

# The Darkness of Depression and Despair

## Among those that have struggled with depression:

- Charles Spurgeon (Great English Preacher)

Likened depression to *“the horror of a soul forsaken by God”*

### Biblical Figures

- Moses (Eyes on others) – Numbers 11:10-15 (See Exodus 18:13-27)
- Job (Eyes on his losses and present suffering) – Job 3
- The Prophet Elijah (Eyes on himself) – 1 Kings 19:4 (see 1 Kings 18:17-19:18)
- Jonah (Eyes on circumstances) – Jonah 4:3 (See Jonah 3:10 – Chapter 4)
- The Prophet Jeremiah – (Eyes on his intense suffering, persecution) – Jeremiah 20:14, 18

## Scripture: Psalm 40:1-4a

<sup>1</sup> I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

<sup>2</sup> He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.

<sup>3</sup> And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed *is* that man that maketh the LORD his trust

## 1. The Darkness of Depression and Despair

### A. The Symptoms:

- Lack of energy / Paralyzed productivity
- Change in eating (Loss of appetite or eating too much)
- Change in sleeping (Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much)
- Inability to concentrate or stay focused
- Loss of interest
- Negative attitude
- Loss of motivation
- Withdrawal
- Anger
- Thoughts of death and/or dying



### B. The Description:

- A passive or listless feeling
- Helpless / hopeless feeling
- An attitude of “nothing seems to matter”

- Sadness
- A plunge
- Mindset that no one cares or understands
- Feelings on not wanting to go on (“I would be better off dead” or desiring to die)
- Feeling like you are in a deep, dark hole (a heavy blackness) and not feeling like trying to climb out)

**Despair:** To no longer have any hope or belief that a situation will improve or change



## C. The Causes

### 1- Medical Condition

- Chemical imbalance within the person's system
- A person who suffers from true chemical imbalances should seek professional help and sometimes even may require medication to help correct what is occurring biologically

### 2- Reactive

- A reaction to such things as:
- The death of a loved one
- A severe personal setback
- Divorce or Break-up
- Loss of job
- A severe disappointment

### 3- Physical Depletion

- Physically drained
- Nutrition is bad (a faulty diet)
- Sleep lacking
- Nerves frayed with pressure and anxiety

### 4- Mental / Emotional Depletion

- Emotional overload
- Handling the cares and problems of others
- Overloaded / overworked
- “Only I can handle this” mentality
- Post-mountain top blues
- Coming off a tremendous emotional high – Like the let-down many have after the holidays
- Self-pity (pout party)
- Anger



According to Tim LaHaye –

“The first step in the chain reaction producing depression is anger.”

### 5- Fearful Dread of a Situation and/or Problem

- Real or imagined problems
- Threat of an impending problem
- Dread of an impending meeting or confrontation

### 6- Spiritual

#### a. Oppression

⇒ Demonic oppression

#### b. Disobedience

- ⇒ Quenching the Spirit of God by not doing what you know He wants you to do
- ⇒ Grieving the Spirit of God by living in willful disobedience to something He has spoken to your hear about

“Spiritual depression is like every day is a winter with no Christmas to look forward to.”

C.S. Lewis

#### c. Unresolved sin guilt

Past sins or present sins

### D. The Trigger

Many times, depression begins with a trigger

- Holidays
- Being on the receiving end of Harsh words
- Anger
- Post-mountain top blues
- Coming off a tremendous emotional high
- Disappointment / Unfulfilled expectations

## 2. When We Are in the Darkness of Depression and Despair:

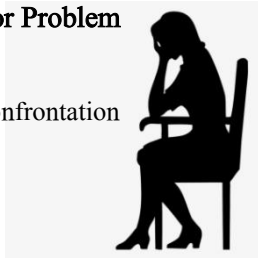
### A. Determine that you want to be helped

- Remaining in a constant state of depression and despair can undermine your witness for Christ – Psalm 40:3
- Be a vessel of His glory

### B. Begin with God!

Where are you at with Him?

⇒ Wait on God – Psalm 40:1



### C. Don't listen to yourself

“Feelings aren't Facts!”

Act against wrong feelings

Find refuge in the gift of self-forgetfulness

### D. Make yourself focus on God

Psalm 42:5

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me?

**hope thou in God:** for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance.

### E. Make a choice to trust God – Psalm 40:4a

- ⇒ Realize there is a greater unseen reality (than what you are experiencing), which is the presence of the Living God
- ⇒ This is not easy - it takes a constant refocus and realignment of your focus
- ⇒ When God is with you, there is no such thing as a truly hopeless situation

### F. Practice Living in the Awareness of God's Presence:

- ⇒ Living in an awareness of God's presence is vital to whatever He wants to do in our lives
- ⇒ Being aware of His presence helps us see everything in the light of His presence

### Living in the Awareness of God's Presence:

- 1- Creates a hunger within us for the Word of God
- 2- Causes us to continually keep Him in our thoughts
- 3- Causes us to consistently seek His guidance
- 4- Brings joy and peace to our hearts
- 5- We are more conscious of the good things He sends us
- 6- Causes us to continually live in dependence upon Him
- 7- Causes our confidence to be in God and not our circumstances
- 8- Prayer in a natural part of our life

### 3. Practical Counsel

In our darkness, we need to affirm the wise, strong hand of God to hold us, even when we have no strength to hold Him

#### A. Depression is real and you do not need to be ashamed if you struggle with it (do not allow yourself to wallow in it)

- Consult with a medical physician (Complete medical check-up)
- If you are doing the things we covered in this message and your physician feels you may have a chemical imbalance, don't be ashamed to go on prescribed medication

#### B. Remember, God has not and will not change

#### C. Evaluate:

- Evaluate your relationship with God
- Evaluate your relationship with others – is it strained, is there bitterness, unforgiveness
- Evaluate your workload – delegate, proper rest
- Evaluate your diet and exercise – balanced diet, physical exercise
- Evaluate your medication – too much cold medicine can cause depression

#### D. Get your mind off self

- Depression and despair often cause a person to turn inward and dwell on whatever is dis-hearting him
- Stop reciting the negative messages to yourself and others

#### E. Don't turn to substances for relief

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Pot

#### F. ACT – Do something

##### Doing is often God's appointed remedy for depression and despair

- Go walking
- Hobby
- If at all possible, keep your commitments and schedule

When you don't feel like being around people, is the very time you need to be around people

- Refuse to give up or give in to your feelings

#### G. Praise God – Psalm 40:3a (Psalm 42:5)

For Who He is

For what He is going to do in your life (statement of faith)

For His presence (even when you don't sense Him)