

Love Community Baptist Church

Wednesday Night Virtual Bible Study

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What Does the Bible Say About Depression?

Proverbs 12:25 mentions depression directly, "Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad" (NKJV). That's a good place to begin. In this little couplet God, via the wisdom of Solomon, provides both a diagnosis and prescription that can help people grow beyond depression. A heart full of anxiety is the culprit. Jesus said:

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light".

Matthew 11:28-30

In broad strokes, many Christians suffering from depression can find hope in biblical foundations. You can also find stories of the Bible where certain people experienced depression: Moses (Numbers 11: 10-16), David (Psalm 51; Psalm 32: 1-5), Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-18), Job, Jonah (Jonah 4:1-11), Psalmist (Psalm 73).

1. We have hope in God.

God encourages us to "call upon [Him] in the day of trouble; I will deliver you" (Psalm 50:15). Hopelessness is one of the hallmark symptoms of depression.

The grace of God in Jesus Christ is the sum of all hope (Colossians 1:5-6, 23, 27; 1 Timothy 1:1).

God wanted to make known among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:27

Paul, a man who had more than his share of tribulation and suffering, proclaimed, "We have placed our hope in Him that He will deliver us again" (2 Corinthians 1:10b).

2. We have joy in salvation.

We live in a fallen world, one in which good things may come to an end. The tragic dimension of life will be present until the kingdom of God comes fully in Jesus' return.

The joy of salvation comes from realizing, again and again, that our sins have been forgiven and that we will live forever with the eternally happy God, who desires that we share in His joy. We should never "get over" the gospel.

3. We should show active love for God and others.

Love for God and others is essential because we all at some time or another find ourselves sucked into a vortex of morbid self-involvement, which keeps us from following the heavenly prescription given by the Great Physician, the medicine that many need above all else (Matthew 22:36-40).

“Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.”

Matthew 22:36-40

When we begin to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and demonstrate love to others, we find true hope in God's active love.

8 Strategies for Dealing with Depression

Here are some practical strategies for helping others who are facing depression. However, never assume there are no medical issues that need attention.

Describe the experience. Ask people to describe their experience of depression in vivid detail. People are different, so depression comes in many shapes and sizes.

Identify the causes. Depression often is not just something we have, it is something we do. Invite people to examine their own hearts with this question: If your depression could speak, what would it say? What does it say about you? To others? To God? Depression is an active experience and can result from many sources other than the physiological: guilt due to unconfessed sin, false guilt, misplaced shame, ungodly fears, suppressed bitterness or hatred, hopeless grieving, and unbiblical expectations.

Read and observe Scripture. Ask people with whom you work to study Psalms 42-43. How does the psalmist address God? What does he preach to himself?

Act on the truth. Those who seek help first must accept the challenge of faithful obedience, even though they do not feel like it and are skeptical that anything will make a difference, it's important to have faith. Also, explain to them that progress out of the pit is step-by-step, bit-by-bit. Small, practical, consistent faith-based change occurs in the details.

Look at lifestyle. Evaluate and provide recommendations for lifestyle problems, such as overworking, lack of exercise, sleep difficulties, procrastination, unresolved stressors, absence of spiritual disciplines.

Resolve conflicts. Deal with troubled relationships, past or present.

Get to work. Assign active loving tasks performed for the benefit of others. Helping others can provide a new perspective on life.

See a doctor. Refer depressed persons to a Christian physician to rule out physical causes if a physician has not been contacted already. Persons who are already taking multiple medications may need a physician's care to avoid further complications.

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