

# *God – I'm Depressed*

Most Christians face the same problems non-Christians face. However, many Christians are unaware that God has provided principles in His Word to help handle life's pressures and problems.

You have to understand and examine some of man's basic problems in the light of God's Word. I am aware that simplistic answers do not solve the sticky problems of everyday life. I am also aware that there are some Scriptural principles that deal effectively with problems of all kinds.

No single problem stands alone. Usually it is inter-related with others.

Taking time to think about the above problems I started with number one "I'm depressed."

Webster defines depression as being pressed down, gloomy, dejected, sad, to have low spirits. He also says, "Psychological depression is an emotional condition characterized by discouragement and the feeling of inadequacy."

Some symptoms of depression are collapse of self-esteem, the feeling in others that no one loves or cares, a dwindling of interest in others, and an intense absorption in self. Also the person suffers from self depreciation -- "I just can't seem to do anything right." Some depression is physical which can be caused by physical exhaustion or an imbalance in one's physiological system.

Depression may be caused by disappointment and the inability to live up to one's expectations. Didn't Peter stoutly maintain he would remain faithful to the Lord though all others denied Him? When the pressure mounted, Peter denied the Lord, and when the rooster reminded him of his failure, he went out and wept bitterly. According to some, crying is a symptom of depression, especially in men.

Depression can also be caused by success. Someone once said, "There is nothing more disillusioning than having aired!" Some think that success is a shield against depression, but it often turns out to be the doorway to anxiety and sadness. The moment we become successful, we are vulnerable.

Depression is devastating because it cripples a person's life and draws them into their own tiny world. Remember what our Lord said, "become first, then you must go last place."

The tiny world I spoke of is the world of introspection. Such people become wrapped in a cloak of self-pity and is useless to himself, God and society. Self-pity can become very intense to where people take their lives.

Depression is demoralizing, it's essential that we know how to deal with it. The old home remedies are not effective. It's useless to whistle in the dark, smile and think it will go away by itself, it won't.

Oversimplification is what some Christians try to use in a direction of what they call "Faith Only." Being a Christian will not automatically solve all our problems, because Christians also suffer from depression. Further, if depression is the result of

a physical ailment, you'll maybe need treatment of some kind. And if it isn't physical, it may be deep enough to require the help of a professional.

But as Christians we have-something going for us. We have. a new insight about ourselves and experiencing-the love of our God, our Heavenly Father. God makes it realistically, to deal with our depression.

Perhaps the greatest example of depression in the Bible is the story of Elijah. He had been God's spokesman for over three years, faithfully calling the nation back to God. In a dramatic battle with four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, Elijah proved conclusively he was God's servant. God also affirmed Elijah by ansering him, his prayers to send rain to break the drought. But as he returned to Jezreel before Ahab's chariot, Jezebel sent a sharp message to Elijah. " By tomorrow at this time you will, be dead. I will personally guarantee it."

Frightened, forgetting everything God had done for him, Elijah ran eightyfive miles into the wilderness.

Chapter 19 of I Kings describes Elijah's dejection as he sat under a juniper bush in the wilderness. "It is enough!"

Now, O Lord, take my life; for I am not better than my fathers." (I Kings 19:4) Elijah is at the depth of depression..

As you examine Elijah's situation we discover four things to help us defeat depression.

First: Get away for a rest (I Kings 19:5-8) This is what Elijah did. After doing a mighty work for God and running totally a hundred and ten miles, he was physically exhausted. He had been so busy caring for the spiritual needs of the nation that he neglected his own. Exhausted, he fell asleep under the juniper bush and had to be awakened by an angel to eat. After a good rest and food, he got up and had enough strength to travel forty days and nights to Mount Horeb.

Things really haven't changed much since Elijah's day. Many still get weary from well-doing. What begins as a fun or joyful ministry often becomes a wearying grind. Like he, we sometimes need to get away for that rest.

Second: Get your frustrations off your chest. (I Kings 19: 9-10) After Elihah traveled the additional forty days he came to the cave in Horeb. There the Lord came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" In effect God was saying, "Elijah, tell me what's bothering you."

And Elijah took this opportunity to pour out his frustrations. "Lord, he said, "they didn't appreciate a thing I did. Even when the drought was broken, they went against -me. :In fact, they are looking for me now to: kill me. Furthermore, 1 am the only one left who is Your servant and

it looks like I'M wasting my life. Its no use living any more I may as well die and get it over with." In one exasperated moment, Elijah poured out the venom that was poisoning his soul. And without realizing it he bequeathed us a workable pattern -- get your frustrations out in the open and tell God what's eating you!

God is interested in the things that bother us. He understands stands our problems and, rather than condemn us, He wants to help us overcome our infirmities.

If however, you think it strange to tell God your problems, then tell an interested friend. Many find speaking their problems helps them discover the problem is not nearly as big as they thought it was. God knew this and encouraged Elijah to get his frustrations out in the open.

Third: Get a fresh awareness of the personal presence of God. (I Kings 19:11- 12) Elijah left forsaken by God as well as the nation, all his friends. He began doubting the power and personal presence of God. As Elijah stood at the entrance of the cave, a tremendous wind came up, so strong it split rocks; but "the Lord was not in the wind." Then came an earthquake; "but the Lord was not in the earthquake." After that a raging fire, and He wasn't in the fire." In a few moments, Elijah had seen mighty demonstrations of the power of God, but God was not in them. When these awesome manifestations ended, the Scriptures says, "and after the fire a sound of gentle blowing." After everything quieted down, Elijah became aware that God was in the gentle stillness. "And it came about, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle ---" He knew God was present, he wasn't alone; God had not forsaken him. In a moment Elijah received a fresh awareness of the personal presence and power of God.

When we are depressed, we too, need a fresh awareness of the personal presence and power of God in our lives. When we are rejected by friends, loved ones or anyone, its easy to fall into depths of depression and insulate ourselves from God in our blanket of self-pity. We want God to demonstrate His mighty power so we can be aware of His presence. Instead, we need to seek God's presence in solitude and quietness because it is

here the Lord will meet us with a fresh awareness of His personal presence.

Fourth: Get back to work (I Kings 19:13-16) Elijah had been the instrument of God to begin a mighty revival in Israel on Mt. Carmel. But he gave it up and :sat around moping about how badly, he had been treated. God again came to Elijah and asked, "What are you doing here Elijah?" And even after his first rest, and new awareness of God's presence, Elijah still complained about how mistreated he had been.

At this point God tells Elijah two important things. The first is to get up and get back to work! "Elijah, you were commissioned to be a prophet, so get up off your self-pity and be a prophet! Go and anoint three men. One of the three, Elisha, is to be your successor. As long as you sit here you will continue to nurse your self-pity." A return to an active ministry was necessary to get his mind off himself.

Then God tells Elijah, "You are not alone in the work of God. There are an additional seven thousand who remain faithful to me!"

When Elijah learned he was not alone in serving God and that others were actively working with him, he overcame his depression and went back to work, back on the road to do the job God called him to.

Like Elijah, once we have rested and had a fresh awareness of the presence of God, we must get up off our self-pity and get back to work. Idle hands and minds provide fuel for depression but resumption of activities takes our mind off our personal problems and makes us useful and productive again.

God didn't design us to be crippled by depression. We can beat it if you'll follow our Father's way, the four above steps are some I feel of His ways He left for our study and use if we wish or dare to.

Feel down, gloomy, dejected and worthless? Try them and see.

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