

Working through Depression

Depression is more common than most of us realize. It can be subtle and it can be debilitating. No one should struggle alone and without hope. Here are 10 resources to help towards getting the help you need.

1. The Gospel

Through the lens of Scripture, we see the good news for depression. We all need to be reminded and encouraged to believe these things and let them infiltrate our heart, soul and mind. These are some of the truths to share as we walk through Psalm 5 with someone in the depth of depression.

- God pays attention to our crying.
- God hears our prayers.
- God does not delight in wickedness.
- We can be in relationship with God because of HIS steadfast love.
- God is worthy of our worship and reverent fear.
- God will lead us in HIS righteousness, not our own.
- God is a safe refuge for us.
- God protects us so we will glorify Him.
- God covers us with blessings.

2. Community

Depression is not something to hide or to be ashamed – you don't have to walk through its pain on your own. God designed community knowing the depths of pain that can come with depression so that we would not be alone. If you are in a small group or Missional Community let them know about your struggle. Let them pray for you and encourage you. There might just be someone in your group that has experienced depression before or is currently struggling.

3. Counseling

In many cases it can be helpful to supplement the care you get from community with the care of a professional that is specially trained to deal with complex issues like depression. The Austin Stone Counseling Center is a resource of the church that can help. You can learn more about how we approach counseling and even schedule an appointment by going to www.austinstonecounseling.org

Working through Depression

4. The Body

We are body-soul creatures and we cannot deceive ourselves into thinking that our bodies have no effect on the way our souls are feeling within those bodies. Paul exhorts Timothy that bodily training is of 'some value', not of NO value – it is small compared to godliness, but it is important. Often, the tendrils of depression have choked out basic structure and wisdom for taking care of physical aspects and need to be set in order: healthy diet, a proper amount of sleep, exercise, a routine/schedule.

5. Daily Life

Daily tasks often seem arduous at best and impossible at worst for someone in the dark of depression. Without taking over his responsibilities, ask to share these tasks with him. Although we want to be wary of creating a codependent relationship, taking baby- steps together will hold him accountable and allow him to start moving forward. Wisely lead him to more and more independence.

- clean the house
- go to appointments
- grocery shop
- mow the grass
- cook
- do errands

6. Serving

In Isaiah 58, God asks his people to reach out to other people: the poor, the afflicted, the heavily yoked. As His people make their lives acts of living worship, God says that their "healing shall spring up speedily." We need to gently encourage someone who is de- pressed to look past his own struggles, and reach out to others in need and look to their interests and not just his own (Philippians 2:4). Invite him to join you as you serve the poor, afflicted and heavily yoked.

7. The Soul and Mind

A large component of depression is the deep entrenchment of lies that Satan tempts hu- mans to believe. A person can hear terrible things about his worth, identity, and future. In those moments, he needs to fight to believe the things that are real and true from the mouth of God. This is why the Psalmist in Psalm 42 says

Working through Depression

to himself, "Why so downcast oh, my soul? Put your hope in God!" Encourage the depressed person to make an action plan for when he is speaking lies to his soul.

- Write down the lie, scratch it out and write the truth.
- Go through a mental checklist of Philippians 4:8.
- Be quick to ask the Holy Spirit to change this lie.
- Journal about a characteristic of God.
- With Scriptures, remind yourself of your standing before Christ.
- Study what God says to those who suffer in Bible
- Listen to a worship song and write out your reaction to it.

8. Sermons

Title

The Sovereignty of God Over Suffering and Evil, Halim Suh

The Wounded Spirit, Tim Keller

Finding God, Tim Keller

Spiritual Depression in the Psalms, John Piper

Available At

bit.ly/1hjAFMp

bit.ly/1hRBMSb

bit.ly/1e4YcjQ

bit.ly/1mRmD3Z

9. Reading

Title

Depression: A Stubborn Darkness, Edward T. Welch

When the Darkness Will Not Lift, John Piper

Spiritual Depression, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Available At

bit.ly/1EZYaR

bit.ly/1EZVvQ

bit.ly/1jSy9Mn

10. Medication

Although there is no medical cure for depression, medicine can help clear the overwhelming chaos in the brain so that the person can make decisions and think without the debilitating fog which might help him hear the Gospel more clearly. A good doctor will direct the patient towards counseling and a support system.