

Chapter 3: Deep Depression

I recently read part of an article describing depression as follows:

Depression, in psychology, a mood or emotional state that is marked by feelings of low self-worth or guilt and a reduced ability to enjoy life. A person who is depressed usually experiences several of the following symptoms: feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or pessimism; lowered self-esteem and heightened self-depreciation; a decrease or loss of ability to take pleasure in ordinary activities; reduced energy and vitality; slowness of thought or action; loss of appetite; and disturbed sleep or insomnia. Depression differs from simple grief or mourning, which are appropriate emotional responses to the loss of loved persons or objects. Where there are clear grounds for a person's unhappiness, depression is considered to be present if the depressed mood is disproportionately long or severe vis-à-vis the precipitating event.

The distinctions between the duration of depression, the circumstances under which it arises, and certain other characteristics underlie the classification of depression into different types. Examples of different types of depression include bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder (clinical depression), persistent depressive disorder, and seasonal affective disorder.

(Source: <https://www.britannica.com/editor/The-Editors-of-Encyclopaedia-Britannica/4419>. Last updated: Dec 28, 2018)

The world tries to fix depression in many ways such as psychiatrists, drugs, drinking, relationships with people, and even suicide.

"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep."

Jonah 1:3-5 KJV

One of the most common clinical sicknesses around the world is depression! One of the most common side effects of depression is

wanting to sleep. Why? You don't want to face the day—you would rather sleep your life away than face it. As soon as Jonah gets on the boat he goes to sleep. Many of us are trying to sleep through our lives because we don't want to face the things that come against us. The worst thing about depression is that it causes a spiritual sleep in the believer that brings them to a place where they don't want to do anything for the Lord any more.

If that's you, the Bible says:

"But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, 'Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light.' So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days."

Ephesians 5:13-16 NLT

Hopefully this chapter will wake you up to this attack of depression.

Jonah begins a spiral downwards as soon as he runs from the call God placed on his life. Think about it—he goes down to Joppa, down in the boat, and he ends up going down in the belly of the fish!

When you're not excepting God's call on your life you will be brought down low! Think about hills and valleys. A valley always comes between two hills. Another word for valley is depression. When a person is depressed they are in a spiritual valley! This is why the enemy wants to bring you down low.

A hill in the Bible represents victory and the blessing of God in the following verse:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Psalms 121:1-4
KJV

There is always one hill behind and one hill in front of a valley. When a person is in a spiritual valley, they look back to the hill of blessing where they were and they feel regret and condemnation because they were in a place of blessing but something made them fall. They look to the hill in front of them and think it's too hard to get where they need to be, so they just end up settling in the valley. It is a sad truth that many people never make it out because they never obey the call to get out and help others do the same.

You kind of see the consequences of those who do not make a decision to get out of a valley illustrated in the book of Ezekiel in chapter 37. God takes Ezekiel and shows him an entire valley of dry bones! But the prophet Ezekiel listened to God and prophesied to those bones and they got out of that valley! I'm prophesying in the name of Jesus you'll get out of yours too! Say Amen!

In Psalms 23 the psalmist said, "though I walk through the valley I will fear no evil because I'm with the shepherd." Jonah wasn't willing to obey the shepherd's voice. He was like the sheep that wandered rebelliously and refused to answer the call, so he was brought down low in a spiritual valley!

God showed me the spirit that is at work in the hearts of the people that are dealing with depression. You see our battle isn't against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces. He showed me this when I was eating at a restaurant one day and I noticed a man I knew in the restaurant that attended our church but was missing regular church attendance for months. So I went up to him, shook his hand and greeted him, and asked how he was doing. He said he was fine. We talked for a few minutes, then we both went back to our tables and a few moments later some people with me at the table asked if I was ok. They asked this because I looked discouraged and was very quiet. I told them I was fine, but they were right; I felt discouraged and depressed. I wasn't earlier, so I began to ask God what was going on with me. He ministered to me that the feelings and emotions I was feeling of depression and hopelessness were because the man that was in the restaurant with me was feeling the same mixed emotions!

God revealed to me the spirit that was bothering him was the spirit of heaviness. We read about this spirit in the book of Isaiah 61:3, when God says he turn beauty into ashes and provide a garment of praise in exchange for a spirit of heaviness.

I began to read up and study about the spirit of heaviness right there in the restaurant and found out that this spirit makes you feel hopeless, discouraged, robs your faith, makes you think no one cares, like no one loves you, and stops your praise because you don't feel good enough to serve God. Because of all these emotions it even brings thoughts of suicide!

So after finding all this out I went back to the man's table and asked if I can speak to him privately. He agreed and I asked him if he felt any of

these things I just mentioned. He said, "Pastor, how do you know all this? I feel every one of these things you just described." I began to tell him that God allowed me to feel what he was feeling to minister the truth to him and to expose the lies of the enemy! We began to pray right there in the restaurant against the attack of the spirit of heaviness. The reason this man was able to be attacked, and for this attack to work on the him, was because he was living a lifestyle of sin and rebelliousness towards God. He was running from His call!

The Bible tells us in God's presence there is fullness of joy (Psalms 16:11), and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom! (2 Corinthians 3:17) But remember, the Bible tells us Jonah was running from the presence of God! When you run from your call you run from God's presence! Outside His presence it's the opposite of joy—it's depression! Outside of His presence is bondage and burdens! When depression isn't taken care of it gets to a point of thoughts of suicide. Jonah comes to a point of telling the people to throw him overboard. He even tells God at one point it's better for him to die. He would rather die than do what God has called him to do. One of the Hebrew definitions for depression is dē'agah, which means anxiety, fear, heaviness, or sorrow.

How do you deal with anxiety? Simply submit your life to God's will and instead of trying to deal with your problems alone and complain about them, pray about them and put it before the Lord. The Bible says: *"In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."* Philippians 4:6 ASV

Look at the beautiful promise proclaimed through the prophet Isaiah regarding the Messiah. It's a promise that Jesus will fulfill for those who receive Him. Look at this word God gives the people who are dealing with the spirit of heaviness:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair

the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.” Isaiah 61:1-7 KJV

Before I accepted the call that God placed on my life I was very rebellious and disobedient. I went to church, worshipped God, gave in the offering, and even told people about how good God was; however, secretly I was fighting depression because no matter what I accomplished and what I tried to do to be happy, it didn't work. It's because I had religion but not a true relationship with God. I wasn't willing to obey God and repent of my sinful and rebellious lifestyle. The depression got so bad that twice I tried committing suicide. The last time I tried I took a whole bottle of pills and fell asleep, but an hour later I got up out of my sleep throwing up. My cousin that was in the house called my uncle, and when he saw me he knew there was something wrong. I wouldn't tell them what I did, and at this point I was delusional and talking crazy. So they forced me in a car, drove me to the emergency room, and the doctors found out what I had done and immediately began the process to help me. Three days later a doctor came in and told me if the pills would have been in my system for another hour or so I would have been dead! I thank God because he allowed me to live and not die so I can warn people about not running from their calling and start serving God so they can receive the fullness of joy and help others do the same.

I also have personal friends that have committed suicide. The sad part is I never knew they were dealing with suicidal thoughts. I never knew they were being attacked with depression. If I had known then what I know now, I would have known how to help them. The biggest sign of a person that's dealing with depression is a person running from serving God! Maybe you're not dealing with the spirit of heaviness but maybe you know someone who isn't willing to serve God and obey the calling that God has placed on their life. Allow them to read this chapter. After you're done reading this book, give it to a person that needs a word of hope in the midst of their depression—you never know, you might just save a life!

God comforts the depressed and He also uses people to help others who are depressed. Titus, a companion of Paul the apostle, was used to encourage Paul and others by just being there for them:

"For even when we arrived in Macedonia our bodies had no rest, but we were oppressed at every turn--conflicts and disputes without, fears and dread within. But God, who comforts and encourages the depressed and the disquieted, comforted us by the arrival of Titus." 2 Corinthians 7:5-6
AMP

Don't allow depression to get the best of you; deal with it and allow God to remove the spirit of heaviness and place on you the garment of praise. Just like a garment, you have to put it on! Start putting your praise on again—get your prayer life back and get in His word, for it's the medicine for the soul and it's the only medicine you need for fighting deep depression in Jesus' name!