

Winning the Battle over Depression

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Introduction: Depression is an overwhelming emotion that can rule our lives.

- A. We *all will have times* where our spirit is overwhelmed by emotion.
 - 1. As a younger man I saw this as a weakness that must be avoided at all costs. As I have lived life I have found that this is a part of life.
 - 2. The accumulation of experiences and thoughts will bear fruit as we get older.
- B. Issues that adults face regarding depression *often starts with their home background*.
 - 1. Do we learn nurture or buried wrath in our home life? **(Eph 6:4)**
 - 2. Greater emotional struggles can be *passed down through generations* through the *same mistakes being repeated* in the homes.
 - 3. Through faith we can overcome and be an example. **(1 Jn 5:4-5, 2 Cor 12:10)**

I. Characteristics of Depression

- A. What is depression?
 - 1. A psychotic or neurotic condition characterized by an inability to concentrate, insomnia, and feelings of extreme sadness, dejection, and hopelessness.
 - 2. Biblically it is described as: anxiety, despair, worry, an overwhelmed spirit, etc.
 - 3. Problems with depression are not always a result of a spiritual problem.
- B. There are different levels of depression - Short term, Periodic and Chronic.
 - 1. To be depressed is not in itself a sin! All God given emotions have a place. **(Ecc 3:2-4)** Also there can be physical reasons for depression.
 - 2. However if depression is not checked it *can come to control ones actions* and thinking. In many cases this is an issue within the control of the Christian.
- C. Depression is often a product of *buried anger*.
 - 1. It could be taught in the home as how one “deals” with problems.
 - 2. What happens when we let go and serve God? God will bless us as a witness to our “enemies.” **(Psa 23:5-6)**
 - 3. It could be a short term overwhelming due to *physical exhaustion* and *unrealistic expectations and perceptions*. **(1 Kgs 19:2-10)**
- D. Depression can be brought about by physical changes *unrelated to experiences*.
- E. Depression is an emotion and not a sin by itself!
 - 1. The pain and uncertainty that comes with this emotion can drive us closer to God. **(Psa 124:2-4, 5-7)**
 - 2. It becomes a sin when *it shuts our mind from doing God’s will*. **(Eph 4:26-27)**

II. Dangers that may come with chronic depression

- A. You can become undependable. **(Mk 4:16-17)**
 - 1. There are problems in maintaining relationships. Withdrawal is preferred.
 - 2. You can be easily upset and influenced by others (Used by others).
 - 3. You can become a chronic complainer. Others may withdraw from you.
- B. Reality changes easily.

1. A small event can cause a sudden 180 degree turn in how you view another.
 2. You can be easily swayed by both flattery and gossip. **(Rom 16:18)**
 3. You can become uncertain in things you can know but certain in things you cannot know **(Col 2:18-19)**
- C. You can become ego-centered.
1. It can become all about you. You then cannot relate to or understand others.
 2. You can use the faults of others for selfish purposes. **(Lk 18:9, 11)**
 3. You can be driven by the wrong relationships. **(2 Pt 2:18-19)**
 4. Pride can become a way of escape. You think you are smarter than others.
- D. You can reject having a doctrinal core. **(Eph 4:13-15)**
1. Because of burdens you can be tempted to flee from doctrinal controversy.
 2. You can become a spiritual “marshmallow” by refusing to stand and pay a price. This can greatly affect your children in how you “protect” them.
 3. You can become fearful of solid truth and of those who stand. **(2 Tim 1:8)**
 4. You can be led to believe anything when your emotions are stirred. You then become unteachable. **(2 Tim 3:6-9)**

III. The challenge of staying faithful while experiencing chronic depression

- A. Many in the church have let these issues be something we do not speak about.
1. You must first see your problem. Do not live in denial.
 2. These chronic issues I liken to a physical handicap.
 3. The real tragedy occurs when the problem is ignored.
- B. Surround yourself with honest and understanding people who can help and protect.
1. Consider how David helped one of his mighty men avoid sin. **(1 Sam 26:8-9)**
 2. Regularly worship God and assemble with Christians. Asaph was helped!
 3. Please be honest and open with your family and children. Hiding and denying these issues can destroy your children.

IV. How should the family of the depressed respond?

- A. There are two common, but wrong approaches to the depressed.
1. Some treat the member with silence by ignoring them. Others may ridicule or silently bury anger against the depressed.
 2. Some may allow the depressed to rule. They must submit or be punished! The depressed one can be very manipulative.
- B. Have the courage to give the person what they need. **(Mk 10:21)**
1. This may lead to short term anger, but long term solutions. You may “intervene.”
 2. Cowardly men allow these problems to make shipwreck of their entire family.
- C. There may be a need for professional help.
- D. Understand your own limitations.
1. You cannot change another person against their will.
 2. Always keep your own faithfulness in mind. **(Gal 6:1)**
 3. Have realistic expectations.

Conclusion: We serve a Lord who understands and will help each of us through faith!