



Mount Vernon
Baptist Church

Midweek Study

Dr. Josh Franklin • Senior Pastor

HOW TO DEAL WITH HOW YOU FEEL



God's Resources for Dealing with Depression

*Psalm 42:5, "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him."*

Consider this:

- 35 million Americans (more than 16% of the population) suffer from depression severe enough to warrant treatment at some time in their lives. In one given period, 13-14 million people experience the disorder.¹
- It's estimated that 16.2 million adults in the United States, or 6.7 percent of American adults, have had at least one major depressive episode in a given year.²
- As far back as the 4th century BC, the famous physician Hippocrates gave the first clinical description of "melancholia," including the erratic mood swings of what is called *Bipolar Disorder* today.³
- Edward F. Ziegler calls depression "the common cold of psychological disorders."
- C.S. Lewis said in *The Problem of Pain*, "Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and harder to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain only increases the burden. It is easier to say, 'My tooth is aching' than to say, 'My heart is broken.'"

What Is Depression?

Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines depression as "the act of pressing down... a low state; a sinking of the spirits; dejection; [or] a state of sadness; want of courage... a low state of strength."

"If you place a heavy iron on a heart-shaped foam pillow, that plump pillow becomes pressed down — "de-pressed." But the next day, if you remove the iron, the pillow returns to its original form. However, if you wait six months to remove the iron, the pillow will *not* return to its original shape. Instead, the pillow remains flat and *depressed*. A pillow, which can sustain temporary pressure, is not designed to hold its shape for a long time under heavy pressure."⁴

Les Carter gives this clinical definition: "A feeling of sadness and dejection, accompanied by a gloomy mindset... It can last anywhere from a few hours to several months, or in rare cases even years. Depression is distinguished from simple unhappiness by being more prolonged than the circumstances responsible for it warrant."⁵

¹ "Statistics," *National Institutes of Health* (2003), as quoted in Tim Clinton, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2009), 73.

² <https://www.healthline.com/health/depression/facts-statistics-infographic#Types-of-depression>.

³ June Hunt, *Biblical Counseling Keys on Depression* (Dallas, TX: Hope For The Heart, 2008), 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵ Les Carter, *Mind Over Emotions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 38-39.

Four Stages of Depression⁶

- 1) **DEJECTION** – a temporary emotional valley
- 2) **DISCOURAGEMENT** – a temporary feeling of hopelessness and loss of enthusiasm
- 3) **DESPONDENCY** – intense melancholy feelings that can last for weeks or months, accompanied by dramatic changes in eating habits and sleeping patterns
- 4) **DESPAIR** – a dangerous stage of emotional instability where pessimistic feelings, irrationality, and thoughts of death overwhelm a person.

“Depression is like pain. While pain is inconvenient, it is a warning system, essential for our survival... God has created me with the ability to experience depression so that I can have a very important warning system to tell me when things go wrong.”⁷

Causes of Depression

- 1) **SELF** – Your thought patterns, your personality and your physical health.
- 2) **SUCCESS / FAILURE** – Elijah vs. the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel / see also **1 Kings 19:2**
- 3) **SECLUSION** (**1 Kings 19:14**)
- 4) **SORROW** - **2 Cor. 1:8-9**
- 5) **SIN**

God’s Resources for Dealing with Depression

- 1) **Examine Your FITNESS** (**1 Kings 19:5-6**)
 - Research shows that thirty minutes of moderate daily exercise is very helpful in elevating mood.
- 2) **Express Your FRUSTRATIONS** (**1 Kings 19:10**) – share/vent your feelings with God (**Psalms 42:4-7**)
 - Fear (**19:3**); Resentment (**19:4**); Guilt (**19:4**); Anger (**19:10**); Loneliness (**19:10**); Worry
- 3) **Enjoy Your FAITH** (**1 Kings 19:11-13**) (Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail sing to God **Acts 16:25-26**)
 - Let God’s Word speak and change your perspective
- 4) **Evaluate Your FOCUS** (**1 Kings 19:15-16**) – Work (A New Challenge)
 - Caleb is 85 year old – Give Me That Mountain (**Joshua 14:10-12**)
 - Contrast with Florence Nightingale, the famous English nurse, who took to her bed at the age of fifty-six. She was convinced she would soon die of heart disease. She considered herself terminally ill and was a patient from that time on. She died when she was ninety. Had she gotten out of bed and taken on a new challenge, she wouldn’t have limited her effectiveness for thirty-four years of her life.
- 5) **Expand Your FRIENDSHIPS** (**1 Kings 19:14**) see also **Eccl. 4:9-10** – we need community
- 6) **Experience God’s FORGIVENESS** (If you have sinned) **1 John 1:9**

A word about antidepressants (for chemical disturbances or genetics): “Many severely depressed people avoid appropriate help because they fear becoming hooked on medication. If you have weak eyes, you don’t hesitate to wear corrective glasses. If you suffer from diabetes, you take insulin. If you have a biochemical or genetic predisposition toward depression, you should feel just as much freedom in taking the proper treatment. Remember, though, that anti-depressant medications do nothing for psychological depression.”⁸

⁶ Bob Russell, *Jesus, Lord of Your Personality* (West Monroe, LA: Howard, 2002), 103.

⁷ Archibald Hart, *Depression: Coping and Caring* (Arcadia, Calif.: Cope, 1978), 22.

⁸ Archibald Hart, *Unlocking the Mystery of Your Emotions* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1979, 1989), 77.