



# The Heart of the Matter

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## *Caring for the Heart— Individually and Together*

Welcome to our February edition. We're grateful to gather once again in this shared space—one rooted in reflection, care, and community. This month invites us to slow down and pay attention to the heart: how it functions, what it carries, and what it needs in order to remain steady and supported.

February holds layered significance. As we honor Black History Month, we also observe American Heart Month—making this a meaningful time to reflect on how history, emotion, faith, and daily habits shape both our physical and emotional well-being. This issue centers heart health not as a clinical conversation, but as a holistic one—embracing mind, body, and spirit.

In this edition, we'll explore:

- A personal reflection on grounding, faith, and caring for the heart
- Heart-centered wellness practices rooted in awareness and intention
- Journaling prompts for emotional clarity and reflection
- A focus on cardiovascular health and stress management
- Nourishing food and tea selections that support heart wellness
- Music and movement practices that encourage calm and connection
- Community opportunities designed to strengthen healthy heart habits

We invite you to turn the page and sit with a quiet reflection shaped by prayer and the fast.



# ROOTED

## Learning to Care for the Heart Without Rushing It

Beloved,

Let's pause for a moment — really pause — because lately I've been noticing how easy it is to keep moving even when my heart feels a little unsettled underneath it all. Life doesn't always slow down just because our hearts need it to, and most days, we just keep going.

During our 21-day fast, Day 9 centered on the word grounded, and it honestly stopped me in my tracks. It made me ask myself a simple but real question: Am I actually grounded... or am I just getting through the day? And I had to sit with that.

I've been realizing that I can keep everything moving and still feel a little off beneath the surface. The days stay full. The responsibilities get handled. On the outside, things look fine — but my heart tells a different story. And maybe that's where I want to meet you this month — right where you are. Not where you think you should be. Not where you're trying to get to.

Real grounding, I'm learning, isn't about pushing through or holding it all together. It's about slowing down enough to notice where your heart is resting — and whether it's actually being supported there. And if all you've been able to do lately is show up, I want you to know... that might be enough right now.

As we focus on heart health this month, I've been paying closer attention to what my heart responds to throughout the day. I've noticed how quickly stress and urgency can throw me off balance when I don't take time to check in with myself. For me, staying steady hasn't looked complicated. It's looked like showing up. Making space for prayer. Taking quiet moments when I can. Giving myself permission to reflect honestly. Nothing elaborate. Just choosing care over constant motion.

Lately, I'm learning that caring for my heart doesn't mean adding more to my plate. It means slowing down and staying connected — to God, to myself, and to what actually brings peace. My hope for you this month is that you feel steady again, not because you pushed through, but because you allowed yourself to stay rooted... right where you are.

With love,

*Tea Cypress Juliet*

# Meditation Corner

*A Space for Reflection, Heart-Strength, and Renewal*

## Heart Health: Slowing Down Enough to Notice

Let's be honest—most days, we don't think much about our hearts unless something feels off. We move through responsibilities, conversations, and stress without pausing to notice how it's all landing in our bodies. The heart just keeps working in the background, carrying more than we give it credit for.

This month's meditation corner is simply an invitation to check in. Not to diagnose. Not to judge. Just to notice. Stress, worry, and constant motion can weigh on the heart in quiet ways. When we slow down—even briefly—we give ourselves the chance to respond with care instead of pushing through.

## *Heart Care in Practice*

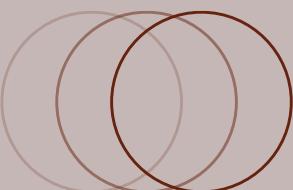
### Scripture for Reflection

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

— **Proverbs 3:5 (KJV)**

My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever

— **Psalm 73:26 (KJV)**



Take a few minutes today—morning or evening—and just sit. No phone. No list. No fixing.

Then gently reflect:

- One moment recently when you felt calm or at ease
- One situation that made your heart feel tense or rushed
- One small thing you can do today to support your heart (rest, a walk, a deep breath, a conversation)

That's it. Simple. Honest.



# Journaling *Prompts*



## Listening to What the Heart Is Carrying

### Why We Journal — Making Space to Listen

There are moments when we don't fully realize how much we've been holding until we finally slow down. The heart often carries things quietly—unspoken worries, lingering emotions, and thoughts we meant to come back to but never did.

Journaling offers a place to set those things down. Instead of letting them stay stored in the body, writing allows them to surface gently. It helps settle the mind and creates space for clarity, especially during seasons when life feels demanding or overwhelming.

This isn't about writing perfectly or finding the right words. It's simply an opportunity to pause, reflect, and allow yourself to be present with what's there.

### *Reflection Questions:*

- What has been weighing on my heart lately, even if I haven't said it out loud?
- Where do I feel stress show up first in my body?
- What helps my heart feel supported when I'm overwhelmed?
- What is one thing I may need to release in order to feel more steady?



# Rooted In The Cup

## Supporting the Heart, While calming the Body

This month, we're highlighting teas that support the heart while also helping the body slow down. These blends were chosen with intention—keeping in mind circulation, stress, and the emotional weight many of us carry day to day.

Tea is not a cure-all, but it can be a meaningful pause. A moment to breathe. A way to support the body gently and consistently.



### ✿ HIBISCUS TEA

#### How it supports the heart:

Hibiscus is one of those teas that's often talked about when it comes to heart health. It's commonly used to support circulation and help the heart work a little more smoothly, especially when stress or tension has been high.

#### What it helps the body release:

This tea is known for helping the body let go of excess fluid and buildup that can place extra pressure on the heart. Many people also find it helpful when the body feels heavy or sluggish.

#### When it fits best:

Earlier in the day or after meals. Enjoy it warm or chilled—whatever feels good.

### ✿ ROSE TEA

#### How it supports the heart:

Rose is often used for emotional heart care. Stress, grief, and unspoken feelings can sit in the chest, and rose is traditionally enjoyed as a way to soften and support the heart emotionally—which matters more than we sometimes realize.

#### What it helps the body release:

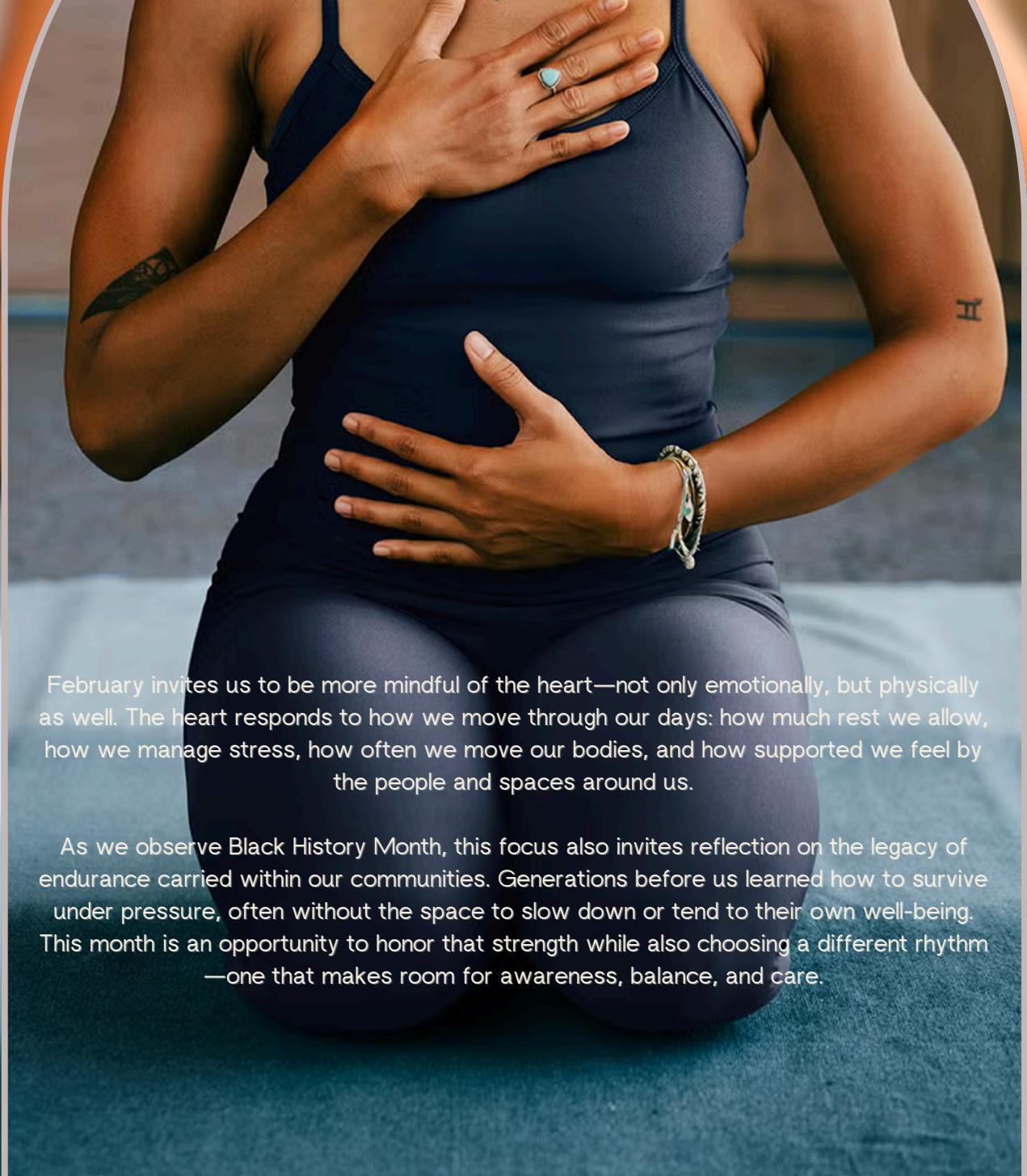
This tea is known for helping release emotional tightness held in the chest. It supports relaxation and encourages the breath to deepen.

#### When it fits best:

During prayer, journaling, or any moment when you need gentleness.

# FOCUS OF THE MONTH

Honoring the Heart Through Awareness and Rhythm



February invites us to be more mindful of the heart—not only emotionally, but physically as well. The heart responds to how we move through our days: how much rest we allow, how we manage stress, how often we move our bodies, and how supported we feel by the people and spaces around us.

As we observe Black History Month, this focus also invites reflection on the legacy of endurance carried within our communities. Generations before us learned how to survive under pressure, often without the space to slow down or tend to their own well-being. This month is an opportunity to honor that strength while also choosing a different rhythm—one that makes room for awareness, balance, and care.

# BODY FOCUS

## *The Heart, Circulation & Cardiovascular Health*

The heart works constantly, without breaks, keeping everything moving. Over time, stress, limited movement, and emotional strain can add pressure—often without us realizing it right away. That's why cardiovascular disease tends to develop gradually.

For many in Black communities, heart health has also been shaped by long-term stress and the weight of carrying a lot for others. Understanding that context helps us approach this conversation with compassion instead of blame.

## **LISTENING TO THE BODY**

Most of the time, the body doesn't shout. It starts by whispering. A little more tired than usual. Tension settling in the shoulders or the chest. Trouble sleeping. A shorter fuse than normal. Even that low-level feeling of being on edge. These are often the first ways the heart asks for our attention — long before anything feels urgent.

And supporting heart health doesn't have to look dramatic or overwhelming. It's rarely about big changes all at once. It's gentle movement. A few minutes outside. Finding ways to release stress instead of carrying it. Staying connected. Allowing yourself to rest when you can. The goal isn't perfection — it's choosing support over strain, again and again.

For many of us in this community, those signals don't always show up as alarms. They show up as feeling stuck. Moving through the same routines. Carrying familiar responsibilities. Pushing forward because that's what we've learned to do. And over time, that pressure can settle right in the chest.

Listening to the body, I'm learning, means noticing when that tightness lingers — and responding with a little more care. Pausing when possible. Reaching out instead of holding it all alone. Making small shifts that ease the strain, even slightly. Because when we listen early, the heart doesn't have to work so hard to be heard.

*Above all else, guard thy heart; for out of it are the issues of life."*

*— Proverbs 4:23 KJV*



# On the Table this Month



## Foods That Support the Heart

When we talk about heart health, what we eat is part of the conversation—but not in a restrictive or overwhelming way. This month is about being mindful of what we place on our plates and how those choices support the heart over time.

Many of these foods have long been part of our cultural tables and shared meals. They remind us that nourishment has always been rooted in community, tradition, and care—often passed down quietly, without labels or trends.

### Leafy Greens

Collards, spinach, and mustard greens support circulation and provide nutrients that help the heart function steadily. These are foods many of us grew up with—simple, familiar, and sustaining.

### Berries

Berries are often associated with supporting blood vessels and circulation. They're an easy addition to breakfast, snacks, or tea time.

### Beets

Beets are commonly used to support blood flow and circulation. They can be roasted, juiced, or added to salads in ways that feel accessible.

### Beans and Legumes

Beans have long been staples at our tables. They support heart health by providing fiber that helps the body manage cholesterol and maintain balance.

### Herbal Teas

Teas such as hibiscus and rooibos are often enjoyed to support circulation and help the body slow down. A warm cup can be both nourishing and grounding.



## WELLNESS FEATURE

### Centering the Heart in Our Community

This month's wellness focus extends beyond personal habits and into collective care. Heart health is not just an individual issue—it's a community one, shaped by access, stress, support, and advocacy. When we talk about caring for the heart, we also have to talk about who is being seen, supported, and protected.

## APPLE MUSIC FEATURE

A Song to Sit With

🎵 “More Than I Can Bear” — Kirk Franklin & God’s Property

 [Listen Here](#)

## Featured Podcast Listening

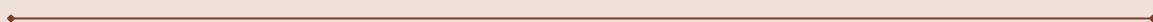
*This month, we invite you to listen to **Session 345: Black Women & Heart Health**, a powerful conversation that brings heart health into clear focus for our community.*

*February is American Heart Month, and this episode helps shine a light on the cardiovascular health disparities that continue to impact Black women.*

*In this discussion, cardiologist Dr. Jayne Morgan shares what a healthy heart truly looks like, how race and gender influence the care Black women receive, and what we can be mindful of as we work to protect our hearts over time. The conversation is informative, affirming, and grounded—offering insight without fear, and awareness without overwhelm.*

 [Listen Here](#)

Above all else, guard thy heart; for out of it are the issues of life.”  
— Proverbs 4:23 (KJV)



# Walking It Out: Heart Health, History, and Community



When I think about movement in our communities, I don't think about exercise the way it's usually framed.

For us, movement has always meant more than fitness. Walking has been a way to process life, to connect with one another, and sometimes just to endure. From slow neighborhood walks to historic marches, putting one foot in front of the other has always carried meaning far beyond physical health.

And yes — when it comes to heart health, walking really is one of the simplest ways to support your heart. It helps with circulation, it eases stress, and it gives your heart steady movement without asking for anything fancy. No equipment. No memberships. No pressure to do it perfectly.

But there's something else walking offers that we don't talk about enough. It creates space. Space to breathe. Space to talk things out. Space to think. Whether you're walking with a partner, a friend, or just yourself and your thoughts, movement has a way of softening what stress tightens.

For a lot of us, caring for our hearts means coming back to what feels familiar and doable. A short walk after dinner. A few minutes around the block. Stepping outside when the day feels heavy. These aren't big gestures — but they matter. Over time, those small choices add up, not just physically, but emotionally too.

So this month, I invite you to think about movement a little differently. Not as another thing to check off your list, but as a moment of connection — to your body, your breath, your community, and even the history that reminds us we've always moved forward, one step at a time.

# WHAT'S BREWING

## WHAT'S BREWING | ON THE HORIZON

As we shared in January, there are a few things on the horizon—and this month, we're continuing to move toward them with intention. We're leaning into ways to support not only heart health, but overall well-being in ways that feel doable, connected, and grounded in real life—not overwhelming.

In addition to our community walks and creative wellness activities, we're beginning to weave more intentional moments into our gatherings—creating space where conversation, care, and connection can unfold naturally. This season is about slowing down, moving with purpose, and allowing room for shared reflection.

- **Community Heart Walks**

Gentle, guided walks designed to support circulation while creating space to move, talk, and reflect together. These walks aren't about pace or distance—they're about showing up and caring for the heart as a community.

- **Couples & Companions Gatherings**

An upcoming offering for partners, spouses, and companions focused on communication, stress, and everyday habits that support both emotional and physical health.

- **Tea, Talk & Reflection Circles**

Small, intentional gatherings centered around tea, conversation, and shared reflection. These circles are designed to create space to pause, connect, and talk honestly about stress, heart health, and caring for ourselves in practical ways.

Details and dates will be shared soon. We invite you to join what fits your season.

# A FINAL NOTE

As we come to the close of this month, I've been sitting with how much our hearts are carrying — not just individually, but together. Black history isn't something we visit once a year and then set down. It lives in our bodies. In our families. In the stories we've inherited and the resilience we didn't have to be taught. Every time we remember who we come from, we're carrying that history forward.

And we're living in a moment where there are very real attempts to silence, rewrite, or erase those stories. To strip meaning from what we know is sacred. To diminish a legacy that was hard-won and deeply rooted. But this is not new — and neither is our call. We are being asked to remember. To teach. To protect what was entrusted to us. And just as importantly, to care for ourselves and one another as we do.

Because honoring our legacy doesn't only happen through resistance. It also happens through rest. Through reflection. Through choosing rhythms that will sustain us for the long road ahead. In this season, caring for the heart isn't separate from the work — it is the work. It's an act of remembrance. And it's a quiet, powerful form of strength.

So take what spoke to you this month. Leave what didn't. Let it settle. And trust that every small way you tend to your heart — even the quiet, unseen ones — honors both the legacy behind you and the future that's still unfolding.

And we'll keep walking together.

