

SURVIVAL GUIDE *for* TENDER SEASONS

Support for Holidays and Difficult Gatherings
For Women Healing from Family Trauma

*The Lord is close to the
brokenhearted and saves those who
are crushed in spirit.*

Psalm 34:18 NKJV



Created by Minister Jane Coy
Still On The Journey Ministries



Scripture quotations taken from the New King James Version (NKJV).
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DISCLAIMER:

This planner is designed for personal reflection and spiritual growth. It is not intended to replace professional mental health care, therapy, or medical treatment. If you are experiencing trauma or mental health concerns, please seek support from a qualified professional.

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WELCOME

Dear Sister,

If you are reading this, holidays and gatherings may feel more like a challenge than a celebration. You may be carrying emotions that feel too heavy to name. I want you to know that you are not alone, and nothing is wrong with you.

This guide was created to support you through tender seasons with gentleness and grace.

This guide will help you:

- Understand why holidays and gatherings can feel difficult
- Prepare emotionally and spiritually for family events
- Protect your peace with healthy boundaries
- Find grounding when you feel overwhelmed
- Remember that God walks with you through every moment

You do not have to just survive this season. You can move through it with intention, compassion, and God's presence.

Walking with you,

Minister Jane Coy
Still On The Journey





TABLE OF CONTENTS



HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL



**WHY HOLIDAYS AND GATHERINGS
CAN FEEL DIFFICULT**



SIX SCRIPTURES FOR DIFFICULT DAYS



PREPARATION CHECKLIST



EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN



JOURNALING PROMPTS



GENTLE REMINDERS



SOTJ WEBSITE RESOURCES



HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

This journal was created to support you through tender seasons, especially holidays and gatherings that may feel emotionally or spiritually difficult. There is no right or wrong way to use this guide. Move at your own pace. Skip sections if needed. Return to pages as often as you want.

You may use this journal before, during, or after challenging moments. Some days you may only read a scripture. Other days you may write more deeply. Let this journal serve you with gentleness rather than pressure.

This guide is meant to be a supportive companion, not a checklist to complete.

WAYS YOU MAY USE THIS JOURNAL

Read one section at a time

Use the Preparation Checklist before gatherings

Refer to the Emergency Response Plan when you feel overwhelmed

Journal honestly and without censoring your emotions

Read scriptures slowly and aloud when possible

PRINT AT HOME USE

You may print this guide to use as a physical journal.

To print the guide

Open the PDF file on your computer or tablet

Select the print option

Choose standard letter size paper

Print single sided for more space to write

After printing

Place the pages in a binder, folder, or notebook

Write directly on the pages using pen or pencil

You may reprint individual pages if you need additional journaling space

You do not need to print the entire guide at once. You may print only the sections you plan to use.





DIGITAL USE

This guide may also be used digitally without printing.

To use digitally

Save a copy of the PDF to your device or cloud storage

Open the file using a PDF reader or note taking app that allows writing

Examples include GoodNotes, Notability, or Adobe Acrobat

Writing on the pages

Use a stylus with a tablet or touchscreen device to write directly on the pages as you would in a physical journal

You may also type using text boxes if preferred

You may duplicate blank pages inside your app if you need more space

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This guide is free to share with others who may benefit.

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The guide must be shared in its entirety

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Minister Jane Coy

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WHY HOLIDAYS AND GATHERINGS CAN FEEL DIFFICULT

8 REASONS THESE MOMENTS MAY TRIGGER PAIN:



1. FORCED FAMILY CONTACT

You may be expected to spend time with people who have caused harm or do not feel safe.



2. PRESSURE TO PERFORM HAPPINESS

Everyone expects joy, but your memories may hold pain.



3. MEMORIES RESURFACE

Sights, sounds, and familiar settings can bring back difficult experiences.



4. TOXIC POSITIVITY CULTURE

Phrases like "But it's family!" do not honor your lived experience.



5. FINANCIAL STRESS

Gift expectations and event costs can add pressure.



6. LONELINESS IF ESTRANGED

You may feel guilt for choosing emotional safety over family presence.

7. SPIRITUAL PRESSURE

Extra expectations around faith events can feel overwhelming.

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Extra expectations around faith events can feel overwhelming.

9. COMPARISON TRAP

Social media shows idealized families that do not reflect your reality.

YOUR PAIN IS VALID. GOD SEES YOU.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28 NKJV



SIX SCRIPTURES FOR DIFFICULT DAYS

WHEN YOU FEEL ANXIOUS:

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

1 Peter 5:7 NKJV



WHEN YOU ARE TRIGGERED:

"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV



WHEN YOU FEEL GUILTY:

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Romans 8:1 NKJV



WHEN YOU NEED COURAGE:

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9 NKJV



WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING:

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Psalms 34:18 NKJV

WHEN YOU DOUBT:

"I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God."

Romans 8:38-39 NKJV

PREPARATION CHECKLIST



BEFORE YOU GO:

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

- Decide ahead: Will I attend or not
- If attending, set a time limit (2 hours maximum)
- Drive my own vehicle (so you can leave when needed)
- Pack a peace kit (Bible, headphones, calming essential oils)
- Identify a safe person to text if you need support



EMOTIONAL PREPARATION

- List potential triggers
- Prepare grounding techniques
- Have an exit strategy ready
- Give yourself permission to leave early
- Remember: Your healing matters more than their expectations



SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

- Pray for God's protection
- Claim Psalm 91:4 as shelter
- Ask trusted friends to pray for you
- Journal about your feelings
- Remind yourself: God is with you

BOUNDARY PREPARATION

- Decide which topics you will not discuss
- Practice saying "I am not discussing that"
- Have responses ready for guilt trips
- Know your non-negotiables
- Remember: Boundaries are biblical



EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

IF YOU GET TRIGGERED OR OVERWHELMED:

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

- Excuse yourself to the bathroom or step outside
- Practice 5 4 3 2 1 grounding
 - 5 things you see
 - 4 things you touch
 - 3 things you hear
 - 2 things you smell
 - 1 thing you taste
- Splash cold water on your wrists or face
- Text your safe person
- Take deep breaths and allow yourself to feel



SCRIPTURE TO SPEAK ALOUD

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside quiet waters.
He restores my soul."*

Psalm 23:1 to 3 NKJV



IF YOU NEED TO LEAVE:

- You do not owe an explanation
- "I need to go" is a complete sentence
- Leave calmly and quickly
- Do not engage in arguments

AFTER YOU LEAVE:

- Be gentle with yourself
- Do not shame yourself
- Process with a safe person
- Journal about your experience
- Rest and recover

THANK GOD FOR PROTECTING & GROWING YOU



JOURNALING PROMPTS

BEFORE THE GATHERING

WHAT AM I MOST AFRAID OF DURING THIS SEASON



WHAT BOUNDARIES DO I NEED TO SET



WHO IS MY SAFE PERSON I CAN CALL



WHAT DOES "SUCCESS" LOOK LIKE FOR ME IN THIS MOMENT



JOURNALING PROMPTS

DURING THE GATHERING

WHAT AM I FEELING RIGHT NOW



WHAT TRIGGERED ME AND WHY



HOW CAN I SHOW MYSELF COMPASSION



WHERE DO I SEE GOD IN THIS MOMENT



JOURNALING PROMPTS

AFTER THE GATHERING

WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT MYSELF



WHAT BOUNDARIES WORKED



WHAT WILL I DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME

HOW CAN I CELEBRATE THAT I HONORED MY HEALING



GENTLE REMINDERS

YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS JOURNEY

Remember:

- Your healing matters
- Boundaries are biblical
- You are not responsible for their reactions
- God is close to the brokenhearted
- You do not have to face this alone
- Peace is more important than performance
- Your emotions are valid
- You are loved exactly as you are



“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 1:6 NKJV



NEXT STEPS

- Visit our website for more resources
- Join our monthly email for gentle encouragement
- Read additional blog reflections
- Save this guide for future reference
- Share with a friend who may need this support

CONNECT WITH US

- Still On The Journey Ministries
- Your website
- Your email

A BLESSING FOR YOU:

May the Lord give you **strength** when you feel weak,
 May He meet you in every quiet place and every difficult moment,
 May you know His **peace** that surpasses understanding.
 May you move through this season held by His love.

With Compassion,

Minister Jane Coy

Still On The Journey Ministries