

Depression

Depression, low spirits, blue moods, gloominess, dejection, sadness, despair, feeling of inadequacy or a general negative outlook on life afflicts just about everyone once in a while, at least.

Depression is a symptom, a warning sign given by our body or mind to tell us that something going on inside needs our attention.

Depression itself is not the problem but a symptom.

Possible causes of depression –

1) Poor eating habits –

Our physical body needs fuel and time to repair itself each day.

When our body's basic needs are **not** met, it doesn't function efficiently and sometimes a listless depression results.

Students pressed for time by exam preparation.

People busied with excessive social activities.

Elderly people living alone find it is no fun cooking for only one.

Poverty that prevents an adequate diet.

All above can lead to depression.

2) Bad reaction to medications or drugs –

Most medications and drugs have bad side-effects of one kind or another.

We need to be cautious and heed competent medical advice rather than attempt to doctor ourselves.

Some people have basic imbalance in their body chemistry and suffer reaction to certain foods; this can lead to depression.

3) Significant changes in bodily functions –

These can open the way for depression, including such normal bodily changes as menopause, post-natal recuperation, even the normal menstrual cycle.

4) Repressed anger –

There is a right time and use for anger but there is also a very wrong and destructive use.

Ephesians 4:26-27 [NIV] *“In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”*

Unresolved anger can open us up to Satan's influence that will lead to depression.

In other words, don't keep anger bottled up inside, seek to calm it by meditating on what the end-result of explosive anger will be.

Don't carry grudges and let them build up to hatred that produces deep depression in the end.

5) Grief or loss –

This is probably one of the largest causes of depression, for these are high anxiety situations, that cause us to look inward and hence lead to a feeling of depression.

6) Self-pity and self-guilt –

I don't mean just momentary disappointments after bungling some minor situation or task. I'm talking about being immersed in self-pity over an extended period of time.

Such self-pity comes from a very negative self image, and a negative or cynical outlook towards life.

7) Rebellion against the Creator God – sin –

When someone is constantly doing something they know is wrong, a conscious depression is bound to be the end result.

Everyone of course needs to ask themselves if their standards are realistic, for no human being can attain total perfection in this life, we all sin at times. [**Romans 3:23**]

Matthew 5:48 [NIV] *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

The Greek word translated “perfect” is “*tēlōs*” meaning to set out for a definite goal. The Creator God expects us to be seeking His perfection of character, but knows that we slip up at times and sin, so He provided a way to re-start on this path to perfection through repentance and accepting the substitute sacrifice of Jesus Christ who, as the Son of God, did live a perfect life. [**1 John 1:7-10**]

8) Living in a depressing environment –

Like a slum, or in chronic unemployment, poverty, loneliness, etc.

Hebrews 11:13 [NIV] *“All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.”*

All faithful Christians see themselves as strangers and aliens in this world. [**1 Peter 2:11**]

Hebrews 11:10 [NIV] *“For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”*

These were looking for a new world that would come to earth at the time of Jesus Christ's Second Coming.

Philippians 4:11-13 [NIV] *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

With our eyes constantly focussed on this “world tomorrow” we can live contentedly and thus free from depression in this present time.

Overcoming depression –

How do we overcome depression?

We find in the Christian Bible the record of one man whom God was using in a powerful way yet he faced deep depression in his life at one time, that man was Elijah.

Elijah had just gone through a spiritual “*high*” as God used him in a supernatural way. [**1 Kings 18:15-40**]

This was a major miracle by God through Elijah, the complete destruction of Baal worship at that time, total victory.

With this in mind let us continue to read about the life of Elijah.

1 Kings 19:1-2 [NIV] *“Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, ‘May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.’”*

The response from the evil queen who had introduced Baal worship to Israel.

When Elijah heard this threat he ran for his life to Beersheba. [**1 Kings 19:3**]

1 Kings 19:4 [NIV] *“while he himself went a day’s journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. ‘I have had enough, LORD,’ he said. ‘Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.’”*

Elijah had built himself up for the confrontation with the false prophets, and it had left him physically and emotionally exhausted.

Elijah had listened to one negative voice instead of all the positive voices, the result was that he became depressed.

God’s cure for this depression –

Now notice how God handled Elijah’s depression.

Elijah slept [v5] then God provided him with food. [v6]

This is the starting point to attack depression, enough rest and a proper diet.

God then took Elijah out of the environment that had been the place of his depression.

1 Kings 19:9 [NIV] *“There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’”*

Simply God asks Elijah, “*what’s the cause of your problems?*”

1 Kings 19:10 [NIV] *“He replied, ‘I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.’”*

We see that Elijah is zeroing in on the one negative aspect of his life, having temporarily overlooked and forgotten all the good that God had done through him.

Notice that God listened to Elijah, encouraged him to talk about his problem, God did **not** correct him harshly.

1 Kings 19:11-14 [NIV] *“The LORD said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.’ Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the*

LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He replied, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.'"

After God had shown that He controls the power of wind, earthquake and fire, I believe the small voice spoke to Elijah of God's understanding, compassion, empathy and kindness. This approach of the Creator God encouraged Elijah to open up his deep concern to God.

We see a three-part programme that God used to help Elijah through his depression.

First step: Food, drink and rest.

Second step: Encouraged Elijah to talk it all out.

Third step: Show empathy and understanding.

Only after these three steps did God give him the final step to overcome his depression, He told Elijah to *"get back to work, surround yourself with activities again,"* [1 Kings 19:15-16].

Only then did God correct Elijah's statement that he was alone. [v18]

I feel that this is a very good plan for helping people with depression.

We need to ask ourselves or whoever it is going through the problem of depression, *"what is it that you are doing or thinking that is causing your depression?"*

What is the cause for depression is a symptom.

When you understand this, then you can begin to deal with the problem.

Depression is in a way emotional pain, just the same as we have physical pain.

Once we find out the cause, like touching a hot stove, we can act to take the physical pain away by taking our hand off the hot stove.

Once we change the cause of depression it will go away.

Unfortunately most people do not look for or study what the causes of their depression are.

Life is full of troubles and depression can be one of these problems.

Life is a training ground in which we are to learn to act and think like our Creator God so that we can then be given eternal life to live in complete harmony with Him.

Our future is always bright and hopeful when we consider what our Creator God is planning and offering us!

The aim of this website is to lead you to understand how to be part of that glorious future.