



ADVANCE

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PURSUE

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PROCLAIM

A FAITH-BASED GUIDE TO MENTAL HEALTH,
WHOLENESS, AND HOPE WITH
A 90-DAY DEVOTIONAL TO STRENGTHEN YOUR
JOURNEY

BY. CHAPLAIN, DR. FREDERICK D
WOODS

ADVANCE • PURSUE • PROCLAIM

Faith & Mental Health Devotional Guide A Journey to Healing,
Hope, and Wholeness in Christ

By Chaplain Dr. Frederick D. Woods

3C Empowerment Consulting

From the Author

I am Chaplain Dr. Frederick D. Woods, and for more than twenty-five years, I have served in the fields of human services and pastoral care counseling. My calling has taken me into hospitals, prisons, military bases, community centers, and sanctuaries—places where people wrestle with the storms of life.

Through these decades, I have witnessed the undeniable connection between faith and mental health. I have seen lives renewed through the power of scripture and prayer, and I have also seen the life-changing impact of professional counseling, medical treatment, and community support. I believe these are not competing forces, but God-given resources working together for our wholeness.

Too often, I have watched individuals quietly suffer because we, as believers, have not always known how to face the reality of mental illness with both compassion and truth.

This book, which combines a practical guide and a devotional, was born from three simple but powerful words: Advance, Pursue, and Proclaim. I first embraced these terms while serving as a facilitator and presenter at a powerful mental health conference hosted by United for Purpose, led by Unity Christian Fellowship International Ministries, Inc. That experience confirmed what I already knew in my spirit: the church must take an active role in leading people toward mental, emotional, and spiritual wholeness. The concepts within these pages are designed to inspire action, strengthen hope, and offer practical strategies—whether you are navigating your own mental health journey, walking alongside a loved one, or ministering to your broader community. My prayer is that this message will reach far and wide, so that together we may break the silence, end the stigma, and reflect the heart of Christ in how we care for one another.

Acknowledgments

My passion and concern for mental health, especially within the faith community, runs deep. I would like to acknowledge the unwavering support of my family, friends, colleagues, and the faith community, who have stood by me throughout my years of service.

To the mental health professionals, advocates, and ministries who work tirelessly to heal broken hearts and renew weary minds, your labor is not in vain. To those who have shared their personal testimonies of struggle and victory, thank you for your courage. And most importantly, I acknowledge my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is the Wonderful Counselor and source of all hope.

To every reader who has opened this book — thank you. You may be here because you are seeking help, understanding, or encouragement, and I want you to know: your presence here is an act of courage. Whether you are walking through your own mental health journey or standing beside a loved one, I thank you for choosing faith over fear. Thank you for your willingness to learn, to reflect, and to take the next step toward healing. Together, we can break the silence, embrace truth, and advance in mind, body, and spirit. Over the years, I have seen too many lives quietly suffer because we, as believers, have not always known how to face the reality of mental illness with both compassion and truth.

Let us **Advance** with courage, pursue peace and resilience, and proclaim the hope that is found in God alone.

Introduction

This book is built on one central truth: God cares for your whole being — spirit, soul, and body. In Philippians 3:13–14, Paul writes about “pressing toward the goal,” leaving the past behind, and moving forward into the future God has prepared. This is the heartbeat of the message you hold in your hands.

This book is rooted in the belief that God cares for your whole being — spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). We cannot separate mental well-being from our walk with Christ, and we cannot ignore the practical steps that help us heal.

Through the framework of Advance, Pursue, and Proclaim, we will explore how to move forward from mental and emotional struggles, how to actively seek peace and healing, and how to boldly share your story to help others.

The guiding theme of this book is Advance, Pursue, and Proclaim:

Advance — Moving forward from past pain into a future of hope.

Pursue — Actively seeking peace, restoration, and mental wholeness.

Proclaim — Sharing your testimony to break the silence and inspire others.

In these pages, you will find Scripture, real-life applications, mental health education, and practical steps that you can take immediately. You'll also find prayers, affirmations, and exercises designed to strengthen your spirit while equipping your mind.

Part 1 — Advance: Moving Forward in Mind, Body, and Spirit

Chapter 1 — The Biblical Call to Advance

Key Scripture: Philippians 3:13–14 —“But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

When Paul wrote these words, he was not writing from a comfortable place. He was imprisoned. He was misunderstood. He carried the weight of his past as a persecutor of Christians. And yet, he said, “One thing I do...”

Paul understood something we often forget: you cannot drive forward while looking in the rearview mirror. To advance means to make a conscious choice to stop letting yesterday dictate today.

Advancing Starts in the Mind

Romans 12:2 tells us to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” That renewal doesn't happen by accident — it happens when we feed our thoughts with God's truth instead of the lies of the enemy. Mental health recovery often begins here: learning to replace toxic thought patterns with thoughts grounded in Scripture and truth.

Letting Go to Move Forward

Isaiah 43:18–19 says, “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!” Some of us are stuck because we are holding onto guilt, shame, or regret like a security blanket. The truth is, those things are chains, not comfort. God wants to cut them loose so you can walk freely.

Taking Small Steps with Faith

Psalm 37:23–24 reminds us, “The steps of a man are established by the Lord... though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand.” Advancing is not about giant leaps; it’s about faithful steps. Healing comes one day, one prayer, one decision at a time.

Speak Life to Advance

Proverbs 18:21 says, “The tongue has the power of life and death.” The words you speak about yourself matter. Speak Scripture over your life:

“I am more than a conqueror through Christ.” (Romans 8:37)

“I have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:16)

“God is doing a new thing in me.” (Isaiah 43:19)

Reflection Questions:

What is one area in your mental or emotional life where you feel God calling you to advance?

Which Scripture from today spoke to you most and why?

What small step can you take this week toward better mental health?

Chapter 2 — Understanding Mental Health from a Faith Lens

Key Scripture: 3 John 1:2 — “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”

In the church, we often talk about spiritual health but neglect mental health — yet God cares about both. Mental health is not just “emotions” or “personality”; it’s your overall emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

Defining Mental Illness

Mental illness covers a wide range of conditions, including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, PTSD, and more. These are not signs of weakness or lack of faith. They are health conditions that require care — just like diabetes or heart disease.

The Myths and the Truth

Myth: “Faithful people don’t get depressed.”

Truth: Even biblical heroes like Elijah (1 Kings 19) and David (Psalm 42) battled despair.

Myth: “Prayer alone will fix everything.”

Truth: Prayer is powerful, but God also works through doctors, counselors, and healthy routines.

Faith + Practical Steps

God's Word renews the mind, but He also gives us resources: therapy, medication when needed, exercise, rest, and supportive relationships. This is not a lack of faith — it is stewardship of the life God gave you.

Part 2 — Pursue: Chasing Wholeness in Christ

Chapter 3 — The Discipline of Pursuing Peace

Key Scripture: Psalm 34:14 — “Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.”

Peace doesn't just fall into our laps — we must pursue it. In a world full of stress, news cycles that never rest, and personal battles that can drain us, peace can seem far away. But the Word of God tells us that peace is something we can actively seek.

Why Pursue Peace?

Because peace is more than the absence of trouble — it is the presence of Christ. Jesus said in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you... Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” Pursuing peace means chasing the things that bring you closer to Jesus.

Practical Pursuits for Peace:

Sabbath Rest — Schedule one day a week for spiritual and physical rest.

Limit Mental Clutter — Reduce negative media intake and replace it with worship and Scripture.

Healthy Boundaries — Learn to say “no” to protect your emotional health.

Prayer for Pursuing Peace:

Lord, I want Your peace to rule my heart and mind. Teach me to run after the things that bring me closer to You. Help me to let go of the distractions and habits that steal my peace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Affirmation:

I seek peace, I pursue it, and I will find it because my mind is stayed on the Lord.

Chapter 4 — Overcoming Obstacles to Pursuit

Key Scripture: Isaiah 26:3 — “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You.”

Pursuing peace is not without resistance. Mental health challenges, cultural stigma, and spiritual warfare can all be roadblocks.

Common Obstacles:

Fear — The fear of what others will think if we admit we’re struggling.

Shame — Believing the lie that we should “be stronger.”

Burnout — Serving everyone else while neglecting our own well-being.

Biblical Response:

Jesus Himself took time away from crowds to pray and rest (Luke 5:16). If the Son of God needed quiet, so do we.

Practical Tools to Overcome Obstacles:

Talk to Safe People — Share with trusted friends, pastors, or counselors.

Challenge Stigma — Remind yourself: mental illness is not a moral failure.

Refill Spiritually — Worship, prayer walks, and journaling can realign your mind with God's truth.

Chapter 5 — Building Resilience

Key Scripture: James 1:12 — “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised.”

Resilience is spiritual toughness — the ability to keep getting back up when life knocks you down.

How to Build Resilience:

Stay in Community — Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 reminds us that two are better than one.

Practice Gratitude — Thank God daily for small blessings.

Use Healthy Coping Strategies — Prayer, breathing exercises, and physical activity.

Resilience Prayer:

Lord, strengthen me for the journey ahead. Help me not just to survive but to thrive. Build in me the kind of faith that gets stronger under pressure. Amen.

Affirmation:

I am rooted in Christ, and nothing can uproot me.

Part 3 — Proclaim: Sharing Your Journey

Chapter 6 — The Power of Testimony

Key Scripture: Revelation 12:11 — “They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.”

Testimony is a weapon against shame and silence. When you speak openly about your journey, you tell others, “You are not alone.”

Why Testimony Matters:

- Breaks stigma
- Builds faith in others
- Encourages those who are still in the fight

- Practical Steps to Share Your Story:
- Pray for wisdom about what to share and when.
- Focus on how God's grace met you in your struggle.
- Offer hope, not just the details of pain.

Chapter 7 — Advocacy and Awareness

Key Scripture: Proverbs 31:8 — “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.”

Advocacy is not just for politicians — it's for believers who care about their communities.

Ways to advocate:

- Share mental health resources in your church bulletin.
- Invite mental health professionals to speak at church events.
- Join awareness campaigns, such as Mental Health Sunday.

Chapter 8 — Living as a Light

Key Scripture: Matthew 5:14 — “You are the light of the world.”

Being a light means letting God’s work in you shine outward. Every act of kindness, every honest conversation about mental health, and every prayer for a hurting person helps to push back the darkness.

Light-Bearing Practices:

- Encourage someone weekly.
- Speak Scripture over others.
- Be present for those in crisis.

Part 4 — The 90-Day ADVANCE Playbook

Chapter 9 — The 90-Day Church & Personal Wellness Plan

A — Assess Needs — Survey your congregation or personal life for the most pressing mental health challenges.

D — Designate a Leader — Appoint a mental health ministry coordinator or accountability partner.

V — Verify Resources — Keep a list of local Christian counselors, crisis lines, and support groups.

A — Activate Training — Host workshops on suicide prevention and mental health first aid.

N — Normalize Conversations — Mention mental health from the pulpit and in small groups.

C — Connect with Clinics — Build relationships with mental health providers.

E — Evaluate Progress — Track participation and testimonies over 90 days.

90-Day “ADVANCE” Playbook for Church Mental Health & Wellness

Phase 1: Foundation (Days 1–30) — “Awareness & Development”

Goal: Increase awareness of mental health needs, provide scriptural grounding, and destigmatize conversations within the congregation.

Week	Spiritual Focus	Mental Health Focus	Action Steps
1.	Psalm 139:14 – You are fearfully & wonderfully made-	Understanding mental health basics.	Sermon on body–mind–spirit connection; host 15-min “Mental Health 101” session after service
2.	Romans 12:2 – Renew your mind -	Identifying stress & burnout signs	Create a handout/checklist for stress symptoms, and a small group discussion
3.	1 Kings 19 – Elijah’s rest & renewal.	Importance of rest & Sabbath –	Encourage Sabbath practices: testimony from a member on finding rest

4. 3 John 1:2 – Prosper in health as your soul prospers - Building resilience, Launch prayer partner system + mental health resource wall

Phase 2: Growth (Days 31–60) — “Victory & Action”

Goal: Equip members with tools for ongoing mental, emotional, and spiritual growth.

Week	Spiritual Focus	Mental Health Focus	Action Steps
5.	Philippians 4:6–7	Peace beyond understanding.	Anxiety management - Teach breathing & prayer exercises; midweek “Calm in the Storm” workshop
6.	James 1:5	Ask God for wisdom.	Decision-making under stress - Roleplay scenarios in Bible study; invite a Christian counselor as a guest speaker
7.	Isaiah 40:31	Renewed strength	Overcoming fatigue Group walk/exercise after service; hydration challenge
8.	Mark 2:1–12	Friends carry the hurting.	Building support systems, Launch care teams to check on isolated members

Phase 3: Sustainability (Days 61–90) — “Nurture, Commitment & Empowerment”

Goal: Make mental health & wellness a long-term part of church culture.

Week	Spiritual Focus	Mental Health Focus	Action Steps
9.	Galatians 6:2	Bear one another’s burdens.	Peer support & empathy: Train volunteers in basic peer listening
10.	Matthew 5:14	Light of the world	Sharing testimony to inspire: Have members share personal victory stories
11.	Hebrews 10:24–25	Stir one another to good works	- Accountability & consistency. Create a monthly “Wellness Check-In Sunday”
12.	Ephesians 6:10–18	Armor of God.	Ongoing spiritual & mental protection Provide “Mental & Spiritual Wellness Toolkit” PDF for all members

Key Tools to Support the 90 Days:

- Weekly email/text devotionals + wellness tips
- Prayer & resource hotline for members
- Partnerships with local Christian counselors

Chapter 10 — Crisis Resources

- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline — Available 24/7 in the U.S.
- Veterans Crisis Line — Call 988 and press 1
- Local Christian counseling centers and pastoral care teams

Chapter 11 — Scripture & Affirmations for Healing

- Psalm 147:3 — “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”
- Isaiah 41:10 — “Do not fear, for I am with you.”
- Romans 8:37 — “In all these things we are more than conquerors.”

Daily Affirmation:

“By God’s grace, I am advancing in mind, body, and spirit. I release the past, I embrace the present, and I press forward into the future God has prepared for me”.

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You for being the God who heals. Strengthen every reader to advance beyond their past, to pursue peace daily, and to proclaim Your goodness boldly. Surround them with the right people, the right resources, and the courage to keep going. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Faith and Mental Health Devotion

Faith and Mental Health Devotion

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank God first and foremost for His sustaining grace and for entrusting me with a ministry that serves both the heart and the mind. To my family, friends, colleagues, and the many who have walked this journey with me—your prayers, encouragement, and testimonies have been my strength with over twenty-five years in human service work and pastoral care. Throughout my journey, I have witnessed the deep intersection between faith and mental health. This Devotional book is born from that intersection—a blend of Scripture, pastoral wisdom, and evidence-based strategies to help you face and overcome mental illness while holding firmly to Christ.

Part 1 — Pursue: Chasing Wholeness in Christ

Chapter 1 — The Discipline of Pursuing Peace

Psalm 34:14 — “Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.”

Peace doesn't just fall into our laps—we must pursue it. In a noisy world full of stress and uncertainty, peace is the presence of Christ, not just the absence of trouble.

Practical Pursuits for Peace:

1. Sabbath Rest — Schedule one day a week for rest.
2. Limit Mental Clutter — Reduce negative media and replace it with worship.
3. Healthy Boundaries — Protect your emotional health.

Prayer:

Lord, let Your peace rule my heart and mind. Amen.

Affirmation: I seek peace, I pursue it, and I will find it.

Chapter 2 — Overcoming Obstacles to Pursuit

Isaiah 26:3 — “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You.”

Pursuing peace is not without resistance. Fear, shame, and burnout are common roadblocks. Jesus took time away to pray and rest. If He needed it, so do we.

Tools to Overcome Obstacles:

1. Talk to Safe People.
2. Challenge Stigma.
3. Refill Spiritually.

Chapter 3 — Building Resilience

James 1:12 — “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial...”

Resilience is spiritual toughness, the ability to keep getting back up when life knocks you down.

How to Build Resilience:

1. Stay in Community.
2. Practice Gratitude.
3. Use Healthy Coping Strategies.

Prayer:

Lord, strengthen me for the journey ahead.

Affirmation: I am rooted in Christ, and nothing can uproot me.

Part 2 — Proclaim: Sharing Your Journey

Chapter 4 — The Power of Testimony

Revelation 12:11 — “They triumphed by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.”

Your story can be a lifeline for someone else. Testimony breaks stigma, builds faith, and encourages those still in the fight.

Steps to Share Your Story:

1. Pray for wisdom.
2. Focus on God’s grace.
3. Offer hope.

Chapter 5 — Advocacy and Awareness

Proverbs 31:8 — “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.”

Advocacy is for believers who care about their communities. Share resources, invite experts, and join awareness campaigns.

Chapter 6 — Living as a Light

Matthew 5:14 — “You are the light of the world.”

Being a light means letting God’s work in you shine outward. Every prayer, every kind word, and every conversation about mental health pushes back the darkness.

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- Psalm 147:3 — “He heals the brokenhearted...”
- Isaiah 41:10 — “Do not fear, for I am with you.”
- Romans 8:37 — “We are more than conquerors.”
- Daily Affirmation: “By God’s grace, I am advancing in mind, body, and spirit”.

My prayer is that these pages meet you with hope, practical tools, and the assurance that you are never alone.

Thank You to every reader of this book and devotional—you are seen, valued, and loved.

Meet Chaplain Dr. Frederick Woods

Chaplain Dr. Frederick D. Woods is a Clinical Chaplain with a specialization in behavioral health and substance abuse disorders. Has served throughout the states and abroad, offering pastoral care, counseling services, and training. A representative of the Military and Institutional Chaplaincy International Jurisdiction of COGIC "Church of God in Christ", A member of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy, and The International Honor Society in Psychology through Capella University. Listed in Psychology Today as the Founder and owner of 3C Empowerment, where he offers counseling, coaching, and consulting. He's also the founder and Director of his grassroots non-profit, GSM "Good Samaritan Ministries," where he provides education and training for ministerial leadership and lay members in pastoral care and counseling, specifically to individuals and families who have been diagnosed with mental illness disorders.

Last and most important, Chaplain Woods is a believer in God through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Those who are interested in furthering their knowledge and skills to serve individuals with one or more mental illness disorders

3C Empowerment offers the following: A Mental Health Guide for Faith Leaders (PowerPoint Presentation)A Training for Human Service Workers (Effective Human Services techniques and Tools)Additional books- Theology vs Psychology (Understanding mental illness and coping with the (Black American Church)

For more information visit: 3cempowerment.com



Advance Pursue Proclaim is a call to action for faith leaders, caregivers, and believers serving those impacted by mental illness and substance use. Drawing on decades of pastoral care and clinical chaplaincy, Dr. Frederick D. Woods bridges theology and psychology with practical tools for healing. As founder of 3C Empowerment and Good Samaritan Ministries, he equips leaders to serve with wisdom, compassion, and hope through Christ.



