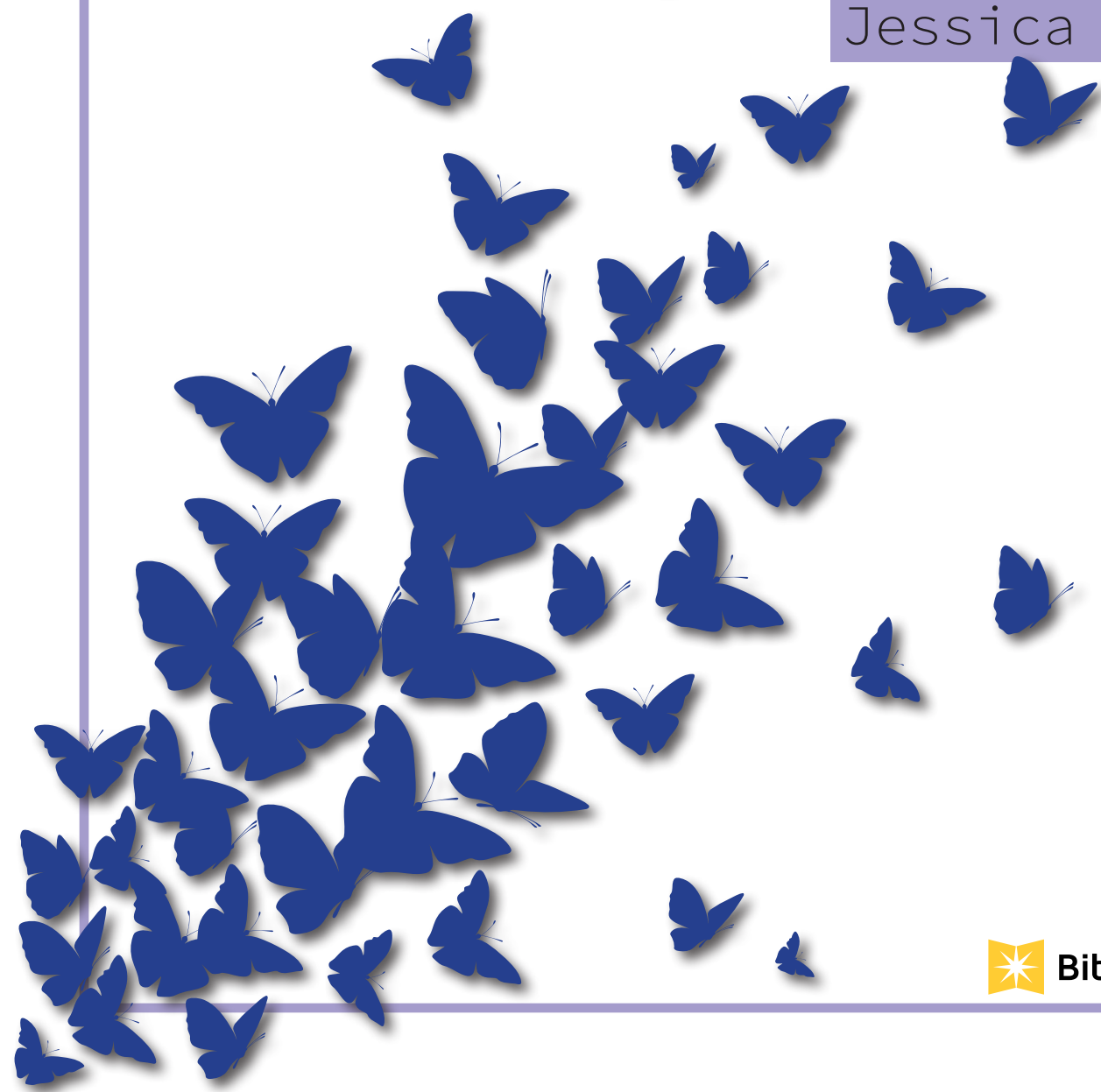


8 verses and prayers for

# Recovering from Trauma

Jessica Brodie



Bible Study Tools

Perhaps you've heard about trauma and thought the term only applied to people who have been the victims of violent sexual or physical assault or soldiers who have endured brutal, unrelenting warfare. But trauma is far more prevalent than this and fluctuates in severity, whether someone is traumatized over a devastating natural disaster or a repeated onslaught of bullying. In short, it applies to any experience that affects our ability to cope, whether mentally, physically, emotionally, or spiritually.

According to the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, most people experience a traumatic event at some point in their lives, and their reactions vary from upsetting memories and nightmares that last a few weeks to PTSD, characterized by debilitating anxiety, flashbacks, avoidance, and sometimes even complete disruption of our ability to engage in everyday life.

Not everyone who experiences trauma has PTSD, and many people deal with it alone, ashamed of what they perceive as an inability to cope or move on. An estimated 5 percent of the U.S. population has PTSD in any given year. In 2020, that translated to about 13 million Americans.

Trauma isn't just something unique to modern times. The Bible is filled with verses addressing trauma and recovery. Consider what the earliest Israelites experienced, both raiding and attacking villages and being raided and attacked themselves. Jesus himself experienced traumatic situations, for he lived as both God and man, and we know he is with us in our pain.

It can be tempting sometimes to minimize trauma, whether our own or that of others. But the reality is that when we experience an event or circumstance that results in physical, emotional, or life-threatening harm and we are struggling to cope in the aftermath, the truth is that we are in trauma recovery.

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## What Is Trauma?

When we experience a distressing event, whether once or repeatedly, we sometimes exhibit a lasting emotional response that can impact our sense of safety, identity, relationships, and ability to regulate emotions.

Trauma impacts people of any age, both children, adults, and the elderly.

**Type 1 trauma** stems from an unexpected single incident. What's important is not the severity of the incident but a person's reaction to it in the aftermath, and not everyone reacts the same way. These incidents include anything from a violent or sexual assault, witnessing a crime or other violence, experiencing a natural disaster such as a house fire or a hurricane, traumatic

loss of a loved one, a car accident, serious or life-threatening illness or injury, and more. Some people experience trauma from giving birth to a child.

**Type 2 trauma** can arise out of long-term, chronic traumatic incidents, such as childhood abuse, neglect, domestic violence, and bullying.

Men and women of any age, culture, and economic or social background experience trauma, and the reaction can last many years. Some people who experienced trauma in their childhood or developmental years are still in recovery well into their elderly years.

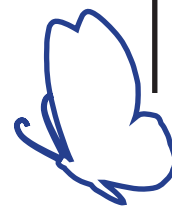
## What Are Some Examples of Trauma in the Bible?

There are many examples of trauma in the Bible. Job struggled with grief, loss, and illness. The Israelites suffered both in Egypt as slaves and after their exodus to the wilderness. Alone in a foreign land, Naomi lost her husband and two sons and was forced to journey back to her homeland to stay alive. Isaac's father tied him to a pile of wood and almost sacrificed him. Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers.

Then, of course, there's Jesus — hated, rejected, ridiculed, betrayed by one of his closest friends, beaten, stripped, and publicly executed in one of the most painful manners possible. Jesus understands pain. He understands trauma. And he offers true healing to us all.

### *Where Are You in Your Journey?*

Take some time now, before reading further, to journal through your own past and present experiences. What has your journey with trauma recovery looked like? Is there anyone in the Bible that you can relate to?



## 1. For Those Recovering from Childhood Abuse

*“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!”  
(Isaiah 49:15).*

Oh, Lord,

You know the depths of my heart, the agony I experience. You know the betrayal that cuts me so deeply and the ways I try daily to lay down my burden at your feet, only to be haunted evermore by the harm I endured. Help me to remember I can take the most righteous comfort in you, Lord — no one but you. You understand. As you saw Hagar in the wilderness after she fled Sarai, the day she called you Jehovah El Roi and recognized you as the God Who Sees Me, I know you also see me. You see me both in my pain and in the pure state of recovery, healing, and wholeness you intend for me. Please bring me peace, safety, and rest in you, Lord. Give me understanding that no matter the grievous harm done to me, I am safe in you now and always.

Amen.

## 2. For Those Desperate to Forget

*“My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me. Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me. I said, ‘Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. I would flee far away and stay in the desert; I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm’”  
(Psalm 55:4-8).*

Father God,

My soul aches at the memory of what happened, and some days I cannot bear it. I want so badly to run from my pain, forget it all, erase what happened, and make it all go away. Like the psalmist, I wish I could fly like a dove far from here and take shelter from the emotional storm I endure. It’s incredibly difficult, and some days I feel so alone. Help me understand that you walk with me in every moment, cheering me on and protecting me. Even when I cannot feel you, you are there. I know you are no stranger to hardship, and I know that in you I can find the refuge I so desperately crave. I can lean on you and draw the strength I need to keep walking forward, growing and healing every moment. I love you, God.

Amen.

### 3. For Those Triggered by Memories

*“He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday”  
(Psalm 91:4-6).*

Heavenly Lord,

Everywhere I go I am reminded of the horrific experience I endured. The smallest, most insignificant things can trigger a memory so powerful it knocks me off my feet. I feel vulnerable, open to harm, like a wound battered by razor blades. One moment I think I’m fine, and the next I’m falling apart. Flashbacks and nightmares surround me. Memories swirl. Oh, God, help me to lay down this pain and surrender it all to you. I know that all darkness flees at the sound of your name. Help me know in my deepest core that you are my safe place, my shelter and my refuge. In you I find complete protection and solace. Like a mother bird protecting her young, you care for me and hold me close. I know you always will.

Amen.

### 4. For Those Who Worry They Will Never Be Healed

*“And 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).*

Holy, Precious, and Mighty God,

In my heart of hearts, I’m scared. I worry I’ll never get over this pain, that I’ll never experience true joy and lightness again without the memory of my trauma crashing down like an avalanche. I also fear who I’ll become if I ever have the strength to set this burden down. On my own, I cannot handle this pain. Please help me to remember I’m not alone, not for a moment. You walk with me and help me carry this baggage. Help me to recognize that it grows lighter and lighter each day, and help me to trust that one day, it will be gone completely. In you, I’m made new. Nothing can hurt me. I love you, God.

Amen.



## 5. For Those Who Struggle to Find Peace

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”  
(Matthew 11:28-30).*

Father God,

My trauma is so heavy! Some days I’m utterly exhausted — by the memories, the onslaught of emotions, the anger and the tears. You know all the things I can’t even begin to express. But there you are, holding out your hand to me. Over and over again, you offer support, help, strength, and understanding. Sometimes that help comes from you, the truth and the light you bring into my life. Sometimes you send others to walk with me, helping me to shoulder the hard work. Please help me to see I can truly rest in you. I am safe.

Amen.

## 6. For Those Feeling Abandoned or Forsaken

*“Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me”  
(Psalm 27:10).*

Heavenly Father, why?

Why did this happen? Why would someone do this? Why me? I feel alone and lost, rejected and forsaken. Did you feel this way, too, hanging on that cross as people mocked you? Did you feel abandoned? Forgotten? Help me, Lord, to take comfort in knowing that even if every single person on this planet despises me, minimizing my pain and ridiculing me for my struggles, you are there. You love me and receive me. In you I have hope, comfort, liberation, and love. Help me push thoughts of abandonment and rejection aside and remember that you see me and you love me no matter what.

Amen.

## 7. For Those Striving to Find the Positive

*“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives”  
(Genesis 50:20).*

Oh Lord,

You see into my heart and know how angry I get some days. You know how exhausting it is to fight just to stay even-keeled. You see the battles I endure every single day just to be relatively normal. Sometimes I’m so furious about what I experienced. But I also know that you have a miraculous way of taking everything wrong and turning it upside down so that it accomplishes so much good. I’m clinging to this, Lord. Even if I can’t always see it, I can trust that you see the full picture and how it all fits into your perfect plan. Help use me and my life for your good purposes, Lord. Help me surrender to your will and your way, knowing you love and cherish me completely.

Amen.

## 8. For Those Who Want to Let Go

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:  
The old has gone, the new is here!”  
(2 Corinthians 5:17).*

Lord, I’m ready.

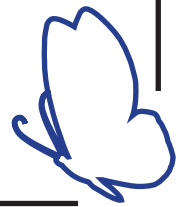
I want so badly to let go of the pain and the hurt, the fear and the memories. I want so badly to embrace the new, good, full life you intend for me, a life I know carries on from now into eternity. It’s scary to let go, but with you, I can. I know in my heart that I am brand-new in you, that all evil and fear and darkness are far, far away. Nothing can touch me or hurt my eternal soul. I am new, pure, washed clean, all because of you. On days I feel dirty and dark, fearful and small, help me recognize that is the enemy at work. You lift me up like the precious masterpiece I am, and I am free.

Amen and amen.



## *A Personalized Prayer for You*

Take some time now to pray through your pen. How can you lift up your own fears, experiences, worries and expectations to God? What do you need to surrender to Him? What verses have had an impact on you in this season of healing? Write them below:



**Jessica Brodie** is an award-winning Christian novelist, journalist, editor, blogger, and writing coach and the recipient of the 2018 American Christian Fiction Writers Genesis Award for her novel, *The Memory Garden*. She is also the editor of the South Carolina United Methodist Advocate, the oldest newspaper in Methodism. Her newest release is an Advent daily devotional for those seeking true closeness with God, which you can find at <https://www.jessicabrodie.com/advent>. Learn more about Jessica's fiction and read her faith blog at <http://jessicabrodie.com>. She has a weekly YouTube devotional and podcast. You can also connect with her on Facebook, Twitter, and more. She's also produced a free eBook, *A God-Centered Life: 10 Faith-Based Practices When You're Feeling Anxious, Grumpy, or Stressed*  
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