

SO, WHY DO I STRUGGLE WITH DEPRESSION?

Depression has many causes & therefore many solutions.

I. It's partly the result of the fall

Rom. 8:19-23; Ecclesiastes 1:2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity.

In one sense, all depression is the result of the fall → at least indirectly.

In the sense we are discussing the fall gives us more or less directly:

1. Genes / genetic make-up

Why should we expect problems here?

2. Biochemistry

The fall not only affect the mind & soul/spirit is also affected the brain.

3. Personality

Personality is not wholly formed → it is also given.

How much is God-given & how much is formed?

Dangers:

1. Seeing this as the only cause & therefore the only solution

2. Using this as an excuse

1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice evermore.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

3. Building an identity around this (instead of around Christ)

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

1 Corinthians 2:2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

How do you introduce yourself? By your problems?

II. It's partly the result of our culture

For Americans struggling with depression we just assume this is the way it always was & the way it is all over the world.

10X increase in last 50 years! The third (2/3 worlds) world countries have a marked lower incidence!

1 John 2:15-17 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Isaiah 30:15 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: **and ye wouldnot.**

“All the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber.”

Pascal

Culture / the world is simply all the unwritten guidelines, manners, traditions & relationships that tell us what it means to be successful, have meaning & enjoy life. They are always unwritten & often unspoken but always omnipresent!

1. A culture of decisions

2. A culture of the individual

American / western culture biggest & only element is the individual: How do I feel? What do I think? What do I want?

It is also a highly mobile!

3. A culture of self-indulgence

4. A culture where happiness (fun, feeling good) is the greatest good / only good

Most common comment in high school year books: "I just want to be happy."

"Happiness is as a butterfly, which, when pursued, is always beyond our grasp, but which if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you."

Nathaniel Hawthorne

5. A culture of entertainment & → therefore boredom

III. It's partly the result of bad / inappropriate thinking

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer. To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Philippians 4:8-9 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

IV. It's partly the result of sinful &/ destructive habits

Happiness will not come magically in a pill. Depression often is connected to other habits & by dealing with those habits, depression gradually flees away.

Rumination; Procrastination; Alcohol use; Time wasting; Dead-end life & jobs; Perfectionism

V. It's partly the result of childhood trauma

Most depressed people suffered with some sort of major trauma during childhood:

- Loss of people/jobs
- Divorce
- Death of parent /sibling
- Protracted illness
- Abuse
- Chaos
- Extreme stress
- Financial catastrophes

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 To every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is* planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew;
 a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
 A time to love, and a time to hate;
 a time of war, and a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time

Depression is not an emotion but a defense against emotions!

What should we learn from this text?

➤ **Emotions are appropriate.**

➤ **Emotions are to be experienced.**

Ecclesiastes 3:4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

Ecclesiastes 3:8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

➤ **Emotions come in a wide variety & are all appropriate.**

Trauma tends to shut down certain emotions & often exaggerates certain others.

Laughter is almost always gone. (This would include silliness, fun & jokes.)

Psychologists call this *anhedonia* → the inability to experience joy.

Weeping, crying & sorrow are not allowed → which tend to become bitterness/anger/rage.

➤ **Emotions are beautiful for a time → His time.**

Emotions pushed down / repressed tend to harm us & leak out in weird places.

Emotions experienced properly tend to come & go as God ordained.

Emotions properly experienced have a natural half-life/shelf-life/expiration date.

➤ **Emotions are not to be avoided or pursued but experienced naturally!**

Life has many stimuli & as we experience life we experience those appropriate emotions. They come naturally & they go away naturally.

VI. It's partly the result of difficulties in relationships

The exact relationship between depression & difficulties in relationships is difficult to establish. However, one thing is for sure, people who struggle with depression struggle in / with relationships.

We need to address at least 3 parts of relationships:

A. Boundaries

Having boundaries simply means knowing where I end & where you begin (or where we end & ye begin)

Knowing what are your rights & responsibilities

This begins for most people early in life. They have their own space, thoughts, proper attachment & detachment, stuff, things, choices, feelings, wants, needs, preferences, beliefs, etc....& these are not controlled or invaded or manipulated or dictated by others.

How might this show up? A person with a problem will invade your personal space!

Ex. 20:1-17 The Bible seems to assume boundaries since there is a responsible "I".

Boundaries must be semi-permeable – so we can allow others in when appropriate or keep them out when this is appropriate to do so.

There are not too loose or too rigid.

We all recognize the classic violation of this in a marriage → the enabler!

1 Timothy 5:22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

2 John 9-5:11 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

One spouse enables the other spouse to be a drunk, lazy, do drugs, steal, lie, cheat....

➤ **By making excuses**

Proverbs 26:16 The sluggard *is* wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.

- **By keeping them out of trouble**
- **By doing their work for them**
- **By not confronting their behavior**
- **By colluding with their sin**
- **By blaming themselves and others**
- **By denying the problem themselves**

Change happens when we become:

1. Aware of self – likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, choices

2. Responsible – for my behavior

3. Proper detachment

Depressed people never understand the distinction between what they can control & what they cannot control.

Everything tends to be their business.

Circle of concern

Circle of influence

B. Assertive behavior

Mt. 5:38-42, Rom. 12:17-21

2 Timothy 4:14-18 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

People with depression are rarely good at being assertive & assertive people are rarely depressed!

Depressives are well-known for their **inability** to assert themselves in a healthy way. They tend to swing to extremes.

This is basically respecting yourself & respecting others. Giving yourself the same respect you give them → in fact, demanding it.

How to become assertive:

- **Know your rights / what's right**
- **Choose a time & deal with the situation**
- **State the problem & how it affects you**
- **State your thoughts & feelings**
- **State what you want (simple, direct, specific)**
- **State the consequences if nothing is done!**

C. Communication

VII. It's partly the result of sin

Psalm 51:3-5 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Psalm 51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice.

Psalm 51:12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit.