



Handling and Overcoming Depression

LifeCare Memos – Messages of Compassion

Depression

Although most people know what depression is, or at least what it feels like to be depressed, a definition by Dictionary.com might help us better understand this condition. Depression is defined as “a condition of general emotional dejection and withdrawal; sadness greater and more prolonged than that warranted by any objective reason.”

Depression is Common

Christians are not immune to depression. We live in an imperfect world and bad things do happen to good people. When we get hurt, we often respond by becoming depressed. Even true believers will face periods of darkness and despair. To feel “down in the dumps” is very common and a fact in life. There is nothing unusual or unspiritual about feeling low or “blue” after we have gone through significant events in our lives.

If you struggle with depression, you are not alone. In your depression, like the Psalmist, you need to pour out your heart to a loving, listening God.

“O LORD, the GOD who saves me, day and night I cry out before you” (Psalm 88:1).

GOD listens to you and will guide you safely through the dark valley. The Psalmist also knew that was true when he wrote,

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4).

Guilt

Many people not only suffer from depression but also from feeling guilty about being depressed. Some even feel there is no reason to keep going on. Again, the Bible tells us we are not alone in these feelings. In his grief, Job wanted to die and be freed from his misery.

“Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?” (Job 3:11)

“Why is light given to those in misery, and life to the bitter of soul, to those who long for death that does not come, who search for it more than for hidden treasure, who are filled with gladness and rejoice when they reach the grave?” (Job 3:20-22).

“Job’s desire for death, his craving for the grave, emphatically underscores the extremities of his financial, physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual pain. Only those godly people who have relished release from life’s woes through the grate of death can fully appreciate Job’s mournful wail.” (Walvoord and Zuck)

Keep on Trusting

In spite of Job’s difficulties, **GOD** had a greater plan for him, which he eventually came to realize.

*“Then Job replied to the **LORD**: ‘I know that You can do all things; no plan of Yours can be thwarted’ (Job 42:1-2).*

We also learn of the blessing of **GOD** in the life of Job after he had gone through his period of depression.

*“The **LORD** blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the first” (Job 42:12).*

When the going gets rough, don’t give up; instead trust **GOD** during the difficult times.

“Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him” (Job 13:15).

*“Trust in the **LORD** with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6).*

Know that **GOD** is in control of your life and that He loves you and has a great plan for your life.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the **LORD**, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11)*

God's Goodness

Another help for those struggling with depression is to make a list of all of the goodness of **GOD** in your life and in the lives of your family members. As you meditate on His goodness to you, to your family and to the people of the Bible, it will help you to focus your thoughts on **GOD's** ability to help you, rather than on your inability to help yourself.

A Smile

As you focus on His goodness and love, it will bring to you a measure of joy and trust.

“A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit”
(Proverbs 15:13).

A frowning face repels, but a smile attracts and delights. **GOD** gave us the wonderful gift of a smile to encourage others. If we can remember in the depths of our despair to cheer others with a smile, our problems will lessen and we can find joy in lightening the load of friends and neighbors.

“I never will understand all the good that a simple smile can accomplish.”

(Mother Teresa)

*“When suffering comes into our lives, we should accept it with a smile. This is the greatest gift from **GOD**—to have the courage to accept everything He gives us and asks of us—with a smile.”* (Mother Teresa)

Ask for Help

Sometimes the load becomes too heavy to carry alone. Don't be afraid to ask for help—from your pastor, counselor, physician or other persons whom you trust. **GOD** can speak wisdom through others—we don't walk this journey alone.

“The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is just” (Psalm 37:30).

Above all, know that **GOD** does not forsake or abandon you. He cares for you and will always extend His mercy, love and protection to you when you seek Him.

Bob Dillon, 150507

LifeCare Memos®

When experiencing the stresses of life, people need support. The Psalmist needed that support and found it when he turned to **GOD**. He said, *“Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one **cares for my life**. I cry to you, O **LORD**; I say, ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living’”* (Psalm 142:4-5).

LifeCare Memos are designed as messages of compassion that integrate biblical guidelines for emotional and spiritual well-being. Topics focus on various life-care issues and address them from the perspective of Scripture.