

Defeating Depression

“Why are you in despair, Oh my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

Depression.

Just saying the word can conjure up disturbing images of dark black clouds overshadowing our minds and emotions. Depression is real. It is a formidable foe that has to be dealt with and defeated.

In Psalm 42 King David asks himself why he is despairing. Why is my soul depressed is the sigh and cry of the man after God’s own heart. David was battling the darkness that had descended over his mind, will and emotions. Even his spirit was becoming discouraged by the onslaught of despair. David’s response: he sucked his thumb, dragged his blankie around, and participated in a one man pity-poor-me party twenty four seven.

Not on your life. David declared with personal conviction that even though he temporarily felt hopeless and helpless, he determined to hope in God. David made a healthy decision to praise the Lord in the midst of the darkness. David stood fast in faith that his hope and help was in God. The Lord would help change David’s countenance from sadness to gladness.

David sets the pace for all who battle depression. The pace is simple. Turn your face to the Lord and the Lord will turn your face into a rejoicing one again! Why be in despair when our hope and help is in the Lord is David’s question for himself and us. How we answer the question David posed and answered will determine if we recover from depression or not.

The spirit of depression oppresses us and its ultimate goal is to suppress the joy of the Lord in our lives.

Depression severely handicaps the quality of our lives and hampers our personal relationships with God and the people we love. Depression has a way of stopping us in our tracks and causing us to spin our wheels instead of going forward by faith with God’s great plans for our life.

Some of the common causes of depression are: significant loss, death of a loved one, divorce, illness, physical, spiritual, emotional or relation burnout, financial setbacks, personal failure, loss of employment, the impact of natural disasters, addictions like

alcohol, drugs and sexual immorality, criminal activity etc. All of these things can cause or contribute to a depressed spirit in people.

Steve Roll's Victory Over Depression

Depression can be defeated. I am an overcomer over the spirit of despair.

In my mid-thirties I was hospitalized for severe reactive depression. I had been voted out of my first church as a young pastor. I was devastated. My heart was broken and my spirit was crushed. The depression nearly took my life. I was suicidal and had to be watched so I would not harm myself.

As a deeply committed Christian and diligent, outstanding Pastor I battled depression with all my might. In the midst of the struggle and suffering, the darkness was overwhelming. I experienced a frightening emotional free fall. I felt like I had descended into a bottomless pit of despair and misery from which there was no relief or escape. It also felt like my Lord and Savior was a million miles away. But He wasn't

David declares in Psalm 34:18 *"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."* The Lord knows that I needed to know that in my spiritually and emotionally depleted state. When I needed Him most, the Lord drew very close to me. Without His presence, I would never have defeated depression.

God never takes a hike when we are hurting. He draws near when we are hurting and depressed. He delivers and saves us from the spirit of despair that tries to crush our lives by stealing our joy and destroying our faith.

While in the hospital, the Lord gave me Psalm 118:17 that states *"I shall not die, but live and tell of the works of the Lord."* Depression did not kill Steve Roll. I did not die. Satan didn't win. I live to tell of God's power to deliver from depression and restore a spirit of rejoicing in the hearts of those who have wrestled with depression.

I am a living example of God's power to restore a life that has been ravaged by despair. God is no respecter of persons. What He did for me He can and will do for you. The Lord took me through an incredible healing and restoration process. He ministered to me through His Word and through the Holy Spirit. He also surrounded me with some remarkable helpers who He used to encourage me along the road to restoration.

If you are depressed, please know that you can defeat it. I did in Jesus' name and so can you. Seek the Lord. He will reveal Himself to you as a loving, merciful, caring, compassionate Father who understands His child's hurt. Jesus knows how to defeat depression because He experienced depression while on earth. Depression did not defeat

the Son of God. Jesus Christ conquered despair for Himself, you and me when He rose in triumph over sin, death and the grave!

*** I have shared my testimony and taught on how to defeat depression in a six CD series called Defeating Depression. It is available at the Restoration Ministries website which can be found at www.srrestore.org.

Common Symptoms of Depression

This list is not exhaustive but suggestive of what to look for if you are feeling depressed. A medical or psychological professional should be consulted for a more definitive list of symptoms. Severity or seriousness of depression should be diagnosed by a qualified professional.

- ✓ **Feelings of sadness**
- ✓ **Increased irritability**
- ✓ **Sudden mood swings**
- ✓ **Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed**
- ✓ **Withdrawal and isolation from people and social life**
- ✓ **Fatigue or loss of energy**
- ✓ **Restlessness. Anxiety. Panic. Fear**
- ✓ **Inability to concentrate, remember things or make decisions**
- ✓ **Change in appetite or weight (up or down)**
- ✓ **Changes in sleeping patterns (sleeplessness or sleeping too much)**
- ✓ **Feelings of guilt, condemnation, hopelessness and worthlessness**
- ✓ **Increased talking or movement**
- ✓ **Disconnected or racing thoughts**
- ✓ **Impulsive behavior or poor judgment**
- ✓ **Inappropriate excitement or irritability**
- ✓ **Dependence on addictive substances and or prescribed medications**
- ✓ **Promiscuous sexual behavior**
- ✓ **Thoughts of suicide or death**

PLEASE NOTE: If you or someone you know is depressed and expresses suicidal thoughts, makes death threats regarding themselves, has eluded to a plan for taking their life or has made a suicide attempt, SEEK HELP IMMEDIATELY!

Contact family members, a close friend, a physician, counselor, pastor or an appropriate authority.

First Steps To Defeating Depression

Recovery from depression requires that we take four simple steps to begin the process of healing, restoration, renewal and rebuilding.

- **ADMIT**

Stop denying that you are depressed. Face the fact that you are battling depression. Refuse to make excuses for your changed behavior. Stop trying to hide from what is really happening to you. Call depression what it is and seek assistance for overcoming it.

Say Yes, I am struggling with depression and I need help.

- **SUBMIT**

Seek the Lord and with the help of loved ones surrender to the help you need. Recognize you cannot defeat depression by yourself. You cannot fix this on your own. You need the help of God and others. The Lord will show you the people and places that will assist you to defeat your depression.

Say Lord, I surrender to Your lovingkindness and submit myself to You and the people you have appointed to assist me to overcome the spirit of despair.

- **COMMIT**

Make a commitment to do whatever you need to get better. Regardless of how you feel (your feelings are unreliable and not to be trusted when depressed) commit yourself to the process that will cause you to recover and rise above the depression that has crippled you.

Say, I will commit myself wholeheartedly to God's healing and restoration process for me. I will do what He and the people who He has placed in my path to help me ask me to do.

- **REFIT**

Do everything you need to do. Minimally, you will need to talk with family and friends, confide in a pastor or a professional Christian counselor, and consult with your personal physician.

If you are directed to attend counseling sessions, read books and listen to CD's, take medicine, read God's Word etc. DO IT. All of the above is

for your benefit. You will get out of your recovery effort what you put in to it.

Say, I will diligently seek out the help I need and I will work hard to recover and walk in the victory I have in Jesus Christ!

Comfort For The Depressed

The Apostle Paul was no stranger to depression. Paul said in II Corinthians 1:8 “*For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life.*” Note Paul states that the burdens of ministry and the afflictions he endured had drained his strength to the point that he despaired of life. Paul was deeply depressed.

II Corinthians 11:22-33 paints a vivid picture of the daily pressures and stresses Paul faced in his life and ministry. When you read his list of challenges and suffering you will think you have it pretty good!

Even though Paul struggled with the spirit of despair from time to time, he experienced God’s comfort and strength. Paul said in II Corinthians 7:6 “*But God, who comforts the dressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus.*”

GOD COMFORTS THE DEPRESSED. What good news this is for all who battle depression. Titus was sent as an encouragement and to provide support and comfort to Paul and his worn-out ministry team.

Truth: God knows how to comfort us when we are depressed. He knows what we need to rise above the spirit of despair and despondency.

If you are feeling depressed, the Lord is with you to comfort, strengthen and help you. You are not alone, even though depression wants you feel that way.

GOD IS WITH YOU, FOR YOU AND WORKING ON YOUR BEHALF RIGHT NOW!

Actions That Attack Depression

Small, manageable goals are important for depressed people. As their self-esteem and self-confidence are being restored by these small victories, they can take on new and bigger goals. In most cases, behavioral changes come before thinking patterns can begin to change.

Morning is often the worst time of the day for depressed people. From the perspective of their depression-fogged senses, their day looks dreadful. Depressed people must get control of the highest hurdle of their day...getting started.

Make this your daily goal: When you wake up in the morning, do not lie in bed... get up right away no matter how you feel. Turn on some music or talk radio and head into the bathroom. Step into a warm shower and soap down. Gradually turn the water to cool, then cold, and jump out. As you move into your bedroom to dress, think about hour list of things to do that day. Plan how to quickly move into your schedule and keep up the momentum. Plan a good time for a walk or other exercise.

Choose four or five ideas in this section. Implement them in your daily life. You will see a marked difference when you decide to take action to attack depression.

1. Establish a daily routine. Plan your day. Keep your plan simple. Be consistent with daily chores and activities. A plan-less day sets you up for emotional wandering and spinning your wheels. Have a plan and stick with it.

2. Don't succumb to your longing to stay in bed. Pull the covers off your head. Put your feet on the floor. Draw back the blinds. Turn on the lights. Turn on some music.

3. Get out of the house, even for short periods of time. Walk around the block; go to a favorite place or store. Visit a park. Enjoy nature. Feel the sunlight and breeze on your face. Go somewhere where there is life and activity. Resist becoming housebound. Don't sit in the darkness. Step outside of depression for a few moments by getting outside.

4. Try to see family members and friends as much as possible, but for very short periods of time. Do not isolate yourself or withdraw from the people who love you. Don't worry about entertaining in your own home. Visit others informally and briefly. Try to do things spontaneously. Social interaction is vital to recovery in spite of the fact that you don't feel like being with people.

5. Exercise! Go walking, jogging, biking, hiking, swimming. Work out. Try to exercise with upbeat praise music. Get the endorphins (your happy hormones) flowing? Physical exercise is a key component to chasing the spirit of despair away. You will not feel like exercising. Do it anyway...if you want to get better.

6. If it is difficult to talk with the people you live with, write a simple note expressing to them your love or your struggles. Do not stop communicating with loved ones. Don't shut out the people who care about you. They don't know how to help you if they don't know what is going on inside of you.

7. Confront those family members and friends who think you will be strengthened by criticism or scolding. Tell them lovingly, but firmly, that you need their encouragement and support. You need people to build you up, not tear you down, when battling depression.

8. Let your spouse or roommates know what you are feeling and that you know that you are not acting normally. No secrets when you are depressed. Don't hide your feelings from those who can support and help you. Hiding how you feel only buries hurt deeper. No matter how hard it is to express yourself, no matter how much it may hurt to share where you are emotionally, SHARE! When we share, people can care for us.

9. Deal with anger in a biblical manner (Ephesians 4:26). Depression is turned inward. Remember that not all anger is wrong. Diffuse it in a Christ-like manner so it doesn't become repressed anger. Find healthy ways to vent your anger, resentment and bitterness.

10. Enlist a person you can trust as a personal confidant. Share with a trustworthy family member or friend you can pour out your heart to. You need a listening ear or two who will love you unconditionally and not pass judgment. You need a trusted Christian friend who will support you and shoot straight with you. Someone who you can count on to ride the storm out with you. Someone who will cheer you on to victory in Christ!

11. If your appetite is poor and you don't feel like eating, eat small amounts of nutritious food throughout the day. You may not feel like eating, but you must keep up your physical strength. Physical weakness only deepens depression.

12. Change the way you talk to yourself. Stop all trash talking and negative self-talk. Instead of dwelling on your faults, flops, fumbles, and failures, look for positive things in your life (Philippians 4:8). Dwell on good things, not bad things.

13. Understand your feelings, but focus on your behavior. Refuse to allow feelings to rule your recovery. Unhealthy feelings contributed to your depression. Feelings are fickle. They come and go. Step off the emotional roller coaster and look to the Lord to help you change your attitudes and behavior to defeat depression and prevent it in the future.

14. Utilize the word of God as a resource of encouragement and healing power. Study, meditate on and memorize some of the scriptures included in this handout.

15. Build positive, healthy relationships with others. Remember; withdrawal only reinforces depression. Be careful to associate only with positive people. Avoid negative, critical, cynical, apathetic people at all costs. Refuse to spend time with pity-poor-me persons. You need cheerleaders at this time in your life.

16. Choose healthy ways to cope with stress. Read your Bible. Attend church services. Find a prayer partner who you can call on for prayer when needed. Journal your journey through depression.

17. Join a Bible-based, Christ centered support group where you can learn from others who are seeking victory over depression like you. People battling depression together can draw upon each other and strengthen one another. Sometimes it helps to know you are not the only one struggling and suffering.

18. LEARN TO LAUGH AT LIFE! Find things to laugh at and force yourself to laugh! Watch a funny movie or sitcom. Laugh at yourself too! It is good for you to laugh again.

19. Play worship and praise music that soothes your soul and ministers peace and joy to you. Allow the Holy Spirit to comfort and strengthen you through God-honoring worship music. It will lift your spirit to out of the pit of despair.

20. Realize there is HOPE! You will feel better someday. You are neither hopeless nor helpless. Help is on the way. When can hope when we have hope. Grab on to the rope of hope that you have in Christ. You really will rise above depression because you are a resurrection kid in Christ.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again, to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”
I Peter 1:3

Scriptures For Defeating Depression

“For God sent His Word and healed them and delivered them from all of their destructions.” Psalm 107:20

HOPE

Psalm 42:5-6, 11
Psalm 31:23-24
Psalm 37:23-25
Jeremiah 29:11
Zephaniah 3:14-20
Isaiah 61:3-6
Job 23:10-14
Philippians 3:13-14
Lamentations 3:19-25
John 14:27

HELP

Psalm 34:17-19
Isaiah 43:2
II Corinthians 1:3-4
Psalm 121
Proverbs 3:5-6
Psalm 46:1-10
Psalm 103:13
Hebrews 12:1-3
Matthew 28:20
John 14:26

STRENGTH

Philippians 4:6-8
Nehemiah 8:10
Psalm 55:22
Isaiah 40:25-31
Isaiah 41:10
II Corinthians 9:8
Psalm 62:1-8
II Corinthians 12:9-10
Psalm 38:39-40
II Timothy 1:7

Psalm 146:5-6
Jeremiah 30:17
Jeremiah 31:1-6
Psalm 138:1-8

Psalm 118:5-7
Psalm 18:1-6
Psalm 56:3
Isaiah 44:21

Hebrews 13:5
Psalm 94:14
Psalm 141:8
Philippians 4:13

PRAISE

Psalm 16:11
Psalm 68:32-35
Colossians 3:16
Isaiah 51:11
Psalm 40:1-5
Ephesians 5:18-19
Psalm 147:3
Psalm 103:1-5

VICTORY

Psalm 30:11-12
II Chronicles 20:15
Proverbs 3:26
II Timothy 1:7
Romans 8:31-39
Micah 7:7-8
Isaiah 60:20
II Corinthians 4:16-18

“The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” Psalm 19:7-8

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