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**Please ASK for Help - The Battle is not Yours, but the Lord’s**

Needless to say dealing with COVID – 19 over the past 3 years has not helped, but rather further isolated and kept us in our homes and tight family circles. We’ve not been able to fellowship and check on each “in person” like we used to.

Further, the deceiver and the father of all lies has unearthed unresolved issues (mentally, emotionally, and spiritually) as we sit isolated whether in “space in time” or locked in our minds.

Sisters we can’t think of a better time than **NOW** to understand that our hope, our refuge, our strength is in our mighty God – El Shaddai Psalm 46:1.

We want to encourage you to lean on the Lord and most of all HIS word that leads, guides, comforts, instructs, and keeps us in HIS perfect will as Psalm 19:7-11 encourages us to do.

There is great reward and comfort in obeying God. However, if we need further help - if you are thinking negative, destructive thoughts or considering harming yourself, we beg of you to seek professional help. It may be that you have attempted to seek help from someone before and the experience did not go as well as you’d hope; please try again. There are many members of the Lord’s church who are equipped to assist with mental health counseling, psychiatric care, or psychological assistance. There are also plenty of sister’s who are willing to offer a listening ear and help point you in the right direction.

Oftentimes, we feel that we are “helpless” because we can’t see the “resolution” of the problems that lie in front of us. Many times, it’s because we fail to ask…We fail to ask for wisdom…We fail to ask for help…We fail to ask for instruction …

James 1: 5-6 NIV states, if any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

Sisters, remember King Jehoshaphat as he was about to face a “vast Army” of the Moabites, Ammonites with some of the Meunites. The spirit of the Lord came over Jahaziel son of Zechariah and said to King Jehoshaphat “you will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.’”

Sisters look at this **POWERFUL** word from the Lord: Do NOT be afraid or discouraged; The battle is not yours, but God’s; GO and march down against them; You will NOT have to fight this battle; Take up your positions; Stand firm; See the deliverance the Lord will give you; Do NOT be afraid; Do NOT be discouraged; GO out and face them; The Lord will be with you.

My beloved Sisters, please immerse yourself in the WORD and increase your FAITH in the Lord. When you feel like you can’t take another step **ASK for help**. Say something and know that God is with you and will never leave you nor forsake you.

For those of us who may not be facing these specific challenges - the call to us is to **be ready** to help those who are. A lot of times people shy away from asking others about their emotional health, and specifically about suicide or self-harm, because they feel they will place the thought in someone’s mind or make them want to engage in self-harm or suicide. That is a myth. The thought is already there and you asking someone about it may be the thing that stops them from considering it further. Below are some tips to help us, help each other. Remember - we are on this journey called “life” together. You are never alone.

Love & Blessings,

Sis. Christan Brooks and Sis. Simone’ Beans

**Facts About Suicide (From the CDC):**

* Rates have increased 33% between 1999 and 2019
* It’s the 10th leading cause of death in the United States
	+ The 2nd leading cause of death for people ages 10 – 34
	+ The 4th leading cause of death for people ages 35 – 44
	+ The 5th leading cause of death for people ages 45 - 54
* In 2019 there was a death by suicide about every 11 minutes
* In 2019 roughly 12 million American adults thought seriously about suicide, about 3.5 million planned to a suicide attempt, and about 1.4 million attempted suicide

**Suicide is preventable with support! Some ways we can help those in need are by:**

* Listening.
* Validating their feelings- it doesn’t have to be a struggle for you in order to be a struggle for someone else
* Being consistent
* Asking the right questions- don’t be afraid to ask direct questions about suicide. Asking about suicide does NOT increase the likelihood that someone will attempt suicide. See ‘Question. Persuade. Refer.’ below.

**Signs to Look For:** When a person is planning a suicide attempt there are some signs that you may observe, such as:

* Giving away their belongings
* A sudden change in mood i.e., going from depressed/sad to happy/blissful/at peace suddenly
* Joking about killing themselves or making a lot of statements about how things would be if they weren’t here
* Talking about how they feel hopeless/helpless, trapped, as if they are a burden, etc
* Increased substance use
* Withdrawing from friends/family/activities
* Saying their goodbyes

**Question. Persuade. Refer.** This is the preferred method in assessing individuals for suicidality. You are able to complete a training on this approach, for a small fee, at the link that follows. This approach encourages open questioning about a person’s intent to harm and/or kill themselves. It teaches the helper or “gatekeeper” as they are called how to persuade the individual to seek assistance and educates the “gatekeeper” on how to connect (refer) the individual for further assistance.

https://qprinstitute.com/individual-training

**National Suicide Prevention Hotline** A 24/7 crisis line that individuals can call and/or text to receive emotional support as needed. **(1-800-273-TALK)** Crisis Text Line **(741741)**