

Dealing With Depression

- I. depression: a. The condition of being depressed in spirits; dejection. b. *Psychol.* Freq. a sign of psychiatric disorder or a component of various psychoses, with symptoms of misery, anguish, or guilt accompanied by headache, insomnia, etc.
- II. Preliminary thoughts.
- A. Depression is a reality of life that even great men and women of God might go through.
 - B. Depression may be a short-term or long-term problem but need not be permanent.
 - C. Depression may be owing to mental, emotional, organic, biological, chemical, spiritual causes (or combinations of these).
 - D. Depression can be associated with *burnout*, which is the exhaustion of physical or emotional strength brought on by continued stress, a loss of enthusiasm, energy, idealism, perspective, and purpose.
 - E. Depression can feed itself through faulty rationalizations like *inevitability/fatalism*, which suppresses initiative to seek solutions or change.
 - F. Fatigue can invite depression which then contributes to fatigue, a troubling circle.
 - G. Circumstances alone do not universally cause depression: what puts one person into depression may not do so with another.
 - H. How one processes circumstances plays a powerful role in inviting, giving in to, avoiding, bearing or conquering depression.
 - I. The cause of depression may be hard to pinpoint and we may need to give our souls a “good talking to” when the lack of *the joy of the LORD* saps our strength. **NEH 8:10; PSA 42:5-6, 11.**
 - J. Depression may not be because of sin but sin can lead to depression. **GEN 4:3-8.**
 - K. Some may actually prefer depression since it elicits attention or sympathy. c/w **MAT 6:16.**
 - L. There may be a need for consultation with a professional clinician but do not overlook the help and counsel of the Great Physician Who *knows what is in man*. **JOH 2:25; HEB 4:12.**
 - 1. A Biblical *perspective* on sin, salvation, life, time and relationship to God is important for a realistic *perception*, and a faulty perception of things can be as powerful a motivator as the reality of things. **2KI 7:6-7; ACT 16:27.**
 - 2. We are not under the *spirit of bondage* again since Christ came but the *Spirit of adoption* by a loving Father which liberates, empowers, and gives soundness of mind. **ROM 8:15 c/w 2TI 1:7.**
 - 3. Faith may not make things easy but it does make things clearer, possible, bearable and hopeful.
 - M. Life is not a bed of roses and there will be *seasons* of heaviness because of our own choices or even by God’s decree. **1PE 1:6-7; 5:10.**
 - 1. Ignorance or emotion-led thinking can cause us to make decisions which are unprofitable, regrettable and sometimes of long-lasting consequence.
 - 2. We may have to bear with a condition we created and it is a foolish thing to fret against God Who did not force us to make the choice. **PRO 19:3.**
 - 3. This is especially of concern in choices to sin against better knowledge, and then having to deal with the guilt, shame, consequences, expectation of chastening, and worries about grieving/quenching the Spirit (all of which are incentives to prompt confession of the sin and earnest repentance). Consider David in **PSA 51:7-12.**
- III. Beware *despair* (The action or condition of despairing or losing hope; a state of mind in which

there is entire want of hope; hopelessness).

A. Be not as those who only looked at the odds but as Paul who looked at God.

ACT 27:20-25.

1. Without hope we are lost. **ROM 8:24.**
2. Without hope we are adrift without an anchor. **HEB 6:18-20.**
3. Without hope we are defenseless, without a helmet. **1TH 5:8.**
4. Without hope we are insecure. **JOB 11:18-19.**
5. Some who say, "There is no hope" really mean that they prefer their idolatry and immorality to needed reform. **JER 2:25-27; 18:11-12.**
6. Christ resurrected as the firstfruits of the dead is our ultimate hope and without this anticipation of future relief and glory, we are of all men most *miserable*, a component of depression. **1CO 15:19-20.**

B. **GAL 6:9** is a telling commentary on *burning out*, a common aspect of depression.

1. A person starts out doing well.
2. As well doing escalates, he becomes weary.
3. He loses sight of the prospect of reaping in due season.
4. He faints, that is, he gives up.
5. His view as to the time of reward is askew. Expected immediate reward or gratification can be a trap for the soul. ct/w **HEB 6:11-15.**
6. He may see the seeming prosperity of the wicked, which makes his own well-doing seem futile, but faith answers this with **ECC 8:12-13; PSA 37:1-11.**

C. Under great pressure, Paul "...despaired even of life" (**2CO 1:8**).

1. How many of us who have not borne great trouble as Paul been tempted to despair of life: wondering about the seeming futility of staying the course, or flirting with the notion of escape? Desiring to depart and be with Christ should be balanced by present duty. **PHIL 1:23-24.**
2. Paul gathered himself from that desperation by leaning on God's expectations, previous salvations, and promises. **2CO 1:9-10.**
3. Paul could be "...troubled on every side, yet not distressed...perplexed, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (**2CO 4:7-12**).
 - a. He did not have false expectations about what God had said about him in **ACT 9:16.**
 - b. He ever measured temporal distresses as small compared to eternal bliss. **ROM 8:18; 2CO 4:17-18.**
4. Be careful as to where your greatest affections are based. **COL 3:1-2** ct/w **2TI 4:10.**
 - a. An inordinate affection for earthly things is not only missing the target, it sets one up for disillusionment and despair when those things are found not to satisfy the soul, or are taken away (and along with that, one's confidence).
 - b. "Aim at heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in.' Aim at earth and you get neither." (C.S. Lewis)