

# The Concurrently Companion



## Episode 6: Mental health crisis and means of grace

### Topic introduction

Last year, we discussed the data on the mental health crisis among kids and teens that became particularly severe following the COVID-19 pandemic. This is an area with new developments and discussions—unfortunately including many distortions (often amplified by social media). A healthy discipleship response acknowledges the whole person: mind, heart, and body.

Please note: At Concurrently, we recognize and acknowledge the need for trained counselors and therapists to care for acute situations of mental and emotional crisis. Just as patients with significant illnesses need medical intervention partnered with tender care at home, individuals experiencing mental and emotional unhealth require the care of trained (licensed) professionals in addition to the care we extend at home, in our church bodies, and in the classroom.

Key terms and resources: *mind/body connection, anxiety, depression, emotional intelligence (towards self and others), limbic system, doomscrolling, embodied, the Shema, J.P. Moreland Finding Quiet, empathic/empathy, means of grace, cortisol*

### Questions

OBSERVATION: What are you seeing in the news? What are you hearing? What's being reported? What has developed since we last engaged this topic of conversation?

ANALYSIS: What is data-driven and what is merely reactivity or distortion of the problem? Where do we see a biblical view of humanity that we can affirm (places where secular psychology gets it right due to God's common grace)? What do we need to challenge gently?

What are ACEs and how do they factor into the equation of mental health?

What habits can amplify mental unhealth?

Why is the question "is this a physical problem or a spiritual problem" a false dichotomy?

What does it mean to be "embodied"? How does God affirm the physical nature of humanity? Think through a Trinitarian lens as well as the lens of the Redemptive Narrative: What is good? What was broken? What did redemption include? What will occur in the "new heavens and new Earth"—the chapter we alternatively call "Glory," "Reconciliation," and "Consummation"?

What scripture comes to mind when you consider these ideas: *heart/soul/mind/strength, embodied, incarnation, the flesh, the spirit, resurrection*?

What habits can contribute towards greater mental/emotional/spiritual health?

“Neurons that fire together wire together.” Explain this idea in your own words.

How does what we practice and model affect those around us? Why?

What are the “means of grace” or spiritual disciplines? What do you notice about them and their design for man (consider the words of Jesus regarding Sabbath in Mark 2:27)?

How does the false dichotomy of secular vs. sacred show up in the area of mental and emotional health? How do we reintegrate our thinking in this area?

QUICK HEALTH CHECK: How are your habits (physical, mental, emotional)? How is your fellowship? Are you making margin for rest?

Questions to probe gently what’s going on with your kids and students: What are you feeling right now? Help me to understand. What are you believing right now? What caused you to feel that way? How are you feeling physically that might be affecting your perspective right now?

And perhaps the most important: How about we pray together to seek God’s care and wisdom in this area as we consider next steps?

## Scriptural anchors/provision

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. — Isaiah 41:10

Don’t be anxious for what you will eat, what you will drink, about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? — Matthew 6:25-26

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