

Dealing with Depression - “This too shall pass”

By Dr. Peter Robbins & Dr. Kevin Downing

[Elijah] came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord.” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” - I Kings 19:4

But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry...”Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than live.” - Jonah 4:1, 3

Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken, “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And then he went outside and wept bitterly. - Matthew 26:75

Misconceptions about Depression

1. Depression is a sin.
2. Depression is a sign that you are far from God.
3. Having a mental illness means you are demon possessed.
4. Good Christians don't get depressed and don't need professional counseling.

What Is Depression?

1. More than 10 million Americans (and many Christians) suffer from depressive mental illness.
2. It is considered the “common cold” of mental illness.
3. Common feelings: sadness, emptiness, loneliness, feelings of failure, gloom, hopelessness, despair, dejection, discouragement, inadequacy, and feeling pressed down.
4. It is a normal reaction to loss that can become complicated and chronic.

Types of Depression

1. Biological:
 - a. A reaction to medication, tumors, hormonal changes, chemical imbalances, postpartum (after childbirth), infections, drug and/or alcohol abuse, glandular disorders.
 - b. Bi-polar (manic depression) is a special kind of biological depression that can be very disabling and almost always requires medication.
 - c. Requires help from a medical doctor and is usually complex.

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2. Dysthymia:
 - a. Often caused by an emotional shock from which someone does not allow oneself to recover.
 - b. Often mild and lasts two years or more.
3. Reactive (Major Depression):
 - a. Reaction to loss (job, loved one, pet, body part, goals, health, energy, independence, etc.).
 - b. Elijah, Jonah and Peter's depressions were reactive.

What can be done about depression?

- a. Determine the cause: Loss? Biological changes? Infection?
- b. Acknowledge the depression and tell someone.
- c. Fight the urge to isolate yourself.
- d. Watch your eating and sleep cycles: eat and sleep when you're supposed to.
- e. Begin exercising – start simply by walking outdoors (check with your doctor).
- f. Watch sugar and caffeine intake.
- g. Stay with your normal routine: get up on time, make your bed, shower, and get dressed.
- h. Look for ways to give to others.
- i. As difficult as it might be, read the scriptures, pray, and praise the Lord.
- j. Do not wait to seek professional Christian help.

“Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God”? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” - Isaiah 40:27-31

If you are struggling with life or are in a painful relationship, then call us for immediate help. We offer several resources to help you in your effort to become a whole and healthy person. Ours is a ministry of reconciliation: reconciling people to others, themselves, and to God. Our committed Christian counselors specialize in treating the difficulties that you face. Call us today and begin your road to healing.

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