
Depression

Every Christian suffers from depression from time to time.

Sometimes depression comes through no fault of our own. There may be severe problems which are imposed by outside circumstances. There may be physical exhaustion and a weakening of physical and emotional strength. There may be serious disturbances or distress in life with a feeling of being trapped or a fear of what might happen. If the depression is not caused by a sin problem, confession is not called for. But the techniques of the Christian way of life are equally useful in combating depression in whatever form it comes.

Sometimes depression is self-induced because it is caused by sin. Mental attitude sins will bring on depression. Failure to exercise Faith-Rest principles or failure to claim promises from the Bible can cause depression. If sin is the problem, the first step to the solution is to confess sin Biblically and use the techniques of Faith-Rest, Occupation with Christ, and the Filling of the Holy Spirit to begin a quick recovery.

Depression may include one or more of the following:

- A feeling of dejection or sadness
- An attitude of self-depreciation
- A reduction in quality or force
- A lowering of vitality or functional activity

The Bible deals extensively with the subject of mental anguish, sorrow, and depression. There are many Bible words used to describe the thoughts and feelings people have when they are depressed. Studying these definitions, and the Bible passages where they are found, is a very important part of the therapy for many kinds of depression. Almost every Bible verse that has a word related to depression also has part of the cure for that condition somewhere in its context.

As you study the following verses, try to determine in each case the reasons for the state of depression and whether it was caused by personal sin (self-induced), was the result of undeserved suffering, or came from some other source. Then, try to decide on what "cure" is being suggested. In some cases, the cure will show up in the context.

In others you will have to decide on a solution from categorical doctrinal principles.

The Bible deals with depression categorically using the following words:

λυπη (**lupei**), meaning "grief, sorrow, distress, suffering, a sad plight". The verb form is λυπω (**lupeo**), "to cause pain, to grieve, to annoy". In military terminology, the word was used of troops in the sense "to harass; to annoy" the enemy. In the passive voice, where the subject receives the action of the verb, the meaning is "to be sad, to be sorry, to be grieved".

"And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry." Matt. 17:22,23

"And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" Matt. 26:22

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." Matt. 19:22

"And he [Jesus] took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." Matt. 26:37,38

"... I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." John 16:20

"But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably." Romans 14:15

"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." 2 Cor. 2:4

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." 1 Thess. 4:13

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through many testings." 1 Peter 1:6

"Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peace-

able fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Heb. 12:11

"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." 1 Peter 2:19

αδημονια (**adeimonia**), noun, "in great distress or anguish"

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful...", Matt. 27:38. See also Mark 14:33,34

"For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick." Phil. 2:26

αναγκη (**anagkei**), noun, "necessity, constraint, natural desire (such as hunger), bodily pain or suffering". When used with θλιψις (**thlipsis**), signifies a condition of necessity arising from some form of outside compulsion.

[From here on, you look up the verses for yourself. wd]

MATT. 18:7; LUKE 14:18; 21:23; ROM. 13:5; 1 COR. 7:26, 37; 9:16; 2 COR. 6:4; 9:7; 12:10; 1 THESS. 3:7; PHILEMON V. 14; HEB. 7:12,27; 9:16; JUDE V. 3

στενοχωρια (**stenochoria**), noun, "narrowness of place, a trapped feeling."

ROM. 2:9; 8:35; 2 COR. 6:4; 12:10

συνοχη (**sunochei**), noun, metaphorically for "anguish or distress" caused by a compressing together or narrowing of the way.

2 Cor. 2:4

Luke 21:25

θλιψις (**thlipsis**), noun, "pressure, oppression, affliction."

MATT. 13:21; 24:9; MARK 4:17; 13:19,24; JOHN 16:21,33; ACTS 7:10,11; 11:19; 14:22; 20:23; ROM. 2:9; 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; 1 COR. 7:28; 2 COR. 1:4,8; 2:4; 4:17; 6:4; 7:4; 8:2; EPH. 3:13; PHIL. 1:17; 4:14; COL. 1:24; 1 THESS. 1:6; 3:3,7; 2 THESS. 1:4,6; HEB. 10:33; JAMES 1:27; REV. 1:9; 2:9,10,22; 7:14

καταπονεω (**kataroneo**), verb, "to wear out with toil or suffering"

Acts 7:24 and 2 Peter 2:7

συνεχω (**sunechw**), verb, "to forcibly hold together; to contain; to constrain; to oppress" Used for holding rowers together on galley ships.

Matt. 4:24, 38; 8:37

Luke 8:45; 19:43; 22:63

Acts 28:8; 7:57; 12:50; 18:5

2 Cor. 5:14

Phil. 1:23

οδυναω (**odunao**), verb, "to cause pain". In the passive "to feel pain".

Luke 2:48; 16:24

Acts 20:38

θλιβω (**thlibo**), verb "to press; to distress; to trouble; to gall"

Matt. 7:14

Mark 3:9

2 Cor. 1:6; 4:8; 7:5

1 Thess. 3:4

2 Thess 1:6

1 Tim. 5:10

Heb. 11:37

ταραχη (**tarachei**), noun, "trouble, disorder, confusion"

Mark 13:8

John 5:4

ταρασσω (**tarasso**), verb, "to stir up, disturb, trouble; to trouble the mind; to alarm; to frighten; to throw into disorder"

Matt. 2:3; 14:26

Mark 6:50

Luke 1:12; 24:38

1 Peter 3:14

Principles of Application in Dealing With Depression

The following ten principles are Bible techniques which you can use to deal with depression in your life, regardless of the cause. Each of these topics is discussed in more detail in other notes in this series, but this outline will give you ideas on how you can make specific application of categorical doctrine to help with real world problems.

Confession of Sin

Personal sin leads to depression. You must deal with sin on a daily basis by confessing and mov-

ing on. If you don't do this, sin becomes a burden which clouds your joy, drains your spiritual energy, and destroys your productivity and vitality. In short, sin is always depressing.

In privacy, make a list of your mental attitude sins, verbal sins, and behavior sins. Ask the Lord to make you aware of the habits of your own life. Respond immediately to the Holy Spirit when He uses the Word to spotlight your sin. Name the sin to God; then rejoice in forgiveness and cleansing and your renewed fellowship with God. All the promises and provisions of God the Father are now available to you. Make it a spiritual habit to confess sins whenever they show up in your life.

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit fills you and controls your life when you have no unconfessed sin in your life. You can trust the Holy Spirit to reveal sin to you when you commit it, or even before. When the Holy Spirit is in control, He produces His fruit (Gal. 5:12). The fruit of the Spirit does not include heaviness, depression, discouragement, disillusion, anguish, sadness, dejection, or loss of vitality. Consider these points:

- Impersonal love is free from depression.
- Joy pushes depression out.
- Peace does not coexist with disillusion in the soul of the believer filled with the Holy spirit.
- Longsuffering gives the ability to deal with depression and trouble.
- Gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are fruits of righteousness, which is divine good. Divine good takes the place of depression.

Living in the Word

By Living in the Word you are constantly reminded of God's viewpoint, of His Plan, of His provision, or His awareness of our spirit of heaviness and what He want to accomplish in us with the testing. Living in the sphere of human viewpoint is a source of depression. Living in the Word gradually transplants you to a new sphere, a new environment for your life, in which there is victory over depression.

Orientation to Grace

Depression is often caused by people, most of the time by people we cannot escape, or people we love, or people we cannot confront, or people we trust. Grace Orientation includes the ability to look at people and see them as God sees them. It includes the ability to let them live their lives as unto the Lord, and trusting God to make His way clear to them. This technique lets people make mistakes without your judging them. It enables you to accept criticism without hurt or bitterness. It enables you to "esteem other better than yourself", to "do nothing through strife or vainglory."

Occupation with Christ

The technique of Occupation with Christ helps to cure depression because it gets your eyes off your spouse, your children, your neighbors, your friends, and yourself. Instead, as you move through the day, you are thinking about the Lord Jesus Christ, His plan for your life, the Father's provision for each incident in your life, and His provision of wisdom for each decision you must make. Occupation with Christ is a by-product of the Faith-Rest Life. Depression is a by-product of occupation with self, with life, with problems.

The Faith-Rest Life

Faith-Rest is believing the promises of God and then entering into the "rest" phase of Christian living by claiming and enjoying those promises. Therefore, you must search the Scriptures daily to remind yourself of promises, and to learn new ones. You must know who and what God is so that you will not hesitate to believe that He can do what He has promised to do. Study the attributes of God using verses about the Essence of God. Know Him as He reveals Himself in the Bible. Believe Him when He tells you what He will do for you. Count on it. Let your faith rest on it. Cast your burden on the Lord.

Relaxed Mental Attitude

A relaxed mental attitude is based on knowing God and on having the divine production in the soul that comes with the fruit of the Holy Spirit. A relaxed mental attitude is one of the results of Living in the Word, Walking in Fellowship, practicing the Faith-Rest Life, and being occupied with

Christ. All of the components of depression melt away when God provides this attribute.

Mastering of the Details of Life

We are all involved with details of life. Either we master them, or they master us! If you are a slave to one or more details of life, your thoughts are devoted to them, and they drive you. They dominate your thoughts, your conversation, your decisions. Slavery to the details of life leads to disillusion, disappointment, and depression.

Mastery of the details of life means that you look to the Lord for every detail. Your happiness does not depend on people, circumstances or things. You have the peace of God that passes understanding. You have learned to be content under any circumstances. You can wait for the Lord's timing in providing the details you want; you can enjoy them when you have them; and you can remain happy when the Lord sees fit Not to provide some detail.

Capacity to Love

There may be many depressing details that surround our relationships with other people or the circumstances of our lives. The fruit of the Spirit love deals with that depression by giving us the capacity to have a Spirit-produced love for God (1 Cor. 16:22); for spouse (Titus 2:4); for others (Rom. 12:13).

Inner Happiness

Inner happiness is not possible for the believer who is occupied with himself and his needs. Inner happiness is a state of rejoicing based on knowing that God is everything He claims to be and that He can do what He has promised. Inner happiness is the joy of living where every provision for physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being is being made by God in the life of a Christian who is walking in daily fellowship with Him.

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