

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DEPRESSION?

What is depression? Why does depression happen? Depression affects millions of people around the world and is characterized by several weeks of a low/saddened mood, persistent throughout one's day and situations. Depression often has a variety of spiritual, psychological, physiological, relational, and environmental contributing factors (learned behavior, rejection, abuse, trauma, sickness, medicinal side effects, poor health, lack of sleep, negative thinking, anger, guilt, etc.). Treatment of depression thus necessitates a wholistic approach to gain lasting solutions.

Psalm 42:5-6 "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.
My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you"

What are the differences between discouragement/disappointment and depression? Discouragement/disappointment is usually temporary, related to failure in a specific relationship or a goal and is overcome or put into proper perspective. Depression is lasting, difficult to overcome, and becomes a significant and defining perspective in all areas of one's life.

Psalm 34:18 "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

What is it like to suffer depression? What are the signs of depression?

No motivation. Difficulty in explaining one's situation to others. Sense of overwhelming darkness. Dramatic change in personality. Lost Hope, hopelessness. Non-communicative, quiet. Withdrawal from life. Low joy and high negativity. Low self-esteem, derogatory remarks about oneself. Verbalization and signs of suicide. Lethargic and tired. Presence of pain without a clear cause. Inability to function with the normal activities of life.

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life" Matthew 6:25

Is depression described in the Bible?

Yes, depression as a temptation and as a sin is described in many places in the Bible...here are some examples:

- Abraham - hopeless for a child in his old age, trusted the Lord in the midst of overwhelming darkness (Genesis 15:3,12)
- Job - in intense emotional, physical, relational, & financial suffering came to points where he hated life and was encouraged to die by his own wife (Job 2:9, 3:11, 3:26, 10:1, 30:15-17)
- Moses - broken and burdened by the suffering of others to the point he was willing to give up his own salvation and life (Exodus 32:32, Numbers 11:14-15)
- David - seen in many of the Psalms and in his loss of his sons (Psalm 38:6-8, Psalm 56:8, 2 Samuel 12:15-23, 18:33)
- Psalm 42 & 43 - powerful Psalms walking through depression

- Elijah - even after a great victory and protection by God, runs away and hides in fear and depression (1 Kings 19)
- Jeremiah - was mocked, persecute, and ignored to the point he wished he wasn't born (Jeremiah 20:14,18)
- Jonah - angry with God and mad at God (Jonah 4:3 & 4:9)
- Jesus - was sorrowful unto death, sweating blood in his suffering (Mark 14:34-36, Luke 22:44)

Proverbs 3:5-8 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ...It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones."

Is it ok to be depressed? What are the dangers of depression?

We must be careful not to minimize, justify, or excuse depression because of its severity, commonality, or frequency. There are definitely some people who experience seasons of depression more frequently than others. We should have compassion on those who experience depression but we should also love them enough to show them how to fight for joy and resist the temptation of depression. If depression is a struggle of yours, reach out for help, it is deadly dangerous and you need friends, pastors, and professionals to help you.

"Half our fears arise from neglect of the Bible." Charles H. Spurgeon

Is it a sin to be depressed? Can a Christian be depressed?

Depression is a form of temptation. It is a temptation to believe a lie about one's self, one's situation, about others, and about God. Since it is a temptation it must be resisted actively. When depression is embraced, entertained, acted upon, or chosen as an identity it becomes sinful. Ongoing unrepentant sin is dangerous and must be confronted with truth. "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" Hebrews 10:26

"We cut the root of sin by being more satisfied in God." John Piper

What about mental illness? It is important to understand that some people struggle with worry, anxiety, fear, and depression to such a degree that it paralyzes them while others only have occasional struggles. Mental illness is real, just like a physical illness, and Christians should not neglect to consider medicines and medical solutions that God has provided to help treat and relieve the symptoms of mental illness. Adequate research should be done concerning the side effects and potential dependence on medicines. Simultaneous to any medicinal usage, Christians should be reminded that we have a volitional responsibility to know and believe God's revealed truth and actively follow Him in obedience (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually), regardless of our feelings (Mark 12:30-31). Christians should demonstrate sympathy and compassion towards those dealing with mental illness, even if they do not fully understand or have not experienced similar struggles or mental bondage.

Worry, fear, anxiety, depression, and mental illness should never be looked at from a mere physiological approach. We should be reminded that we have a real, supernatural enemy in Satan who seeks to "kill and destroy" (John 10:10) us (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually) from loving God and loving others. God's truths are described as the "sword of the Spirit" which is one of our weapons in spiritual warfare as we stand firm in our faith, prayerfully resisting the enemy of our souls (Ephesians 6:10-20). Non-believers who struggle

with mental illness should be reminded that their only hope for everlasting peace will be found in Christ Jesus.

- “How Can I Become a Christian?” - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian
- “How Can I Be Sure I am a Christian?” - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian

“When anxiety strikes and blurs our vision of God’s glory and the greatness of the future that he plans for us, this does not mean that we are faithless, or that we will not make it to heaven. It means our faith is being attacked.” John Piper

Christians who struggle with mental illness should not doubt their faith, but should be reminded that they are not helpless or hopeless. They should desperately petition God for relief, but simultaneously see their weakness as an opportunity to grow in faith and dependence on Christ (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). If Jesus chooses not to remove your mental struggles from you, you must trust His grace to be sufficient for you.

“Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10 ESV)

Is it wrong to take psychiatric medicines like antidepressants?

Oftentimes medicine is necessary for mental illness the same as is necessary for physical illness. Psychiatric medicines can be a key component of a wholistic solution when an individual seeks and is ready to receive help. Unfortunately some discount or discredit the need for medicinal treatment while others abuse and overly-depend on a medicinal aid.

In biblical times, alcohol was used and biblically described & prescribed for medicinal purposes in ways similar to an anti-depressant (Ecclesiastes 9:7, Psalm 104:15, Proverbs 31:6-7, Luke 10:34) but was simultaneously warned about concerning the dangers of misuse, abuse, and over-dependance (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5, Romans 14:21).

Proverbs 31:4-7 “it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to take strong drink, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted. Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.”

What are some myths about depression?

- True Christians never struggle with depression.
- Nothing bad happens to God’s people.
- God doesn’t care about or love me.
- People don’t care about or love me.
- Depression has a simple solution, just have faith.

Daniel 3:17-18 “If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

Will I ever be able to overcome my depression? How can I overcome my depression? Seek the God of comfort. All things are possible to Him. Make all of your

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requests known to Him, but finish your prayers with a heart of trust in His will and plan. Be like Paul, seeking relief from demonic torment,

2 Corinthians 7:6-7 “But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.”

- 1) **Recognize Your Situation** - ID your problems, causes, feelings, beliefs, and situation
- 2) **Recognize Your Enemies** - Satan, the world, & humans (yourself included) fight against you
 - We destroy arguments & every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God (2Cor10:5)
- 3) **Right mind** - believe the truth and repent/turn from wrong belief about yourself & your situation
 - and take every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- 4) **Right action** - avoid sin and act in obedience to God, discipline yourself
 - Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)
- 5) **Right feelings** - avoiding false feelings and embrace true feelings
 - Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”
- 6) **Right suffering** - seek relief from suffering but trust God in your suffering
 - Mark 14:35-36 “And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’”

Hebrews 13:6 So we can confidently say,
"The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

Become as healthy as possible, addressing all areas of your life, see the truths linked below!

Spiritual Health - www.trustworthyword.com/spiritual-health

Mental Health - www.trustworthyword.com/mental-health

Physical Health - www.trustworthyword.com/physical-health

Emotional Health - www.trustworthyword.com/emotional-health

Relational Health - www.trustworthyword.com/relational-health

Home Health - www.trustworthyword.com/home-health

Workplace Health - www.trustworthyword.com/work-place-health

Marital Health - www.trustworthyword.com/30days-improve-marriage

• www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-marriage-roles

Sexual Health - www.trustworthyword.com/sexual-health

• www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sexual-sin

Financial Health - www.trustworthyword.com/financial-health

• www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-money

Tips for those in a season of depression:

1. Force yourself to get out and about with people who care about and know you.
2. Ask for help from a faithful pastor, an experienced, biblical counselor, and a trusted doctor.
3. Sing, memorize, pray & trust God's truths, don't just study them. Hope in Jesus.
4. Be thankful to God for the blessings in your life, no matter how small they seem at the time.
5. Desperately and dependently ask God's help regularly through His Word.
6. Ask Jesus daily for joy and healing. Confess your sinful failures daily and let them go.

God's Spirit produces the fruit of patience and peace which oppose and replace depression. Seek the Spirit's fruit by staying in fellowship with other Christians, staying in the Word of God, desperately seeking God in prayer, and walking in holy living. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..." Galatians 5:22

"At first blow, our belief in God's promises may sputter and swerve. But whether we stay on track and make it to the finish line depends on whether, by grace, we set in motion a process of resistance — whether we fight back against the unbelief of anxiety." John Piper

How can I help someone who is depressed? What should I do? What should I not do? Not helping is not an option. Be compassionate and sympathetic, even if you do not understand. Be like the friends of the lame man, using your faith and love to carry your friend to Jesus.

DO:

- Be present, even when the depressed wants to be alone.
- Listen and let the depressed process out loud verbally.
- Even if you don't understand, validate their feelings as genuine.
- Love practically - acts of kindness, encouraging notes/emails/texts
- Send encouraging verses as the Lord lays them on your heart
- Let them know when you are thinking, praying, and fasting for them.
- Speak truth in a humble, loving, and compassionate manner.

Proverbs 27:6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend"

DON'T:

- Give trite/short/simple statements to tough/complex/overwhelming problems.
- Try to solve all their problems as they verbalize them.
- Think the solution will be quick or easy.
- Add to their overwhelming guilt.
- Avoid them or give surface level interaction when you are uncomfortable.

1 John 3:16 "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers."

What does the Bible say about suicide? If you're considering suicide...

Don't. Stop. Please call out for help. Your life matters, even if you don't think it does at this moment. Your pain and distress is temporary. There is hope and strength here for the pain you are in right now! There are people that do care about you. Suicide may seem like the only answer to your problems at the moment. Don't believe that. In truth...

- Suicide doesn't "fix" problems or relieve pain. It creates more problems and pain.
- Suicide isn't a cure for suffering. It creates more suffering.
- Suicide isn't an escape from this world to heaven. It may take you immediately to Hell.

www.trustworthyword.com/suicide

What does the Bible say about worry, fear, and anxiety? Truths about worry are found in several places but two good places to begin our focus are Matthew 6:25-34 and Luke 6:46-49. Just take these two verses (below) and we can see that God commands us not to worry so whenever we disobey him we are acting like we are God at that moment and that we are in charge.

- "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life" Matthew 6:25
- "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" Luke 6:46

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-worry

What does the Bible say about Christian identity? The greatest gift of Christianity is not merely a future existence in Heaven, but is the present and eternal reality of a relationship and unity with Christ (John 15:1-11, 1 Corinthians 6:17). As Christians we must realize that we are not products of our past or present decisions, failures, or successes. Our identity, value, & worth are rooted in our new name and identity in Christ. We focus on knowing God first and foremost and simultaneously discover our amazing nature as God's forever adopted children.

www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-christian-identity

HELPFUL RESOURCES

[GotQuestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)

www.412teens.org

["Is It wrong for a Christian to be depressed?" - www.gotquestions.org/Christian-depressed.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-depressed.html)

["What does the Bible say about depression?" - www.gotquestions.org/depression-Christian.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/depression-Christian.html)

["Should a Christian take anti-depressants?" - www.gotquestions.org/Christian-anti-depressants.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-anti-depressants.html)

"Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

Luke 24:38

TrustworthyWord.com is an International resource, but for those living in the United States of America, here are some suicide hotlines and helpline ready for you now. If you do not live in the USA, please call your local authorities or medical treatment centers for help immediately.

- [National Hopeline Network](http://NationalHopelineNetwork.org): 1-800-SUICIDE
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](http://NationalSuicidePreventionLifeline.org): 1-800-273-TALK (Español: 1-888-628-9454)
- [National Child Abuse Hotline](http://NationalChildAbuseHotline.org): 1-800-4-A-CHILD
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](http://NationalDomesticViolenceHotline.org): 1-800-799-SAFE

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