or lament** is another practice: writing out your thoughts to God, or even composing your own psalm of lament, can be cathartic. God can handle our questions and complaints (just read Job or Lamentations for biblical proof). The key in spiritual practice is **consistency over intensity**. It’s better to sit quietly with God for 5 minutes a day than to try an hour-long study that you can’t mentally sustain right now. As you consistently turn to Him, even imperfectly, you will find your spiritual footing growing stronger. Isaiah 40:31 promises that *“those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength... they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”* That renewal often happens gradually – day by day, as we wait on Him.



- **Handling Underlying Issues:** A nervous breakdown can be a signal of underlying issues that need addressing. Through counsel and prayer, you might uncover root causes – perhaps unresolved grief, untreated trauma, chronic burnout from overcommitment, or deep-seated guilt/shame. **Invite God into those root areas.** Sometimes part of recovery is making life changes: setting healthier boundaries (even Jesus took time away from crowds to pray and rest, Mark 6:31), learning to say “no” to prevent chronic overload, or seeking reconciliation/forgiveness in strained relationships if those have weighed on your mind. It might also involve **repentance and receiving grace** if sin or false beliefs have contributed to your distress. For example, some Christians drive themselves to breakdown by believing “I must be everything to everyone” or “I’m only valued when I perform well.” These are not biblical truths, and letting God rewire those beliefs with His truth (“Your worth comes from being my child, not your performance”) can be incredibly freeing. **Renewing the mind** (Romans 12:2 again) isn’t just a cliché – it’s a core part of healing to align our thinking with God’s. This is where a combination of Scripture, wise mentors, and good therapy converge to bring deeper healing, not just symptom relief.

Finally, be patient with the **timeline of recovery**. Just as it likely took months or years of mounting stress to reach a breaking point, it may take some time to fully regain your strength. **Give yourself grace.** Small improvements matter: maybe today you could get out of bed and take a shower – praise God for that victory. Next week, maybe you’ll manage a short outing with a friend. Over time, these baby steps add up. Many people do recover and even **come out stronger**. The Cleveland Clinic notes that with accurate diagnosis, identification of stressors, and appropriate treatment, the acute symptoms of a breakdown often resolve within a few months ⁵¹ ⁵². Full recovery – including making life adjustments to prevent relapse – might take longer, but **healing is possible**. You can live joyfully again, and even **more deeply connected to God** than before. A Christian who went through a breakdown and healed testifies that it was “*not the end of the road, but the beginning of restoration*” ³² – a place where God rebuilt him from the inside out.

A Journey Toward Joy and Deeper Faith

Emerging from a nervous breakdown is truly a journey – one that encompasses medical help, psychological growth, and spiritual renewal. Along the way, remember that **God’s hand is on you** even when you feel broken. Psalm 73:26 declares, “*My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*” Your flesh (body) and heart (inner self) *may* fail – and indeed, in a breakdown they feel like they have – but God remains the steady strength of your heart. **He will not let you go.**

As you walk through recovery, celebrate the small markers of progress. Thank God for a good night’s sleep, or a moment of laughter, or a verse that spoke comfort to you today. These little glimmers are like the dawn light inching over the horizon after a long night. Proverbs 4:18 says, “*The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.*” You might only see a faint gleam now, but it will grow.

Also, **don’t be afraid to lean on others** and on God at each step. Humility is actually a gateway to grace: “*God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble*” (James 4:6). It’s okay to admit “I need help” – in fact, that’s where grace rushes in. The apostle Paul, after describing a near-breakdown experience of being “*under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure*”, wrote that “*this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God*” (2 Corinthians 1:8-9 NIV). Sometimes our trials strip away self-reliance so we learn to rely wholly on God’s faithfulness. And God *is* faithful – “*His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness*” (Lamentations 3:22-23 NIV).

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In due time, as healing takes root, you will find that **joy and purpose return**. Psalm 126:5 promises *“Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.”* The very tears you’re sowing now, watering the soil of your life, can produce a harvest of empathy, wisdom, and a testimony of God’s grace. Many who recover find that they can then **comfort others** who are going through similar trials, *“with the comfort we ourselves receive from God”* (2 Corinthians 1:4 NIV). Your story – even the messy, hard parts – can become a lifeline for someone else in the future. Nothing is wasted in God’s economy.

In conclusion, a nervous breakdown is an awful experience physically, mentally, and spiritually – **but there is hope**. Physically, your body can recover as you give it rest and care. Emotionally, you can heal through support and possibly therapy or medicine. And spiritually, you can emerge with a faith that’s been refined in the fire, more unshakable because it has endured the shaking. God does not break us without also offering to rebuild us stronger in Him. *“The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast”* (1 Peter 5:10 NIV).

Take heart: **breakdown can lead to breakthrough**. As you feel what you feel in your body and soul, don’t forget to also *“feel”* after God – reach out for Him in the dark, and you will find that He’s already holding you. *“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning”* (Psalm 30:5). That morning will dawn, and by God’s grace, you will rise with a testimony of **His faithfulness through it all**.

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