

LESSON 8 Overcoming Depression

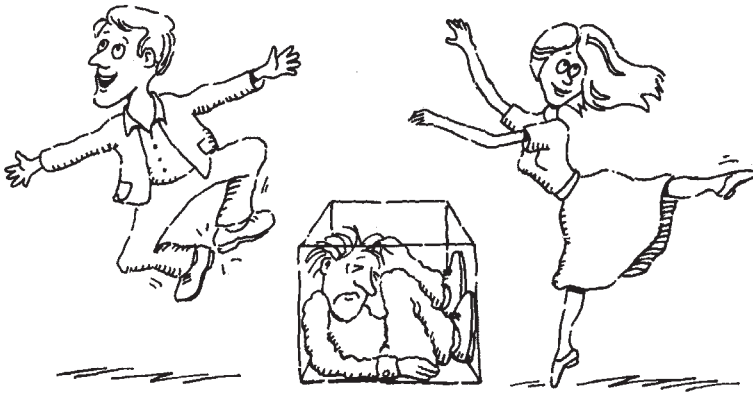
My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" Why are you downcast O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?" My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

—from Psalm 42

Would you expect these to be the words of a man who also composed many jubilant songs of praise and thanksgiving to God for His mercy and grace? Is it possible that this same man could cry out to God, "Why have you forgotten me?"

This heart's cry of the psalmist David reveals to us that it is possible for one who loves and trusts God to experience times of great depression when God seems far away and silent. The important point is that David *did* cry out to God for help. He did not simply allow himself to wallow in self-pity and misery. At the conclusion of this Psalm he speaks to himself again: "Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God" (Psalm 42:11).

In this lesson we will identify causes of depression, and discover what resources are available to help the Christian prevent or overcome times of depression. We will also look at ways to help others who are experiencing depression. We can put our hope in God and know that He has *not* forgotten us!



lesson outline

Defining Depression
Discovering Causes and Cures
Preventing Depression
Helping Others

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Identify true statements regarding the definition of depression.
- Name three ways that depression can be related to illness.
- Choose a principle that will help Christians to overcome depression resulting from stress.
- Explain the attitude a Christian should develop in regard to fearful events in life that cause one to despair.
- Identify examples of guilt related to sin, and assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret, and solutions for each of these.
- Apply Matthew 5:10-11 as a solution for bitterness or resentment.
- Select true statements concerning ways to prevent depression.
- Recognize activities which can provide positive help to others who are suffering depression.

learning activities

1. Work through the lesson development in the usual manner. Be sure to read all Scripture texts given, and answer all study questions.
2. Study the glossary definitions of any key words you do not know.
3. Take the self-test and check your answers.

keywords

accumulation	stress
condemnation	terminal
dejection	therapy
depressive	tranquillity
impulsive	vitality
resentment	vulnerable

lesson development

DEFINING DEPRESSION

Objective 1. *Identify true statements regarding the definition of depression.*

What is depression? One medical doctor describes it like this: “The whole world looks shadowed in gloom. What is worse—you’ll come to believe that things *really are* as bad as you imagine them to be!” He believes it is negative thoughts which bring about depression.

Webster’s Dictionary gives these definitions, among others, for depression: *a state of feeling sad; dejection; a psychotic disorder marked by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, and feelings of dejection; a reduction in activity, amount, quality, or force; a lowering of vitality or functional activity.*

Many of us go through occasional times of depression. Life suddenly seems to have no joy; our problems overwhelm us, and we sink into extreme self-pity, misery, and despair.

Here is how one person describes the depression that she experienced some time after her husband’s untimely death:

“When my husband died, I was surrounded by family and caring friends, and I felt the presence of God very close to me. He gave me strength throughout my husband’s long illness and the days following his death. Many people remarked what a testimony I was of the peace and tranquillity that Jesus gives to those who mourn. He *did* comfort me, and keep me, and lead me.”

“As the days passed, I became involved in a very exciting and fulfilling ministry. Even though I was separated from my family and dearest friends, my life was reasonably happy and I kept very busy. Nearly a year passed. There were changes in personnel where I worked, and some of them affected my work in a threatening way. I became very sensitive to any form of criticism, and resentful when I did not receive praise which I felt I had earned. My time away

from my work was often spent alone, and I began to feel lonely and abandoned by those I loved most.

“At this very time, a person that I greatly admired and whose approval I desired caused me great hurt. My reaction was to withdraw from everything that could possibly add to that hurt. This was the start of my depression. For the first time, I experienced overwhelming grief over the death of my husband. I felt unloved, unworthy, and unimportant. There seemed to be nothing worth living for. I did not want to read the Bible, pray, or receive any advice from Christian friends. I just wanted to be left alone to enjoy my misery and indulge in self-pity.”

If you have ever experienced depression, perhaps you can identify with some of the feelings described by this woman. Here is a list of some common symptoms of one who is depressed:

1. Trouble sleeping and fatigue
2. Difficulty concentrating
3. Loss of interest in things one ordinarily enjoys, including sex
4. Preference of being alone
5. Difficulty making decisions
6. Has a negative attitude about oneself and others
7. Other illness brought on by depression (such as ulcers)
8. Impaired decision-making ability (often impulsive and faulty such as a decision to commit suicide)
9. Intense sadness and despair
10. Greatly decreased activity

Certainly, things happen in our lives from time to time which cause us to feel sad, fearful, or uncertain. All of us have good and bad days—days when we feel wonderful and everything seems to be perfect in our lives, and other days when everything seems to go wrong. These could be called *mood swings*. Normally these moods do not last long. We recover quickly from the bad days with no negative results. Depression, on the other hand, is a state of mind which may come upon us slowly and which persists for an extended period of time.

We need to be able to identify the causes of depression and discover ways that it can be overcome or prevented. In the next section of this lesson we will discuss some of the major *causes* of depression and how to combat them.

Application

- 1 Which of these statements are TRUE definitions of depression? Circle the letter preceding each choice you make.
- a Depression is marked by a lack of energy and a reduction of activity.
 - b Any feeling of sadness or loneliness is depression.
 - c Sometimes it is a combination of events which brings on depression.
 - d A depressed person usually has a high opinion of himself.
 - e Withdrawal is often a symptom of depression.
 - f The depressed person enjoys being with happy people.
 - g A depressed person has a tendency to make quick and poor decisions.
- 2 How can the length of time that symptoms persist indicate that a person is suffering from depression?

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DISCOVERING CAUSES AND CURES

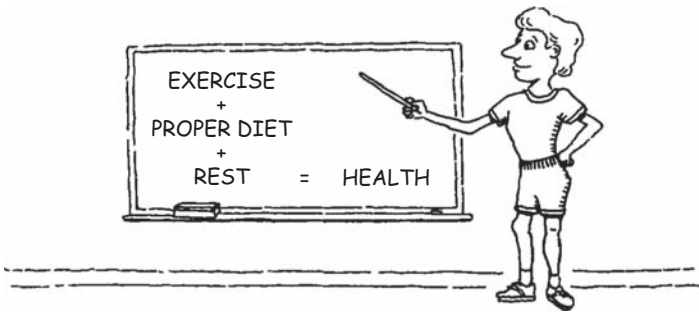
Many things can, of course, contribute to depression. In previous lessons we have already discussed numerous problems such as financial difficulties, problems with children, loneliness, and broken relationships which can lead to depression. Depression is not usually caused by one problem alone, but by an accumulation of setbacks which together finally become more than a person can bear.

In this part of the lesson we shall consider some general problem areas that may lead to depression, and how the Christian can find victory over problems such as these.

Illness

Objective 2. *Name three ways that depression can be related to illness.*

One psychologist has said, “Whenever a patient comes to me in a depressive state, I first send him to a medical doctor for a physical exam.” Depression can be a symptom of a physical illness which needs attention, or it can develop as a *result* of trying to cope with a serious illness. It is one of the stages a person goes through when he learns that he has a terminal illness. We will discuss this more in our next lesson.



Sometimes we allow our bodies to become fatigued by overwork to the point that we become ill and depressed. Even those who are involved in Christian ministries can experience depression as a result of over commitment and fatigue. I have seen pastors or their wives who have almost reached the breaking point after an extended period of trying to fulfill several areas of ministry which required that they work night and day. In Mark 6:30-31 we read that when the disciples were deeply involved in conditions such as these, Jesus prescribed the therapy of *rest*:

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

Our bodies need proper exercise, proper diet, and adequate rest in order to function properly. It is no wonder that when we neglect any of these things there is a reaction, we lose our vitality, and we want to give up.

The Word of God is a spiritual resource in times of illness to help us combat depression: “Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave” (Psalm 107:19-20).

The Bible is filled with testimonies of healings through the power of God’s Word. These testimonies encourage us to call upon the Lord in our times of distress, to allow His Word to minister to our need, and trust Him to provide healing.

Application

3 Name three ways that depression can be related to illness.

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4 What should be the first step in overcoming depression in each of these cases?

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Stress

Objective 3. *Choose a principle that will help the Christian to overcome depression resulting from stress.*

Stress is defined as “a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation” (causing illness). This is what happens when one problem builds upon another until the person is under such pressure that there is a physical, chemical, or emotional reaction. Often the reaction is depression.

One psychologist developed a scale to rate the degree of impact upon a person of various events in his life. Here are a few of the events listed on the scale and their impact level as determined by him:

Event	Scale of Impact
Death of spouse	100
Divorce	73
Death of close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Loss of job	47
Change to different line of work	36
Change in responsibilities of work	29
Son or daughter leaving home	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Change in residence	20
Change in church activities	19
Vacation	12
Christmas	12

This psychologist concluded from his research that if a person experienced more than 300 points in life-changing events over a period of two years, he ran the risk of developing a major illness (Greene, *Introduction to Psychology*, 1976, p. 146).

Grief is high on the list of stress factors; suffering and the death of a loved one are major causes of grief. These are stresses which most of us encounter during our lifetime. How we react to them depends greatly upon our spiritual preparation. (See Lesson 3.)

After a loss, a period of grief is a normal process. But I do not believe it is inevitable for a person who experiences great stress to suffer illness or depression as a result. We can receive strength and comfort from the Holy Spirit. Consider these verses:

Nehemiah 8:10: "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

John 16:22: "Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy."

Application

- 5 Choose the best answer. These verses tell us that
- a) it is wrong for Christians to grieve when they have suffered a loss.
 - b) there is a time for grief, but the Lord is able to replace our grief with His joy.
 - c) it is impossible to grieve and know the joy of the Lord at the same time.
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If you begin to see signs of stress in your life, do what you can to ease the stressful situation. If there is nothing you can do to lighten your load, increase your time in the Word—wait upon the Lord and allow Him to bear your burden. Jesus' words to His disciples are words of hope for you today:

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid (John 14:1, 27).

From the world we can expect stress, pain, suffering—but Jesus has provided the cure for all of these: His peace and joy. We have only to ask for it.

Application

- 6 Which of these principles will best help the Christian to overcome depression resulting from stress? Choose the best answer.
- a) The Christian should ask God to help him avoid life-changing events which cause stress.
 - b) The Christian should learn to control his emotions so that life-changing events will not create tensions in his life.
 - c) As stress increases, there should be a corresponding increase in spiritual preparedness: more time for God's Word to speak, and more time in prayer.
 - d) A Christian who is truly committed to God will not experience stress no matter what events take place in his life.
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Fear and Despair

Objective 4. *Explain the attitude a Christian should develop in regard to fearful events in life that cause one to despair.*

We are living in an age of fear and despair. Terrorism and political unrest threaten stability. Cancer is a dreaded disease which seems to affect every family. Crime is epidemic, and innocent victims suffer the consequences. In many parts of the world, people are afraid to be on the streets at night. We fear that we will lose our jobs; we fear getting old; we fear pain; we fear that something will happen to our loved ones.

It is when we become obsessed by fear that depression can overtake us. Such fear causes despair: there is no point trying to go on with life, or trying to be happy, because life is hopeless. There seems to be no way out of our miserable circumstances—nothing good can possibly happen to us. It is at this point that the despairing person may even think of suicide as the way out of his fearful condition.

Application

7 What is wrong with this line of reasoning?

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The cure for fear is love. If we love God, we will have confidence in Him to lift us out of our fear. In 1 John 4:16-18 we are told:

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. Love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The man who fears is not made perfect in love.

Whenever your heart is filled with fear, ask God to take away the fear and replace it with His everlasting love. And be encouraged by these words of Jesus to His disciples: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Application

8 What attitude should a Christian develop regarding fearful events in life that could cause him to despair?

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Guilt and Regret

Objective 5. *Identify examples of guilt related to sin, and assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret, and solutions for each of these.*

Often grief is accompanied by feelings of guilt or regret, because of things we have done, or things we should have done. I have met parents who were grieving over a child who had left home and gotten involved in a life of sin. They heaped blame upon themselves for failing the child in one way or another. A father who permitted his son to purchase a motorcycle was overcome by grief and guilt when an automobile struck and killed his son while he was riding his motorcycle. “If only I had said *no!*” the father cried over and over again. Still others feel terrible guilt because of ugly things they have said or done to harm someone.

There are two kinds of guilt involved here: real guilt as a result of some sinful action, and assumed guilt for something over which we have no control. Real guilt is a wholesome guilt which is rooted in relationships—to God, to others, and to ourselves. It is accompanied by a strong desire to confess, and it always responds to forgiveness. Assumed (or *neurotic*) guilt is usually related to rules and regulations. It, too, is accompanied by a strong desire to confess, but seldom responds to forgiveness. Both forms of guilt feel the same, but they are rooted in different problems and they respond differently to forgiveness. Both kinds of guilt can cause depression, but the cure is different for each one.

Guilt related to sin. The Christian does not need to live in self-condemnation for sins committed. When our conscience condemns us, we have an advocate who intercedes with us before our Father in heaven (1 John 2:1-2). “If we confess our

sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

There is no need to bear the burden of sin. Repent, confess your sin to God (and if possible, to the one against whom you have sinned, if someone else is involved), and receive His forgiveness. Then accept the fact that it is finished, it is behind you, and forget about it.

Assumed guilt. I heard about a young mother who had taken her small child for a walk. She met a neighbor, and they stood on the sidewalk talking while the child played nearby. Suddenly the child darted into the street and was struck by an automobile and instantly killed. The young mother, overcome with grief, was burdened down by guilt that she had allowed such a thing to happen. As the days went by, she became more and more withdrawn and depressed. She could not handle the personal blame that she felt for this accident.

Certainly many things happen in life which we deeply regret. We look back and see things we would have done differently if we could change them. Widowed persons often have regrets and think of many ways they might have made their spouse happier. Parents are often filled with guilt and regret because they feel they could have done a better job of training their children.

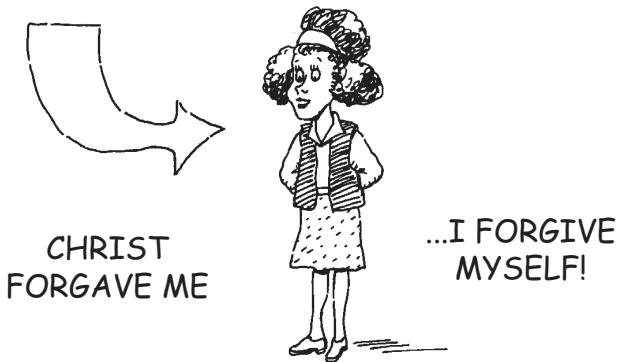
These are all wasted efforts, because we cannot change the past—we can only learn from it and try to avoid the same mistakes in the future. And if events take place in our lives that are beyond our control, we should recognize that we are not guilty of wrongdoing, and that our lives are committed into God’s care. If He in His mercy and grace will forgive even the most awful of our sins, should we not accept His forgiveness also for all of those painful circumstances which have filled us with regret and self-condemnation?

The psalmist David knew that he could turn to the Lord no matter what mistakes he had made, and receive cleansing. Here are his words in Psalm 130:1-4, 7:

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If

you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness . . . O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

No matter what has happened in your life, there is *full redemption* with the Lord. If He is so gracious and willing to forgive, can you not also forgive yourself? Put behind you all your regrets and unnecessary guilt. Use them as opportunities to make known to others the wonderful release to be found in casting your failures upon the Lord, and receiving His love and grace.



Application

9 In this exercise, match the examples and solutions in the left column with the type of guilt each describes (right column). Place the number representing your choice in each blank space.

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|---|---|
| a A young man who was away from home on a journey when his mother unexpectedly died. | 1) Guilt caused by sin. |
| b Repent, confess, and receive forgiveness. | 2) Assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret. |
| c An unmarried woman who had an abortion. | |
| d A mother who gave birth to a deformed child. | |
| e Forgive yourself. | |

Bitterness and Resentment

Objective 6. *Apply Matthew 5:10-11 as a solution for bitterness or resentment.*

Nothing can rob a Christian of spiritual victory more than a spirit of bitterness or resentment against someone who has wronged him. Bitterness is like a worm that eats into every aspect of your life so that all of your actions are motivated by the festering hatred that you have for the one who has offended you. Bitterness and resentment are two dimensions of anger.

Recently I read about a fine Christian man whose life over the years was filled with hard trials. A son died in infancy; some time later his home burned to the ground and he lost all his possessions; still later his wife died after a long and painful illness which required expensive medical treatment. The fruits of the Spirit were evident in his life through every trial. For many years he taught the adult Sunday school class in his church, and lives were touched by his gentle spirit and devout faith.

One day a deacon who sat in his class decided that the man's teaching ministry had lost its effectiveness. He began to suggest to others that their teacher was not as capable as he used to be, and that they should have a new teacher. When word got back to the teacher that members of the class were not satisfied with his teaching, he was deeply hurt. Out of this grew a spirit of bitterness and resentment against the man who had criticized him. He had been able to endure all of his trials up to this point, but when he was personally attacked, he could not take it. He withdrew from all his involvement in the church, and was overcome with extreme depression. He allowed his bitterness to dominate his thoughts until he became obsessed by it. Once a blessing to the church, he now was a reproach.

In Lesson 4 we talked about injustices and how the Christian should react to them. If this man had been able to apply Matthew 5:10-12 to his problem, he could have avoided the bitterness and depression that resulted. Ephesians 4:31 tells us to "get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." In Hebrews 12:15, we read these words:

“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

Application

10 Choose the correct response. Not only can bitterness and resentment lead to depression and rob us of spiritual victory, but, as these Scriptures indicate, they are also

- a) attitudes which cause trouble and bring harm to many people.
 - b) something that we must expect from time to time, because people will do things to hurt us.
 - c) the fault of the person who causes the bitter feelings to develop.
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The only solution for a bitter or resentful spirit against someone is forgiveness. Jesus told His disciples, “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15). In another place He told them: “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:27). If you will follow this instruction, and pray for the one who has wronged you, it will be impossible for you at the same time to hold in your heart bitter feelings against that person. The Lord will give you real love for such a one as you pray for him.

Bitterness can also be turned upward, against God. This some times develops as a result of blaming Him for our troubles, instead of discovering what the real source is. It is no wonder that the person who harbors bitterness in his heart is easily overcome by depression. Bitterness not only affects us physically, but it also drains us spiritually. The greatest harm is done to the person who allows bitterness to overtake him—the person responsible for the condition which led to bitterness may be entirely unaware of the damage he has done.

Application

11 Read Matthew 5:10-12. Apply it to the problem of bitterness and resentment, and explain the influence it can have upon this problem.

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PREVENTING DEPRESSION

Objective 7. *Select true statements concerning ways to prevent depression.*

Is there any way to prevent depression? Can we see it coming and take steps to avoid it? I believe there are ways a Christian can be prepared to combat depression and recognize symptoms of depression before it overtakes him.

Here are some principles that we should keep in mind when thinking of ways to prevent depression:

1. We should not allow any unconfessed sin to remain in our lives. Sin will bring depression and grief. The only way to get rid of the depression is to get rid of the sin.

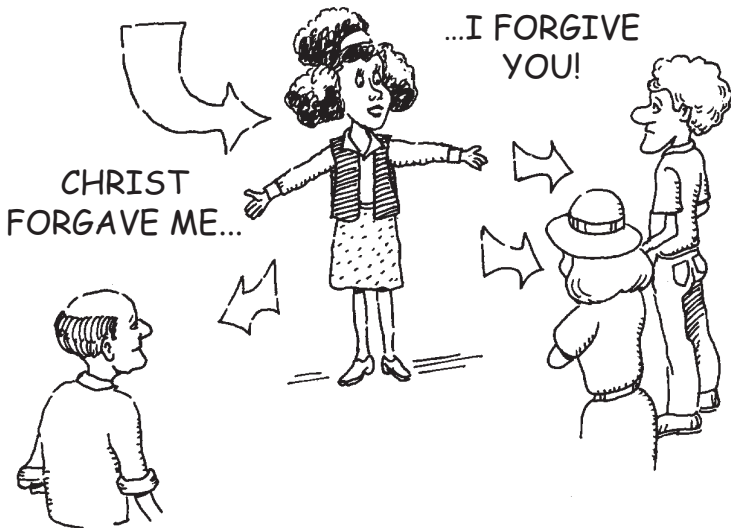
2. Not all depression is sin. Christ knew anguish when He wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). When He went into the garden of Gethsemane, the Bible tells us, “He took Peter, James, and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,’ he said to them” (Mark 14:33-34). Job did not sin against God, but he knew great depression (Job chapter 3). If grief is turned inward, it will cause depression. But as we look to God in times of sorrow, He will replace our grief with His joy.

3. We are physical as well as spiritual beings. Overcommitment and fatigue, improper rest, diet, and exercise all can lead to depression. Neglect of our spiritual life, such as neglecting worship, Bible reading, meditation, and prayer, will weaken us and make us vulnerable to the attacks of Satan.

4. Whenever we have a problem, we should identify the cause and seek the appropriate solution as quickly as possible. When unsolved problems begin to pile up, we are easily overcome.

5. There is therapy in reaching out to others who have needs. Instead of looking inward, and dwelling upon your own stresses or pain, look outward. The trial you are enduring will give you a special sensitivity to others who are hurting, and you can be an expression of Christ's love in their lives. Your own depression will be replaced with joy in serving the Lord and helping others. That is why it is so important to be active in a Christian community—a church where believers show concern and minister to each other.

6. A person who practices forgiveness will know freedom from the stress of bitterness and resentment. He has truly learned what love is, and what it is not (1 Corinthians 13).



God's promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13 has helped me many times to draw upon His strength to see me through times of difficulty, and He has never failed me.

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond

what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Application

12 What principle can we draw from this Scripture for the prevention of depression?

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Sometimes Christian counsel is essential to help a person prevent or overcome depression. If you are unable to find release in any of the ways we have suggested here, do not hesitate to seek the help of someone trained to provide this kind of help.

Application

13 Which of these statements are TRUE concerning depression? Circle the letter preceding each choice you make.

- a Forgiveness provides release from guilt and from bitterness.
 - b Unsolved problems create a condition where depression can easily occur.
 - c Spiritual neglect is more likely to lead to depression than physical neglect.
 - d Depression is usually related to sin.
 - e We are more likely to overcome depression if we look upward to God than if we look inward to ourselves.
 - f Jesus showed us how to combat depression by his example in the garden of Gethsemane.
 - g Our own suffering sometimes helps us to minister better to others who are suffering.
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HELPING OTHERS

Objective 8. *Recognize activities which can provide positive help to others who are suffering depression.*

When Job suffered his great trials (Job 1 and 2) the Bible tells us that his three friends “set out from their homes and

met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was” (Job 2:11-13).

If you go on to read the book of Job, you will discover that Job’s friends did not stop with their silent participation in his suffering. Rather, they added to his distress by heaping blame upon him and accusing him of sinning against God.

The best way to help someone who is experiencing great depression is by a loving, caring attitude, by simply *being* there to show your support and concern. A suffering person does not need someone who will add to his sorrow, as Job’s friends did. He *does* need a friend who will not be judgmental, but who will help him find the cause for his depression, when *he* is ready to face it, and support him as he applies the steps necessary to overcome his depressive condition.

We have described depression as a loss of joy, a loss of vitality, a feeling of dejection and a time of inactivity. Often the depressed person lacks the strength or the will to make an effort to overcome his condition. A person who will say to him, “I know you are hurting—I want you to know that I care; is there anything I can do to help you?” and who will then be prepared to pray, to weep, to comfort, to show love, such a person may be God’s instrument to lift a soul from the depths of despair to blessed victory through Christ.

The helper’s role is one of encouragement and the giving of hope. If there is unconfessed sin, allow the Holy Spirit to speak and lead to repentance. There is deliverance in Christ. And let us remind each other, whenever life’s burdens seem more than we can bear, of these words of the apostle Paul:

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.... Therefore, we do not lose heart.

Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all (2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 16-17).

Application

14 Which of the following attitudes or activities would provide positive help to someone who is suffering depression? Circle the letter preceding your choices.

- a** Show concern.
- b** Be loving.
- c** Be judgmental.
- d** Suggest reasons why he is depressed.
- e** Listen.
- f** Be there.
- g** Be willing to share sorrow.
- h** Leave him alone.
- i** Support him.
- j** Offer help.
- k** Give comfort and hope.
- l** Encourage him.



self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write T in the blank space if the statement is TRUE. Write F if the statement is FALSE.

- 1 Depression involves negative thoughts, feelings, and reactions.
- 2 Depression is any feeling of sadness or discouragement a person may experience.
- 3 A depressed person usually makes decisions easily.
- 4 Three symptoms of depression are inability to sleep, lack of interest in things usually enjoyed, and great sadness.
- 5 Depression can be both a symptom of illness and a result of illness.
- 6 There is a relationship between the amount of stress that builds up in a person and the possibility that he will suffer a serious illness or depression.
- 7 Depression sometimes occurs because people blame themselves for events over which they had no control.
- 8 A good self-image often accompanies depression.
- 9 From the words of Jesus in John 14:1 we have assurance that a troubled heart can be cured by trust in God.
- 10 The best way to reduce stress is to keep yourself spiritually prepared to face life's problems.
- 11 The cure for fear is courage.
- 12 Whenever we have guilty feelings, we know we have done something wrong.
- 13 A person can be free from the guilt that accompanies regret for past actions when he accepts Christ's forgiveness and then forgives himself.
- 14 The person who is most injured by feelings of resentment or bitterness is the one who allows those feelings to remain in his heart.
- 15 The best way to get rid of bitter feelings against another person is to pray for that person.

SHORT ANSWER. Fill in each blank space with one word to complete these principles for preventing depression.

16 We are less likely to suffer depression if we take care of our and health.

17 We should never allow unconfessed to remain in our lives.

18 We can help ourselves as we others who are in need.

19 We should try to each problem as it occurs, so that we can avoid building up stress.

20 It is important that we replace bitterness or resentment with

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21 In times of sorrow, we need to allow God to replace our grief with His, which gives us supernatural strength.

22 Name three ways to help someone who is suffering from depression.

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answers to study questions

- 8 Your answer. It should include these thoughts: An attitude of love for God and trust in Him will overcome fear. We can have confidence that, in every fearful situation, Christ is the overcomer—He is with us, and His love sustains us.
- 1 a True.
b False.
c True.
d False.
e True.
f False.
g True.
- 9 a 2) Assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret.
b 1) Guilt caused by sin.
c 1) Guilt caused by sin.
d 2) Assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret.
e 2) Assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret.
- 2 Symptoms of depression will persist over an extended period of time. (Many of us have bad days occasionally. Depression is a condition that may come upon us slowly and endure for an extended period of time.)
- 10 a) attitudes which cause trouble and bring harm to many people.
- 3 Depression may be a *symptom* of a physical problem; it may be a *result* of a physical problem; it may be a result of improper care of the body.
- 11 Your answer. If we can only realize and remember that the Lord *blesses* us when we bear insults and other wrongs in a Christlike manner, we can actually feel a sense of rejoicing even when men turn against us, because we are aware that Christ is our overcomer and He will never turn against us. Our victory over bitter feelings will make us a blessing to others.
- 4 First, have a physical checkup to discover if there is a physical problem. Second, when depression occurs as a *result* of dealing with a physical problem, God's Word will help us to cope with the problem with a positive attitude. Third, proper exercise, diet, and rest may be all that is needed to avoid depression.
- 12 Your answer. It says this to me: No matter what trial or testing I am going through, God has helped others through the same thing already, and *He will help me, too*.
- 5 b) there is a time for grief, but the Lord is able to replace our grief with His joy.

- 13 a True.
b True.
c False.
d False.
e True.
f True.
g True. (See 2 Corinthians 1:1-11.)
- 6 c) As stress increases, there should be a corresponding increase in spiritual preparedness.
- 14 All of these activities would be helpful except c, d, and h.
- 7 It overlooks the fact that God is in control of our lives, and He will not give us more than we can bear.

