

Introduction to Biblical Thoughts on Depression

Depression is something that we all encounter at some point in our lives. It has varied origins and can range from being a temporary mild distraction to a persistently immobilizing or even life threatening condition. There are many examples of depression in scripture in which those God loved such as David, Elijah and Job struggled with despondency. Depression usually doesn't occur overnight although it may (chronic versus acute) nor does depression often instantaneously disappear although we should never limit the power of God. However, God's love remains for all those who are broken and disheartened and His desire is for you "not to have the Spirit a fear but of power and love and a sound mind." With God all things are possible" and He will provide the strength and resources so that you can be a productive member of His family.

What are some origins of depression?

- Real or imagined loss or trauma.
- Biological such as chemical imbalance, genetic predisposition, disease, postpartum depression or post adrenalin depression and diet.
- Psychological/cognitive depression that may be related to distorted thinking, persistent guilt or shame, stress, familial situations/issues, learned helplessness or anger.

What are some symptoms of depression?

- A sense of hopelessness, sadness, and discouragement.
- Significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain (e.g., a change of more than 5% of body weight in a month), or decrease or increase in appetite nearly every day.
- Insomnia; sleep problems.
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain
- Lack of concentration/distractibility.
- Irritability or restlessness.
- Feelings of shame, guilt and self-reproach.
- Apathy and disinterest or diminished interest concerning things that you previously enjoyed.
- Fatigue and loss of energy.
- Self-destructive or suicidal.

Where to turn when you are depressed?

Turn to God in prayer, counsel from His word, counsel from His appointed pastors, teachers and elders and, if needed, those He has gifted as physicians which frequently needs to be either ruled out first or be at least part of the ongoing treatment of depression.

Depression may possibly be relieved though medical treatment, exercise, forgiveness and confession, acquiring coping skills, gaining a biblical perspective, allowing someone else to share your

burden (God has not left us as orphans but has given us His Holy Spirit and place us in His family, worship and thankfulness “Only God gives a song in the night”, putting off unbiblical habits or distrust or avoiding unhealthy relationships.

Remember God’s care and sustaining comfort is always there for you and there is nothing that we will experience that Jesus hasn’t given us the power to endure and overcome as He endured and overcame. “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed...So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

(2 Corinthians 4:8-9; 16-18 ESV)