

Mandisa Is With Jesus Now, Singing the Highest Praise

If you are in crisis, please call 988 or visit . You are not alone.

On the surface, contemporary Christian singer Mandisa was the epitome of success. She became a musical star after her appearance on “American Idol” in 2006, and she won a Grammy for Best Contemporary Christian Album in 2014.

But those who read her interviews or followed her on social media knew she struggled with depression, low self-esteem and weight issues. In 2017 she told ABC News that she had contemplated suicide. In her 2022 memoir, “Out of the Dark,” the singer admitted that she had been raped, and that her suicidal thoughts were partly due to the death of a close friend who had breast cancer.

Mandisa—whose full name was Mandisa Lynn Hundley—was found dead in her home in Nashville, Tennessee, last Thursday, April 18. She was only 47. Police are still investigating, and a cause of death has not been announced. But in a video she posted a few days before her death, Mandisa candidly talked about her emotional battles, and she admitted she was “in a season of lament” because another close friend had died.

“There is a spirit of heaviness that is trying to overtake us,” she told her fans. “I’m not great, but I have the joy of the Lord.”

Breaking news, Spirit-filled stories. Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!

Many fans who watched her message, originally posted on Facebook, wondered if Mandisa took her own life. She seemed to be forcing herself to smile. Yet she urged people who were

struggling with anxiety or dark thoughts to read her seven-day devotional about depression on the YouVersion Bible app.

There's no question that Mandisa's uplifting music flowed out of a life of pain. She often told fans she wanted to be married. She was self-conscious about her hair and her weight—and "American Idol" judge Simon Cowell didn't help when he made cruel on-air jokes about her size.

Mandisa went on to forgive Cowell publicly for his nasty remarks. She told him: "What I want to say to you is that, yes, you hurt me and I cried and it was painful, it really was. But I want you to know that I've forgiven you and that you don't need someone to apologize in order to forgive somebody," she said. "I figure that if Jesus could die so that all of my wrongs could be forgiven, I can certainly extend that same grace to you."

The singer began working with a personal trainer and went on to lose 100 pounds after the incident with Cowell. But after her friend's death in 2014 she gained back much of the weight, and she retreated for a while from public view until her book was published. Even in the live message she aired last week on social media she again mentioned her struggle with self-acceptance.

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up to date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

The theme of Mandisa's music was that any emotional battle can be overcome through faith in Christ. Her 2014 hit song "Overcomer," which she wrote for her friend who died of cancer, says: "You're an overcomer / Stay in the fight 'til the final round / You're not going under / 'Cause God is holding you right now."

We don't know if Mandisa ended her life. That could be a possibility. But it's also possible that any medications she

was taking could have caused suicidal ideations.

Last year I lost a close friend to suicide. He was a great husband to his wife, a great father to his children and a respected Christian leader in his 60s. But because he had a medical condition that caused sleep deprivation, doctors prescribed a sleeping pill that in some cases can cause suicidal thoughts. (I personally believe that many of the medications people take today are more harmful than we realize.)

My friend's death was tragic—and maybe it could have been prevented if doctors were more careful about prescriptions. But I know my friend is now in the presence of Jesus, and the fact that he took his own life doesn't mean he wasn't saved or that what He did for God has been canceled. His faith was in a loving Savior who promises to ultimately dry all our tears and end all depression.

The same is true for Mandisa. She has left us, but her battle with depression doesn't cancel all the good she did. She loved the Lord, but her mental health battle was intense. Don't judge her for that. Instead, remind everybody who is struggling with negative emotions to avoid isolation, seek out healthy counseling and discover God's supernatural joy.

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

J. Lee Grady is an author, award-winning journalist and ordained minister. He served as a news writer and magazine editor for many years before launching into full-time ministry.

Lee is the author of six books, including "10 Lies the Church Tells Women," "10 Lies Men Believe" and "Fearless Daughters of the Bible." His years at Charisma magazine also gave him a unique perspective of the Spirit-filled church and led him to write "The Holy Spirit Is Not for Sale" and "Set My Heart on

Fire," which is a Bible study on the work of the Holy Spirit.