

Depression Overview

Psalm 42:5: The question of Depression: Why?

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

What is Depression? <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>

- ❖ Depression (major depressive disorder or clinical depression) is a common but serious mood disorder. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working. To be diagnosed with depression, the symptoms must be present for at least two weeks.
- ❖ Women are about twice as likely as men to develop major depression. They also have higher rates of seasonal affective disorder, depressive symptoms in bipolar disorder, and dysthymia (chronic depression).
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/womens-health/women-and-depression>

What are the various types of Depression? <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>

1. **Persistent Depressive Disorder:** Depressed mood that last for at least 2yrs. May have episodes of major depression, with periods of less severe symptoms. Many people can function day to day but feel low or joyless much of the time.
 - a. **Symptoms:** Feelings of hopelessness, low self-esteem, fatigue, poor appetite or overeating, difficulty with concentration, sleeping too much or too little. (Cleveland Clinic)
2. **Major Depression:** major depression is a state where a dark mood is all-consuming and one loses interest in activities, even ones that are usually pleasurable. Thoughts of death or suicide may occur.
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/six-common-depression-types>
 - a. **Symptoms:** Changes in weight loss or gain, issues sleeping, small obstacles seem impossible, intense feelings of worthlessness & guilt. Self-destructive behavior and or thoughts of suicide. (Harvard Health)
3. **Postpartum Depression:** More serious than “baby blues”, (a few weeks of mild depressive or anxiety symptoms). Woman experience major depressions during pregnancy or after they deliver. Feelings of extreme sadness, anxiety, and exhaustion that accompany postpartum depression that may make it difficult for moms to care for themselves or babies. May have difficulty bonding to their babies, which can lead to guilt.
4. **Psychotic depression:** Severe depression from psychosis, such as having false fixed beliefs (delusions) or hearing or seeing upsetting things that others cannot hear (hallucinations) The psychotic symptoms can have themes such as delusions of guilt, poverty, illness and suspicion
5. **Seasonal affective disorder:** Basically, Living in Buffalo during winter :) Depression generally lifts during spring and summer. Social withdrawal, increased sleep and weight gain predictably returns every winter.
6. **Bipolar Disorder:** Experience extremely low moods, (bipolar depression), but also can experience extreme high or euphoric/irritable moods (spending spree, nothing can go wrong mentality) called mania or less severe called hypomania.

Risk Factors:

- Personal or family history of depression
- Major life changes, trauma, or stress
- Physical illnesses and medications
- Spiritual Warfare: The enemy of your souls seeks to debilitate you. (Look at the story of Job.)

- Identity Crisis: Not knowing or understanding who you are in Christ and who God is.

Treatments available:

- Therapies such as CBT, or IPT (interpersonal therapy and problem-solving therapy). Or ECT (Electroconvulsive therapy), which is a brain stimulation a few times of week. This is supposed to be painless but can have side effects of memory loss or confusion. TMS (Transcranial magnetic stimulation) stimulate nerve cells in the brain.
- Medication: SSRI's or Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors. (Lexapro, Zoloft, Prozac), Increase levels of serotonin in the brain, which help improve your mood. (Consult your Doctor on medications, never go off meds cold turkey) Remember, all have side effects, can be addictive and are not meant for long-term care for most.
- Exercise, eating healthy, taking minerals and vitamins. Important to see doctor, thyroid, vitamin deficiencies can create feelings of low mood and other depressive symptoms.

What does Depression Feel Like?

- Depression is not a one size fits all thing. It is unique and can come from an array of different factors.

"Depression...involves a complete absence of affect, feeling, response and interest...But for all intents and purposes, the deeply depressed are just the walking dead." (Elizabeth Wurtzel; Prozac nation)

"Profound melancholia is a day in and day out, night-in-night-out, almost arterial level of agony. It is pitiless, unrelenting pain that affords no window of hope, no alternative to a grim and brackish existence, and no respite from the cold undercurrents of thought and feeling that dominate the horribly restless nights of despair." (Kay Redfield Jamison, An unquiet Mind)

Questions/Statements those experiencing depression face.

1. Why is this happening to me?
2. What did I do to deserve such pain?
3. I'm such a failure, all I do is bring pain to everyone, I'm worthless.
4. What purpose does this suffering have?
5. Will this ever end? Is there a way out?
6. Is death the only way to fix this, the only way out of my pain?
7. I am all alone, the only one going through this, no one understands.
8. Where is God, why is he allowing this?
9. I wish I was never born, my life and everything around me is meaningless.
10. Give up, there is no Hope!

How as a Christian can you answer these questions? How can you help someone else walk through these feelings of despair, hopelessness and questioning God? How can I make sense of my own depression as a Christian? Does God's Word give me any answers?

What does God's Word say about Depression?

- The word depression itself is not mentioned in the Bible, but we can see Biblical examples of people experiencing forms of depression and suffering or despair from Job to Jesus and his disciples. Let's explore a few examples.
1. **Job:** Satan approaches God and questions Job's faithfulness is attributed only because God's protection and blessing is on him; take that away and he will curse you. God says you can take it away, and eventually bring physical affliction onto Job. Job loses all his livestock, servants and his son's and daughter's. Job curses the day he was born, but blesses God, the Lord gives and takes away. He is then given boils all over his body, his wife told him to curse God and die, and his 3 friends offer up unhelpful advice, which causes more despair. God eventually answers Job and basically says I am God and you are not; did you create the world, do you understand how it works, do you question me? Job confesses, repents of his ignorance and questioning of God. God restores his fortunes, provides new family, new livestock, money and comfort.
 2. **Moses:** Numbers 11:10-15 (Pressure, Despair, Worry, Stress, Tension)
10 Moses heard the people of every **family wailing** at the entrance to their tents. The Lord became exceedingly angry, **and Moses was troubled**. 11 He asked the Lord, "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the **burden** of all these people **on me**? 12 **Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me** to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their ancestors? 13 Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' 14 **I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me**. 15 If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me—if I have found favor in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin."

Dialogue: We ask the why? Why am I going through this? Why don't you, you are God, I'm not, rather be Dead.

...r, hopelessness, depressed mood.

...closed Hannah's womb, her **rival kept provoking** her in order **to irritate** her. 7 This Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival **provoked** her till **she wept and would not eat**. 8 Her husband Elkanah would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you **downhearted**? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?" 10 **In her deep anguish** Hannah **prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly**. 11 And she made a vow, saying, "Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and **not forget** your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head." (God hears the prayers of Hannah.)

4. **Ruth:** Chapter 1: Ruth lost her husband and only two sons and her daughter n laws she want to send off. (Grief, loss, hopelessness, despair, anger towards God)

11 But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. **Why would you come with me?** Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? 12 Return home, my daughters; **I am too old** to have another husband. **Even if I thought there was still hope for me**—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— 13 would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for

At Least you have, not a good remark

Loss, grief, anger, bitterness, questioning We can't understand Why.

them? No, my daughters. **It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has turned against me!**" 20 "Don't call me Naomi," she told them. **"Call me Mara, (bitter) because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. 21 I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty.** Why call me Naomi? The Lord has **afflicted** me; the Almighty has brought **misfortune upon me."**

5. **David:** Wealth of Examples in the Scriptures. For David, some were caused by his own sin, some from the sin of others.

- **Psalm 6: 6-7:** I am worn out from my groaning. All night long I **flood my bed with weeping** and **drench my couch with tears.** My **eyes grow weak with sorrow,** they **fail** because of all my foes.
 - **Psalm 42: 3** My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, **where is your God? (5) Why my soul are you downcast?** Why so **disturbed** within me? **Put your Hope in God,** for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God.
6. **Jesus:** Psalm 22: Pain, anguish, restless, sorrow, seeking.

v1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? **Why** are you so far from **saving me,** so far from **my cries of anguish?** 2 **My God, I cry out by day,** but you do not answer, by night, but **I find no rest.** But I am a worm and not a man, **scorned** by everyone, **despised** by the people. 7 All who see me **mock me;** they hurl insults, shaking their heads. 8 "He trusts in the Lord," they say, "let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him." v11 Do not be far from me, for **trouble** is near and there is no one to help. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. **My heart has turned to wax;** it has melted within me.

Matthew 26 & Luke 22:44: Jesus prays in Gethsemane

38 Then he said to them, "My soul is very **sorrowful,** even to **death;** remain here, and watch with me." 39 And going a little farther he fell on his face and **prayed,** saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this **cup pass from me;** nevertheless, **not as I will, but as you will."**

Luke 22:44: "And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

1. These are just a few examples of people in the Bible, including our Savior who suffered intensely in unique ways, and what we may call today depression.
2. You're not alone. You're not forgotten, you are not dismissed, rather you have Godly men and woman who have walked through pain just as you are.
3. You also have a great Savior, a man of sorrows, fully God, fully man, tempted and tried in every way we were, yet fully entrusted himself to God and never sinned.
4. You have a great God who can redeem the deepest pain and situation, and desires you pour out your heart to Him. Cry out, seek His face, ask the Why questions, cling to His promises.

Matthew 11:29-30: Take my yoke upon you and **learn from me**, for I am **Gentle** and **humble in heart**, and **you will** find rest for your souls. For **my yoke is easy** and **my burden is light.**"