**What should a Christian do if overwhelmed with depression?**

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| http://www.christiananswers.net/0.gif | http://www.christiananswers.net/0.gif | See this page in: [Hungarian (Magyar)](http://www.christiananswers.net/hungarian/q-acb/acb-f001h.html), [Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia)](http://www.christiananswers.net/indonesian/q-acb/acb-f001i.html), [Korean](http://www.christiananswers.net/korean/q-acb/acb-f001k.html)  Depression is a common problem. Photo courtesy of Eden Communications. Copyrighted.Depression has been called the “common cold” of mental disorders, and one source estimates that it disrupts the lives of 30 to 40 million Americans. [[4](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-f001.html#4)]  **Depression is too complicated to solve with a single pat answer.** Gary Collins, in *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide* (Dallas: Word, 1988), lists seven major categories of causes for depression,[[1]](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-f001.html" \l "1) and six major approaches to treating it. Each one has multiple options within each category. In addition, people use the word “depression” to cover everything from disappointment over losing a baseball game to the terrifying gloom that drives people to suicide.  The Bible does not use the word “depression,” although it [describes people](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/depression-bible.html#examples) whom we might call depressed. It certainly doesn't mention antidepressant drugs. However, there are a few general principles I would recommend when trying to deal with depression:  **Aim to work on the causes** of your depression, not just the symptoms.  Scripture points to many issues of sin or conflict that can affect your emotions; most counselors would agree that depression can result from other underlying issues. Don't just worry about the depression itself; check to see what other problems need attention.  **Realize that you can't base life on your emotions**  Christians base life on truth, not feelings. [Philippians 4:1](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/phil4.html#1) commands us to rejoice (whether we feel like it or not!). And [James 1:2](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/james1.html#2) asks us to “Consider it all joy when we fall into various trials.” Notice that James doesn't tell us to feel joyful; he tells us to reckon, to choose to think about your situation as a spot where you can have joy.  **Faith**  Depression can be overcome. (Photo supplied by Eden Communictions. Copyrighted.)  Choosing to trust truth rather than your feelings may require a lot of faith. And if that is what we mean by asking if faith can solve depression, then faith may be enough in some cases. Trusting what God says rather than your feelings is certainly a more realistic approach to life!  **Heed God's Advice**  However, many people talk about “faith” and only mean a vague hope that God will somehow pull them through. That's too nebulous a concept to be reliable. Many of the same people who claim to have faith keep plunging through life ignoring God's principles for healthy living. If we spurn the good advice that the Bible contains, we won't escape the consequences - even if we have faith.  **Is it right to use antidepressant drugs? Or is faith enough to solve the problem?**  **Chemical Imbalances**  Photo courtesy of Eden Communications. Copyrighted.  Some cases of depression may be caused by chemical imbalances. If that is the cause, then antidepressant drugs may be the answer. God has allowed mankind to learn about many medical tools, and He sometimes uses medicine to heal. There may also be some cases of depression so severe that medications are necessary to bring the sufferer to the place where they can tackle some of the other issues; such cases might require medication, at least temporarily. I know of no Scripture that forbids such use. [[1]](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-f001.html" \l "2)  **Unresolved Issues, Root Causes**  However, any medications should be used with caution. Virtually any medicine has some side effects. Drugs can mask the symptoms, allowing you to ignore root causes. Some people may use antidepressants to avoid approaches that require you to deal with other unresolved issues. It seems easier to pop a pill. A general rule of thumb is to try other strategies first, unless the depression is so severe that the person endangers themselves or finds themselves unable to participate in other therapies.  Depression is a complex area, and severe problems of depression deserve the attention of a pastor or other counselor.  *Author:* Dr. John Bechtle  **Helpful tips for depression**  More pointers for Christians...   * Avoid being alone. Force yourself to be with people. * Seek help from others. (*ChristianAnswers.Net* can put you in contact with a Christian by e-mail. Free, private assistance is available - [Go](http://www.christiananswers.net/forms/multi-purposeform.html#counseling)...) * Sing. Music can uplift your spirit as it did for King Saul ([1 Samuel 16:14-23](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/1sam16.html#14)). * Praise and give thanks. “*In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*” ([1 Thessalonians 5:18](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/1th5.html#18)). * Lean heavily on the power of God's Word. * Rest confidently in the presence of God's Spirit. “*Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance*” ([Psalm 42:5](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/psa42.html#5)).   See the good book *Healing for Damaged Emotions* for more details) [[3]](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-f001.html#3)  Supplied by David Seamands.  Answers to related questions...   * Are there biblical examples of depression and how to deal with it? [Answer](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/depression-bible.html) * How can I be and feel forgiven? [Answer](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-dml/dml-y004.html) * If God forgives me everytime I ask, why do I still feel so guilty? [Answer](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-dml/dml-y027.html) * I think I was sexually abused, but I'm not sure. What Is sexual abuse, and what can I do to stop the trauma I am facing now? [Answer](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-dml/dml-y021.html) * I'm ugly. Why was God so unfair to me this way? [Answer](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-dml/dml-y020.html) * If God knows I am hurting, why doesn't He help me? [Answer](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-dml/dml-y025.html) * Are you thankful to God? - [GO](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-f001.html) * What does the Bible say about suicide? [Answer](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-dml/dml-y038.html)   **References and Endnotes**   1. **Eight major causes of depression.** (1) Biological factors, (2) Learned helplessness (sense of being trapped and unable to remedy an intolerable situation), (3) Parental rejection, (4) Abuse, (5) Negative thinking, (6) Life stress, (7) Anger, (8) Guilt. [Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler, *Josh McDowell's Handbook on Counseling Youth* (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing, 1996), chapter 5; Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, revised edition (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing, 1988).] [[UP]](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-f001.html#REF-2) 2. **Biological factors—**   Depression often has a physical basis. At the simplest level, we know that lack of sleep, insufficient excercise, the side effects of drugs, physical illnesses, or improper diet can all creation depression. Thousands of women experience depression as part of a monthly premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and some are victimized by postpartum depression following childbirth. Other physical influences, like neurochemical malfunctioning, brain tumors, or glandular disorders, are more complicated creators of depression. There is evidence that depression runs in families and may have a genetic basis. -Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, revised edition (Dallas, Texas: Word, 1988), p. 107. [[UP]](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-f001.html#REF-2)   1. David A. Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Chariot Victor Books, 1991) (ISBN: 0896939383). 2. *Newsweek*, May 4, 1987, pp. 48-57.   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