

“... pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart”
2 Timothy 2:22

July 17, 2022 - The Downward Descent of Depression



Biblicalcounselingcenter.org has a great free database of articles explaining the Bible's teaching on the various problems we face. I highly recommend it! The following is based on an article by Ron Alchin.

Depression can be linked to physical causes like lack of sleep, poor diet and exercise, and hormonal and chemical imbalances. However, when there's a spiritual cause, depression has a common pattern of a downward descent through 4 D's.

1) Disappointment. It's not sinful to be disappointed. In this sin-cursed world, there are times we won't get what we want or think we deserve. A relationship falls apart, a college rejects us, or we can't bear children. There are also times we get what we don't want or think we deserve, like a poor medical diagnosis or loss of a loved one. Sometimes our hopes and dreams are shattered in an instant. Moses missed out on Canaan. Job lost everything. Jesus was betrayed and abandoned by his friends. Paul was falsely imprisoned for years. This level of depression is really just sadness and grief. The question is, how will our heart respond to disappointment? If we trust God has a purpose for every one of our disappointments, that "disappointment is HIS appointment," we can take comfort in knowing He causes *"all things to work together for good"* for those who love Him. (Romans 8:28). However, if we blame God and reject Him, we'll slip down to the next level in the descent of depression.

2) Discontentment. This comes from fixating on our disappointments. We refuse to be satisfied unless we get what we want or feel we deserve. We're resentful of what God is allowing to happen to us, we self-righteously believe we know better than He does, and we pity ourselves as an undeserving victim. I can only imagine how easy it would have been for Paul to ruminate on God's unfairness, yet from prison he wrote, *"I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am."* (Phil. 4:11) Even when he begged God to remove the thorn in his flesh, he trusted God's grace was sufficient and said he was *"well content with weaknesses, insults, distresses, persecutions, and difficulties, for Christ's sake."* (2 Cor. 12:9-10). The truth is, we don't really *need* what we want. All we need is God's grace, love, and the hope of eternal life. If, on the other hand, we continue to think we need our wants and God is failing us, we'll slip further down the descent of depression.

3) Despair. In the Greek, this word means "no way out, no way through." It's a complete loss of hope. This is usually when we start to neglect our responsibilities in life because it seems pointless when nothing will ever get better. This is Job's wife, who told Job to *"curse God and die."* (Job 2:9). It's Job himself when he said, *"Let the day perish on which I was to be born."* (3:2). It's Elijah, who asked God to take his life because Jezebel was just going to kill him anyway (1 Kings 19:1-4). In times of despair, we must recognize there's always a way out with God! He's the God who split the Red Sea when Israel seemed hopelessly trapped! He's the God who sent an angel to destroy 185,000 Assyrians when Hezekiah was trapped in Jerusalem like a bird in a cage! He's the God who raised Jesus from the dead on the 3rd day when it seemed all hope was lost! God's shines brightest in the darkness of our despair because that's when the faithful turn to Him in trust! But those who wallow in despair slip to the final level of depression.

4) Destruction. This is when someone gives up on life's responsibilities to the detriment of their physical health, finances, career, and families. They may turn to alcohol, drugs, or promiscuous sex. They may lose their spouse, their kids, their house, and tragically, they may take their own life. This is Judas. He was in despair after he betrayed Jesus. He saw no way out, and instead of turning to Jesus for forgiveness like Peter did, he turned to destruction and hung himself. In fact, Jesus even called him *"the son of perdition"* (John 17:12) — perdition means "ruin and utter destruction." If you're at the destruction level and considering taking your life, please talk to me, Dwayne, or the shepherds. Suicide is sinful and never the answer. The cross of Jesus Christ has the power to save us from destruction and set us back on our feet if we'll turn to Him in faith. Depression cannot win in our lives if we keep track of the 4 D's, ask God to save us from any further downward descent, and lift our hearts and minds back up to Heaven (Colossians 3:1-2). - BM

Sunday Worship Services

9 a.m. Lord's Supper Service
9:45 a.m. Bible Class
10:45 a.m. Praise & Preaching

Wednesday Bible Classes 7:30 p.m.

Elders

Herb Hinely 407-339-4805
Jeff Hunt 407-739-5266
Joe Rimmer 407-414-7393
Dave Weaver 407-782-1112
Tim Welsh 407-670-8279

Deacons

Matt Hinely, Terry Petty
Erik Quist, Rory Salimbene
Emory VanCleaf
Bobby Burns, Daniel Fritz

Evangelists

Brian Messerli 407-300-2517
Dwayne Gandy 214-724-5375

Wonderful Counsel for Depression

Matthew 12:15, 20

What is Depression?

- o Prolonged sadness and loss of hope greater than what seems warranted by external events.

1. You're not Alone or _____

- o We live in a sin-cursed world full of sadness, heartache, pain, and sometimes longing for _____.
- o **Matthew 26:38; Psalm 6:6-7; 102:5-6, 11; Job 3:3; Lamentations; Jeremiah 20:18; 1 Kings 19:4; 2 Corinthians 1:8**

2. There is Hope!

- o Jesus' Wonderful counsel _____ human explanation! It may take time and patience, but God can do the impossible and He WILL bring us through!
- o God came through in every one of the examples from point #1! (**For example, 2 Corinthians 7:5-6**)
- o **Exercise:** Find the turning points for those who were depressed in Scripture (see adjacent page for more details on exercises)

3. What's out of Designed _____ in Your Life?

- o **Luke 2:52** - 4 core dimensions of humans: mental, physical, spiritual, and social. Each one directly affects our _____.
- o **Mental:** Satan's lies fill our thoughts with _____, black and white/all or nothing thinking, perfectionism, and harsh self-criticism. (**2 Corinthians 10:5**)
 - o **Exercise:** Column 1 = automatic negative thoughts (ANT's) Column 2 = God's redemptive thoughts (**Philippians 4:8-9**)
- o **Physical:** Lack of sleep, stress, hormonal/chemical imbalances, side effects from medication, poor diet and exercise, lack of sunlight. (**1 Kings 19:4-5**)
 - o **Note:** Medication can help some to level out physically to better focus on counseling to heal mentally, spiritually, and socially.
- o **Spiritual:** Feeling distant from God? False beliefs about God? Living in denial of sin?
 - o **Psalm 22:1-2, 24** - God is still there!
 - o **Philippians 4:4-7; Psalm 103:2** - **Exercise:** Write down one blessing a day, give thanks for it and dwell on it
 - o While we don't want to quickly label depression as sin-caused, it could be! (**Psalm 139:23-24**)
 - o **Exercise:** A _____ a day keeps depression away.
- o **Social:** Alone time is healthy; loneliness is not. Isolation _____ us inside our minds and hearts with no one to give us perspective (**Proverbs 27:9; 20:5**). We need people in our lives who love us and can help us bear our burdens! (**Prov. 17:17; Gal. 6:2**)
 - o **Catch:** Since we're social beings, pain/loss in relationship can cause/contribute to depression.

4. Let Yourself _____

- o Sometimes depression comes from unresolved, repressed anger or sadness. (**Proverbs 14:13**). Might lead us to numb pain with sin, distract ourselves with _____, latch onto others to make us happy, or attempt to escape through suicide. Peter wept. Judas tried to escape.
- o **Exercise:** (see exercise #6 on adjacent page). (**Lamentations 2:18-19a; 3:21-23**)
- o We grieve, but not as those who have no hope (**1 Thess. 4:13**)

John 5:6 - "Do you wish to get well?"

H2H Discussion Questions

1. What are some UN-helpful ways to "help" someone who's depressed?
2. If you've ever been depressed (or found yourself in any one of the 4 "D stages" from the bulletin article), what was most helpful to you in coming out of it?
3. Depression is a complex subject, and it's hard to address it all in 40 minutes. Is there anything you'd like to add to the discussion, either from Scripture, personal experience, or other research?

Depression Assessment and Exercises

If applicable, list a few things you feel disappointed by: (Has anyone let you down? Has life let you down? Have you received something you didn't deserve?)

If applicable, list a few things you feel discontent with in life: (Is there anything you feel like you can't live with anymore or without anymore? Is there anything about your life you believe has to change or you just can't go on?)

If applicable, list a few things you're in despair about: (What feels hopeless in your life? What feels like a tunnel with no light in sight because there's no way out?)

If applicable, list a few destructive behaviors you've been thinking about or engaged in: (Neglecting responsibilities, angry outbursts toward those you love, social isolation, even thoughts or acts of self harm or suicide)

Exercise #1: What was the turning point from sadness to hope in people's lives in Scripture? How did God change their perspective or circumstance to give them hope, courage, purpose, and healing? (For example, the turning point from Psalm 73:1-16 to 73:17-28. Or from Psalm 102:1-11 to 102:11-28)

Exercise #2: Make two columns. When something happens that fuels or triggers depression, in the first column, write the automatic thoughts that came to mind. These thoughts are usually negative, skewed/false, black and white/all or nothing, perfectionistic, or harshly self-critical. In the second column, reframe your automatic thoughts as redemptive thoughts. This isn't about ignoring the pain or sadness of the situation, but replacing the hopelessly false thoughts from Satan with the hopeful and true thoughts of God.

Exercise #3: Sometimes Satan's lies and negative thoughts come from our childhood. Here's an exercise to help us find the root of these thoughts: 1) What messages about yourself did you receive from your parents and/or siblings? (For example, "If you can't do it right, don't even try." or "You're most loved when you make us happy." or "You'll never amount to anything.") 2) What messages about yourself did you receive from your peers? ("You're fat." "You're ugly." "You're an idiot." etc.) 3) What messages did you receive from major events that upset the balance in your life? (From divorce, bankruptcy, miscarriage, etc.) 4) How do you see these messages affecting your life today? 5) Are those messages actually true according to God's Word?

Exercise #4: Keep a thankfulness log, either in a journal or on your phone. Make it a goal to write down one blessing a day, give thanks for it, and meditate on why it's such a great blessing. If you can't think of one that day, look back at previous entries and think about one of those that day.

Exercise #5: Read one Psalm a day and pray about it. What does it teach you about God? About yourself? About hope? About your purpose in life? Even if you don't feel like reading it, do it anyway, tell God you don't feel like it, but you're doing it because you know there's healing for you here. A Psalm a day keeps depression away.

Exercise #6: To help you grieve, walk through the following steps. 1) Describe how your parents and siblings processed grief growing up. 2) When you cried as a child, describe how your parents and siblings reacted. 3) Be honest about what you've lost that you can never get back. 4) Know that God wants to hear from the real you in prayer, not the fake version that's "strong" and "keeping it together." 5) Ask God to help you be honest about your anger, fear, and sadness.

Exercise 7: Get a complete physical from a doctor to ensure there are no underlying physical causes contributing to depression. What kind of food are you eating and how much? Are you getting enough sleep at night? Are you exercising, even just walking a few times a week?

Announcements

Sunday, July 17, 2022

Please email all new announcements to announcements@psd.church.

MEMBERS HEALTH ISSUES:

- **Patsy Holt** is home from the hospital, but she's on oxygen, breathing treatments, antibiotics, and new meds including more steroids. She's home recovering and so thankful for your prayers.
- **Emory and Angie Van Cleef** were self-quarantining last Sunday. They took Covid tests on Wednesday and they both tested negative. Everyone in the household is much better. Charlie, Emma, and family went home yesterday.
- **Chloe Blevins** is really struggling mentally, physically, and emotionally. Her new work schedule is working her too hard, she's looking for a new job because this one won't give her much time off, she's missing Jack terribly and finding it hard to function. She requests are prayers, and visits are always welcome. She's at home watching online today.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF PSD:

- **Linda Sherman, Chris Bowman's mom**, has a blocked kidney. The doctors are concerned that this could cause permanent kidney damage. She had a successful procedure on Thursday to drain her kidney and partially open it. However, this has not completely solved the issue. The doctors are waiting for the swelling to go down so they can complete the process of eliminating the blockage. **Dave Thomas, Joy Thomas' son**, is doing much better. He worked from home this week and plans to return to the office on Monday. **Vicki Simmons', friend of Cheri Feist**, is out of the hospital! Continue to pray for her complete recovery. **Aysegul van Cleef's father** has prostate cancer and is unable to get treatment. He is in a lot of pain. Please pray for him, Aysegul, and the rest of the family. **Susan Rimmer's cousin's baby Lily**, who was born 3 months prematurely, sadly passed away this Friday. Please pray for the family.

TRAVELING

- **Jeff and Julia Hunt** will be out of the country on vacation from 7/13 to 8/1. Pray for their safe travels. **Joe and Susan Rimmer** are in Tennessee until Tuesday. **Rodney, Angela, Austin, and Ashley Rubright** will return home from their vacation tomorrow. **Peyton Gandy** is in Indiana visiting friends. He will return on Friday. **Brian Messerli and the Parks** are leaving Tuesday for a vacation in New York. They will be back on July 26th. **Herb and Micah Hinely** are in Oklahoma for the RJ Stevens singing school. Herb will be back on the 24th. Micah will fly to Pennsylvania to join the rest of the family on vacation. **Matt and Amy Hinely and kids** will be driving to Pennsylvania. Leaving Thursday 7/21 returning Saturday 7/30. **Erik and Deeanne Quist** are at the Arthritis Foundation conference this week and will be in Myrtle Beach next week.

COVID REPORT

- **Mike and Kathy Lodge** have mild Covid symptoms. They'll be watching online today. **Caleb Holiday** tested positive for Covid last week.

SHUT-IN:

- Anne Dickson, Geny Harrison, Lynna Davis, and Pat Steele

DATES TO NOTE:

DATE	EVENT
JULY 17 – AUGUST 27	FALL SESSION FOR HOUSE 2 HOUSE
WEDNESDAY SEPT 7	NEW START TIME: 7:00 PM
SEPTEMBER 23 – 25, 2022	FALL WORKSHOP WITH DAVID BANNING

