

#9 Overcome Depression with Hope

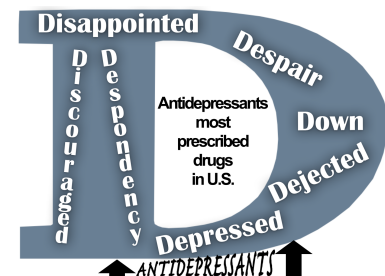


A. Understanding Depression

- Are you looking for help to relieve discouragement or find a cure to help the depressed? Learn how to overcome depression; God will use you to bring His hope into your soul and others!

♦ Depression and Hype in the News

- Widespread. Antidepressant's popularity. Loneliness. Suicide
- Range of depression
- World's interpretation: mental illness - no proof; "Lithium does not correct chemical imbalance for none has been proved to exist" (From excellent resource: *The Christian Counselors Medical Desk Reference*, p. 219)
- God's hope counters depression



- "Those who trust in the LORD are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever" (Ps 125:1).
- "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed!" (Romans 10:13).

♦ Emotions and Depression

- Men and women differ widely because they are different.
- Emotions amplify the inner thinking.
- Emotions and feelings are not the cause of depression but intensify depression's message, causing a person to surrender to the voice of resignation more quickly.



♦ The Need for Biblical Discernment

- Various levels of Christian development

"But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14).

- **First level** is depicted by lack of discernment in children, "We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine..." (Ephesians 4:14).
- **The third level** is the mature, grown-up. Consume solid spiritual food.
- **The second level** is known for (1) Repetition (practice), (2) Senses trained- not reliant on sight but faith, and (3) Discerning good and evil (necessary for a shortcut).

♦ Sources & Signals of Depression

- Broken dreams
- Faith definition: Depression comes from doubting God's ability or willingness to help a person cope with some given circumstance.
- Signals of depression:

- "I can't handle it anymore." "I give up."
- "I'll never be able to do it." "I may as well end it all."
- "I'm a failure." "I feel so alone."

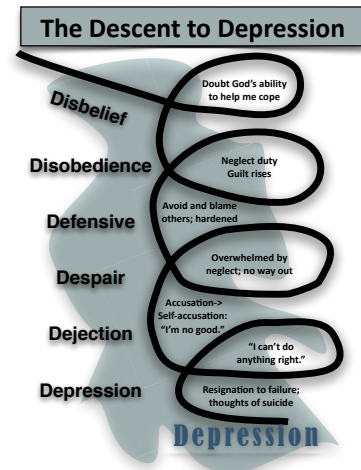
Write your own below:

◆ Depression's Downward Cycle Linked

Depressing thoughts and feelings are not depression but entice us to step into depression by a wrongful (and always doubting) response. Disbelief leads to disobedience (doubting), starting a deepening descent towards depression and death. Each stage reinforces itself with more resignation; you can't do anything about it.

The 6 Ds: The Descent Towards Depression

- **Disbelief:** Disappointment breeds doubt
- **Disobedience:** Neglect duty: guilt rises
- **Defensive:** Avoid and blame others; hardened
- **Despair:** Overwhelmed by neglect, no way out
- **Dejection:** Accusation-> Self-accusation: "I am no good."
- **Depression:** Resignation to failure; thoughts of suicide
 - While despair focuses on impossible circumstances, dejection narrows down to one's personal inability to cope with the situation. Depression is a resignation to defeat.
 - Levels of depression as hope becomes more remote; symptoms worsen.
 - Bipolar disorder (formerly manic depression) reveals the desperate attempts to break from depression's hopelessness and "goes from extreme blueness to extreme elation." (CCMDF, p. 216).



B. Replacing Depression with Hope

◆ Gaining Perspective on Depression

- What do we learn from Jesus? "Learned obedience from through what He suffered" (Heb 5:8). Three lessons from Jesus (Lu 22:42-44):
 1. God's will is always best (Ro 12:2)
 2. God will give grace to endure (1 Cor 10:13)
 3. Success does not always look like success (Ps 129:2-4)
- Faith often goes contrary to sight.
 - If scolded
 - If parenting and ...
 - If you can't get into school
 - If one can't handle a problem
 - If one feels like a failure

◆ Sharpening our Shield (Ephesians 6:16)

• Rebuilding the Foundation

- Must have: (1) confess wrong, (2) face consequences, and (3) be willing to obey.
- Question on how truthful one should be
- Hints on leading people through a prayer of repentance

• Rebuilding Trust

Depression shows that a person has doubted God's willingness or ability to help him/her cope with some aspect of life.

- Study on Moses (Ex 5:22-23)

◆ Two Truths Needed to Heal Depression

Is God able to help? Will He help? These are the two truths that we must believe!

#1 Truth: God's Power (Mat 26:52-53)

Lie: "God is not able to help you."

#2 Truth: God's Care for His people (Job 2:4-7)

- God sometimes allows evil.
- God pays attention to the needs of His people.
- We can trust God for the details.

◆ The Cycle of Deliverance for Depression

The five steps of the cycle of deliverance.

#1 What are you depressed over?

#2 What do you doubt about how God will help you?

- Since God is all-powerful, then He can....
- Since God cares for me, He will, in His time, exert His power and wisdom to help me....

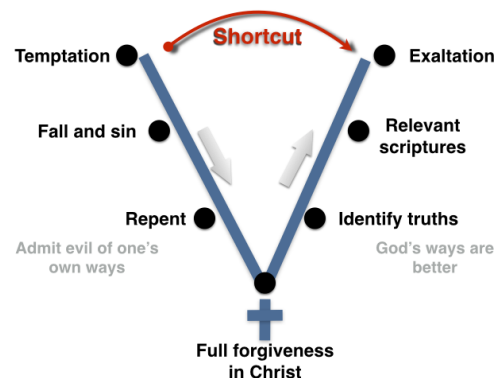
#3 Confess and repent from your doubts

- The evil one wants us to feel poorly about ourselves and give up.
- God wants us to notice how bad we feel (consequence) to recognize that perhaps we have offended the Lord. The Spirit, in contrast to Satan, leads us to the cross, where healing can be found.

#4 In prayer, remind yourself of the truth.

"Though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Pe 1:8).

#5 Take specific steps on what you should do.



✚ Life Application

- Remember, the evil one seeks your worst
- Don't blindly trust the world's solutions
- Obey even when you don't feel like it
- We need to train our senses (perception)
- Trace your responses (5 Steps or 'D' words)

➔Key: God always wants us to trust Him and find Him faithful.

Life Sharing & Exercises

1. Do you tend to get depressed? Is it associated with some event, period, etc?
2. What are the two truths about God we must remember to fight depression? Which one do you have the most trouble believing? Why?
3. Hebrews 5:14 states that the mature believer has his/her senses trained to discern good and evil. Give one example of a place where you could be better trained.

◆ Assignments: Exercises and charts to help understand and overcome depression.

