

Depression #1

The source and the solution

by Richard Jordan at Shorewood 11-18-01

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II Corinthians is the most personal epistle that Paul wrote. It was written during the darkest hour of his life

Ac:20:1: And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

Ac:20:2: And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

Ac:20:3: And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

2 Cor:1:8: For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

2 Co:2:13: I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

This is a classic description of depression.

2 Cor:4:8: We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

2 Cor:4:9: Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

Depression is a universal fact that saint after saint experienced as a reality.

The root cause and real cure to conquer emotional tyranny:

Depression is not where God wants you to be but He wants you to have joy and peace. Depression is the state of feeling sad and dejected, the result of inactivity, self-castigation and dropping out, the opposite of being happy, the state of being down and out.

Three kinds of depression:

1. Mild - discouragement
2. More serious - despondency
3. Most crippling – despair

Each has its own symptoms you can identify.

1. Mild is mental with self-doubt, self-pity
2. More serious: self-critical, anger and self-pity
3. Despair leads to self-rejection and bitterness, sleeplessness, apathy, unkempt appearance, weeps, pacificity, withdrawal, discontent, irritability, sorrow, loneliness, hopelessness, schizophrenia, abandonment. Despair spiritually begins with questioning God's will, ungrateful, rejecting God's will, anger at God, griping, resentment against God's Word, indifference, just unbelief.

Symptoms: Self-preservation is the first law of life. Psychology is good at describing the problem but it doesn't have the truth or doesn't come to answers about it. Habits leading to a change of mood, changing relationships with others, loss of contact with reality are defense mechanisms. Separation from a love object produces loneliness which result in depression. Other symptoms are exhibitionism, temper tantrums, withdrawal, excessive gambling, alcoholism, appearance with body piercing (as the heathen do –Leviticus) as a status symbol (please look at me). The person often feels unworthy (I need to look like a freak because that's what I think about myself). Sexual promiscuity, profanity, clinging, excessive generosity to make themselves indispensable, incessant talking, attacking, intimidation, aggression most frequently first on self, and then turning against others, physical pains and weakness, loss of affection, tendency to withdraw from others, unwilling to risk loving and not loving, dangerous emotions, self-occupation, anxiety, fear, worry, (fear and worry go together), wishing to die (Christians say, "I wish the Lord would come."), just not wanting to cope with the problems of life.

Almost all clinical solutions say depression is caused by external experience. Depression begins with disappointment. You don't become depressed when everything is going your way. Depression begins with someone not performed according to your expectations (legalism). Depression is the result of lack of self-worth and appreciation of who you really are. Everyone has a breaking point, biological malfunctions after a high point in life, lack of purposeful meaning.

Formula for the pathway to depression: Your emotions are absolutely predictable because of the relationship between your emotions and your thinking process.

Depression always starts out with improper thinking. It starts out in your mind where you start thinking that something ought not to be. The mind is the seed bed.

Two basics: unrealistic expectations and misplaced faith. You live in the real world where people expect things you can't give and they reject you. Have you ever rejected someone else? Do you have a dependency on the wrong thing? If you put people in bondage you don't believe Romans 3:23. You are not immune to this present evil world. Proper thinking of truth sets you free. Life is full of insult and rejection. The Lord has given us a capacity to live through it. Peace is a result of learning to cope with insult, injury and rejection. We have to learn to deal with it God's way.

The first step toward depression is an event that causes disappointment. At that point you have a choice to respond by faith, walk in the spirit with thanksgiving or choose to respond in the flesh with human viewpoint with fear and anger. Responding by faith with thanksgiving produces peace.

Anger is usually fear in disguise and it leads to despair and depression. Anger sets off a defense mechanism. An angry person ventilates or internalizes it. The more dangerous is the latter. Brooding is an internal struggling and it gets bigger and bigger until it explodes. The proper attitude is to look at the anger. It becomes sin when you focus it on people. Anger is one of the two motivators to deal with. The other is fear. Changing the circumstances doesn't work very well because you get madder when that doesn't help. Anger turns into self-pity. Insult > anger > self-pity > depression.

The one constant in depression is always self-pity. The more self-pity, the

more depressed you become. There are two forms of thinking in self-pity:

1. Past thinking where you remember and rehearse the insult.
- 2 Thinking where you project the insult into the future which results in worry, foreboding and fear about it happening.

If you get rid of self-pity you will get rid of depression. That's a fact. The solution to depression is to have a renewed mind.

II Cor. 2:13 Paul was depressed about not finding Titus, but in verse 14 he says, "Thanks be to God." God is sufficient always. Victory in Christ right in the middle of depression. We are living on the victory side. How to get from verse 13 to verse 14?

Paul changed his thinking about what was going on. He took the faith choice in his mind. The problem is in our mind not in the circumstance. Depression is an emotional state. You must understand that your emotions follow your thinking. They are the responders to the thoughts that are in your mind. They cannot discern reality from fiction. (Watch a scary movie or a love story.)

The real battlefield for your emotions is in your mind. If I am afraid, I am thinking fearful thoughts. Drugs and shock therapy numb your mind and blanks out your memory. The result is temporary.

Romans 12:2

You have to re-educate your thinking so you will think like God thinks. You have two choices:

1. Human viewpoint and religious systems
2. Divine viewpoint – the Word of God

You can change your thinking patterns but not your emotions. Put in things of the world in your mind and that is what affects your emotions. The Word of God will result by faith and there will be action. When the alarm clock rings, you have a choice but should act no matter how you feel about it. How do you do it?

Phil. 6:7,8 By prayer. That's what you do. You have to do it, not feel like it. Just do it by faith. What happens? You have the peace of God, an emotion which is the opposite of anxiety. Skip the emotion and act on the Word of God, the way God created you to function.