

HEALING FOR THE SOUL

Climbing Out of the Pit of Depression

Depression: A debilitating feeling of hopelessness, helplessness, & despair which results in a person withdrawing from responsibilities and relationships.

THREE OBSERVATIONS ABOUT DEPRESSION

1. **FACE REALITY.** Depression, darkness, despair, and disappointment are legitimate spiritual experiences. Just as there will be mountain top experiences, there will be seasons in the valley of depression; this is inescapable!

In this you greatly rejoice, even though for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials... 1 Peter 1: 6

...we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life...our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within. But God who comforts the depressed, comforted us... 2 Cor. 1: 8 & 6: 5-6

2. **BE REAL.** If there is one thing we learn from the great Bible characters, even Jesus, it is okay to express your raw emotions to God (Psalm 13: 1-2; Psalm 22: 1-6; Psalm 88; Job 7: 11-20). God will never gasp in surprise and say, "I would never have believed that of you!" The suffering can only be endured when the pain is articulated, which is the first step to healing.

But I am very discouraged, and I was pouring my heart to the Lord. Don't think I am a wicked woman! For I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow.
1 Samuel 1: 15b-16 (NLT)

Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord. Lamentations 2: 19b

3. **KEEP RELYING ON GOD.** Another lesson we learn from the great Bible characters is that in times of depression there is no one else to turn to for answers except God, because God is the final reference point for all of life.

If you are walking in darkness, without a ray of light, trust in the Lord and rely on your God. Isaiah 50: 10b (NLT)

Why are you in despair, O 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: 5 & 11

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you will be able to endure it. 1 Cor. 10: 13

ELIJAH IN 1 KINGS 19: A BIBLICAL CASE STUDY OF DEPRESSION

Elijah experienced all the classic symptoms of depression:

1. **FEAR & FLIGHT** (v. 3)
2. **FAILURE** complex (v. 4)
3. **FUTILITY** desiring death (v. 4)
4. Extreme **FATIGUE** (v. 5a)

How did Elijah go from the mountain top of victory on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18 to the valley of defeat & depression in 1 Kings 19?

1. He let his **GUARD DOWN** in the aftermath of a great victory.
2. He did not **THINK** realistically or clearly about his situation.
3. He overestimated his **STRENGTH**.
4. He **ISOLATED** himself from others.
5. He submitted to **SELF PITY**.

What did God do to heal Elijah's depression?

1. God ministered to Elijah's **PHYSICAL** needs by providing him proper nutrition and adequate rest (vs. 5-8). Sometimes the most spiritual thing a person can do is eat a good meal, get a good night's sleep, & get away for a few days of relaxation.

2. God ministered to Elijah's **EMOTIONAL** needs by allowing him to freely vent his frustrations. (v. 9-10, & 14). At the heart of Elijah's depression was disappointment with God caused by **UNMET EXPECTATIONS**.

3. God ministered to Elijah's **SPIRITUAL** needs by taking him to church (Mt. Sinai). At the root of depression is a **DISTORTED** of God and/or ourselves. Worship, God's Word, and prayer are powerful anti-depressants to correct our outlook on life and renew our joy (vs. 11-21).

*God demonstrated to Elijah that the **STILL VOICE OF GOD** speaking to the human heart is more powerful than miraculous displays of God's power.

*God corrected Elijah's false sense of **IMPORTANCE**, as if God's work was dependent on Elijah. In fact, God had already chosen Elijah's successor.

*God affirmed the impact of Elijah's ministry. Because the success of Carmel was so short-lived, Elijah viewed his ministry a failure. But God pointed out 7000 people scattered throughout the nation who remained true to God, not due to Elijah's miracles, but the quiet influence of his **GODLY EXAMPLE**.

* God gave Elijah something to do. God basically tells Elijah, "Get back to work, I've got a job for you to do, **MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL!**"

*God gave Elijah a **FRIEND**.