

***CONSIDERING THE PROBLEM OF
DEPRESSION & DISCOURAGEMENT!***

Recognizing the Problem

Depression is a prolonged feeling of sadness, discouragement and an inability to *get on top of things*. It is probably the most common emotional problem that people have today. The following symptoms may be present when a person is depressed:

Physical:

Insomnia, loss of appetite, loss of weight, loss of interest in sex, complaints about the body, lack of energy.

Thinking patterns:

Difficulty concentrating, poor memory, trouble making decisions, excessive self-criticism, thoughts of death or suicide.

Emotions:

Despair, guilt, irritability, crying, fear, gloomy outlook (sometimes masked by such opposite behavior as giddiness, inappropriate laughter, or pronounced quietness and sweetness.)

Activity:

Slowing of most activity, withdrawal from social contact, or the desire to withdraw, deterioration of work and personal appearance. Risk of suicide is strong for the extremely depressed person, as is the risk of mental or emotional breakdown.

COUNSELING STUDIES -- DEPRESSION

Biblical Perspective

Discouragement can be caused by circumstances beyond a person's control: dead-end job, marital difficulties, criticism from friends, and family, etc. It can also arise from the sense of failure or inadequacy, which could be caused even by seemingly insignificant factors in a person's life. These factors can gradually multiply into a grave problem in the person's life.

Often discouragement and depression is rooted in sin, as seen in Psalm 38:3-8; 32:1-5. With a prolonged feeling of sadness can come a growing distrust of God. There may be guilt from blaming God for the events, circumstances, and people with whom we have to do, and with whom we may be bitter as well. Often this is further seen in resentments and self-pity.

All of these factors can lead to guilt, inactivity, doubting, complaining, and worrying, so that the person may feel as though he's in an inescapable pit. Many admirable biblical characters experienced discouragement but the Bible gives evidence that hope in God's mercy and steadfast love provides deliverance from depression.

What are Further Causes of Depression?

- 1 . Lack of Adequate Rest. I Kings 19:3-4
- 2 . Lack of proper diet.
I King 19: 6-7
- 3 . Frustration and anger at God or others.
Gen. 4:6; Num. 11:11; I King 19:10, 14
- 4 . Excessive stress. Matt. 26:37-38
 - a person fails to delegate: Num. 11:14
 - a person fails to trust God: I King 19:1-4

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5. Feeling sorry for oneself because of circumstances.
Num. 11:11-14; Psa. 77:3; Jonah 4:1-4
6. Disobedience to God's revealed will.
Gen. 4:6; II Sam 12:1-18; Psa. 51:1-12; Jonah 4:1-4
7. Personal expectations of others or God that are not realized.
 - Jonah didn't want Nineveh to repent.
Jonah 4:1-4
 - Elijah wanted people to turn to God.
I Kings 19: 10-14
 - Moses wanted Israelites to turn to God.
Num. 11:10-14
8. Fear of what might happen. I King 19:3
9. Loneliness. I King 19:4

What Are The Examples of Depression in Scripture?

1. Cain's depression was caused by disobedience to God's revealed will.
Gen. 4:6-7
2. Moses' depression was caused by excessive stress. Num. 11:11-15
3. Elijah's depression was caused by personal high expectations, fatigue, lack of food, a fear of Jezebel and loneliness. I King 19
4. David's depression was caused by his adultery. II Sam. 12:1-17;
Psa. 32:1-5

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5. Jonah's depression was caused by circumstances that did not go as he desired, and disobedience to God's will for his life. Jon. 4:3
6. Christ's depression was caused by excessive stress prior to the crucifixion.
Matt. 26:37-38

What Are the Characteristics of a Depressed Person?

1. Complaining about his circumstances.
Num. 11:14; Psa. 38:4; 77:3
2. Desire to be alone.
I King 19:3-4
3. Seeing no meaning or purpose in his life.
I King. 19:4
4. Loss of joy. Psa. 51:8, 12
5. Sense of problems being overwhelming.
Psa. 77:3-4
6. Continual focus on one's problems even into the night with loss of sleep.
Psa. 77:6
7. Questioning of God's goodness.
Psa. 77:7-9
8. Anger and jealousy.
I Kings 19:10, 14; Jonah 4:1-4
9. Facial expression of despondency.

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Psa. 38:6; Matt. 26:37-38

10. Physical exhaustion.

Psa. 38:10

11. Imagined exaggerated calamities that may come upon him.

I Kings 19:10, 14, 18; Psa. 38:11-12

What Is the Biblical Solution of Depression?

1. Proper eating habits. I Kings 19:5-7

2. Proper rest. I Kings 19:4-7

3. Sharing your inner feelings with another concerned person or God.

I Kings 19:9-10, 21; Matt. 26:37-38

4. Resolve unnecessary stress by delegating position or work to others.

Num. 11:10-25

5. Determine areas of responsibility that have been neglected and begin to focus on them. I Kings 19:15-18

6. Confess all known sin, if sin is the cause.

Gen. 4:5-7; Ps. 51:1-4; 8-12

7. Focus and meditate on God's goodness and greatness and share it with others. Psa. 42:5; 77:2, 11-15

A typical believer will face difficult situations as Paul faced, but will not allow them to destroy his outlook on life or his effectiveness. See II Cor. 4:8-9.

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Paul was: Troubled..... but not crushed
Perplexed..... but not despairing
Persecuted..... but not forsaken
Struck down....but not destroyed

Brief, But Positive Answers!

1. God cares and is concerned for YOU. Isa. 41:10
2. Biblical confession of sin and failure will relieve a lot of depression.
Psa. 32:1-5; 103:1-5
3. Total trust in the Lord's providential will and plan for the life is so important. Phil. 2:13; 4:13; II Tim. 1:7; Rom. 12:3; 8:28-29, 37;
Eph. 6:10
4. Christ's YOKE for our lives is not only easy, but HE CARRIES it with us.
Matt. 11:28-30
5. We must in everything give thanks, for this is HIS will and the way of rest and peace. I Thess. 5:18; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6-8

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Finding Answers For the Problem of Depression and Discouragement!

Project I

1. What did David ask from the Lord according to Psalm 51:10-12? _____

2. In what way did David thoroughly deal with his sin according to Psalm 51:1-4? _____

3. Why would unconfessed sin bring depression and discouragement to the Christian? _____

4. What did David say about the physical results in his life when he had *kept silence about his sin?* (Psa. 32:1-5) _____

5. What does Romans 8:28 really mean to you? _____

Do you really believe that all the things that happen to us are a result of God working for our good if we love God and are willing to fit into His plans?

6. What is Christ like according to Matt. 11:28-30? _____

7. What does Christ invite us to do in Matt.11:28-30 that would make a difference in the stresses and difficulties of life? _____

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8. What does it mean that His yoke is easy and His burden is light?

9. What is God's will for us according to:

I Thess. 5:18 _____

Eph. 5:20 _____

Phil. 4:6,7 _____

Project II

Often we are discouraged, despondent, and find ourselves depressed because of our self-talk practices or in other words, our inner thoughts and evaluations about life in general.

We may become very depressed because of what we say to ourselves about the **circumstances** of our lives, the **events** we may face and then the **people** who are a part of these.

1. What were (or are) your thoughts when you felt depression begin in your inner life?

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2. What were your evaluations or your self-talk considerations about those very things that are at the center of your depression? _____

3. Do you have thoughts about anger, or feelings of bitterness? Are you aware these continued thoughts will bring depression? _____ Are you willing to say **NO** to such inner thought meditations? _____ You may need to scream “STOP” inside your own heart and mind in order to quit the self-talk thoughts that help to build your discouragement and depression.

4. Do you have feelings of inadequacy and failure? Christ is your sufficiency, and you must allow HIM to meet your inner heart need. It could be your negative self-talk or deep criticalness of yourself is helping to produce your problem.

What should your thoughts be instead?

(Based on I Pet. 5:8; Psa. 37:4,5; Isa 40:28-31; Isa. 41:10; Psa. 27:14; Heb. 13:5,6?)

Project III

Memorize:

Romans 8:28, 29

Romans 8:31

Phil. 4:19

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I Thess. 5:18

Matt. 11:28-30

Heb. 4:14-16

Consider Christ!

*Christ is touched with the feelings of our personal infirmities! (Heb. 4:14-16)
This means that He is deeply moved at our sufferings. He knows all about suffering.
When He went to the cross, He suffered every kind of pain ---- emotionally,
physically, and even spiritually! He suffered more than any human could ever suffer.*

*He knows all about everything you have gone through that has helped to build
your discouragement, hurt, despair, and depression. He is moved inwardly about
your heart cry and need. You can rest assured that you can't suffer anything that He
hasn't already suffered. So He urges you to come **boldly to the throne of grace to
find help in the time of your need.***

*We also have the Holy Spirit who abides within the saved and is there to comfort,
encourage, strengthen, anoint, and support. Allow Him to minister to your life.*

He wants to be your solace, strength, and support.

-- Dr. Edward Watke Jr.