

A Note from Jennie 000

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A NOTE FROM JENNIE



God has great timing. Perhaps you're seeing this in your life.

Many of us have experienced a bit of a wake-up call recently, whether due to global unrest, political tensions, or personal challenges. We've been forced to stop and look at the state of our minds. Or we've been confronted with changes that have happened inside us over months, weeks, and years, and we don't exactly like what we see. But if you've opened this book, maybe it's because you've sensed that now is the time to do something about all that is swirling in and around you.

For so many of us, who have been paddling busily on the lake of our lives, the lake has suddenly drained, and we've seen what was at the bottom of our lakes. And what it was, was a lot of mess. A lot of turmoil and mental suffering. And rather than being new junk, maybe it's been on the bottom of our lakes for quite some time—ignored or shoved out of sight until now.

But gazing down at it, many of us are thinking, *Wow, I think I've been anxious for a long time, but I've been busy enough that I didn't notice. Or, Wow, I've felt depressed and tired for a long time, and maybe I need to get some help.* As we consider the state of our minds, we're realizing, something's got to change.

We need a new normal.

Maybe you've been struggling with low levels of anxiety for a long time. Or maybe you've recently experienced a season of difficulty or stress that has caused a spike of anxiety. The past few years of unrest and uncertainty have definitely revealed hidden anxieties many of us were already feeling. Whatever your unique situation, you might be asking, *What am I supposed to do with these thoughts? What do I do with these feelings?*

What if I told you that you don't have to spiral in toxic thoughts anymore? What if I told you that God has the power to not only save our souls but also to change our lives? I've seen Him do this for other people, and I have seen Him do this in me.

A few years ago, I went through a season of attack. It was quiet, it was subtle, and I barely noticed, honestly. It came every night at 3 a.m., when I was jolted awake, and simmering anxieties and doubts began to fill my mind. It beat me up for month upon month. And the bad part was, I didn't even realize it was happening. I thought it was just inevitable, that I had no control over it. I was at war with the devil in the night, but I never admitted it out loud. For eighteen months I never told anybody what was

What am I supposed to do with these thoughts? What do I do with these feelings?



EMOTION

THOUGHT

BEHAVIOR

RELATIONSHIPS

CONSEQUENCE

INTRODUCING THE SPIRAL

YOU ARE NOT A PROJECT TO BE FIXED

WHEN I FIRST STARTED TO THINK ABOUT MY THOUGHTS, I VIEWED MY mind as something I could fix. But the longer I thought about it, the more I realized that my mind is part of me, and it does the things it does to attempt to take care of me. There are *reasons* I struggle with doubt and fear and anxiety and anger. Good reasons. And for you, I know it's true, too. If we never go back and really look compassionately at why we get where we are in our spirals, we end up with the shame of having to "fix it." And we end up with more shame when it breaks again.

But God is a God of mercy. We see that throughout the entire Bible.

In the Old Testament, He is patient with Israel and continues to give chance after chance. He is patient with David and the mistakes David makes, calling him a man after His own heart even when David does unthinkable things that we all would write him off, cancel him, and push him away for. He loves David throughout the span of his life, not just when he is winning, but when he's confessing to appalling sins.

In the New Testament, we see a compassionate God in Jesus. We see a God who came to Earth to rescue people from their own decisions. We

see a God who said, *You know what? I will make a way for all the places where you have messed up. I won't even ask you to fix it. I will fix it.*

The story of Jesus is not one in which we got our act together and then God saved us. It's one in which we were completely dead in our transgressions and in our mistakes, and God rescued us anyway and set us apart.

The whole of the Bible is super clear on the fact that we have limits, that we're going to make mistakes, that we are not completely curable on Earth, and yet that we're filled with the Spirit who is helping us. We are new creations that can produce good and the fruit of the Spirit. And yet we're still going to struggle with our flesh and with our minds, daily.

I'd never want you to think that you're easily fixable. Or that on the days when you spiral, you should feel shame in any way. If anything, you should feel hope that you need God, and that we have a God who is accessible to us when we come to Him. He has compassion for us, so we can have compassion for ourselves.

MEDITATE:

God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:4–5)

REWIRE THE SPIRAL:

I do not have to fix myself because Jesus died to make me right with God.

God, thank You for being a God of mercy. When I get tired on this journey, when I hit my limits, wash me again in Your patience, Your love, Your compassion. Amen.