

Depression: The Family And Depression

A. Family Causes

B. Family Solutions

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INTRODUCTION

We all experience normal emotional sadness to one degree or another.

- Short duration “blues”
- Grief
 - Grief pertains to a specific loss
 - The sense of guilt accompanying grieving will be specific to the loss
- Guilt - forgiven in Christ - lightened at the assurance of the Gospel

Depression is:

A mood disorder.

- Physical
- Emotional
- Spiritual

Almost always in combination

Long-term:

- Daily for at least two weeks

Significant impairment

- Significant distress or impairment

Occupational, social, family-related, other -important areas of functioning One of these two characteristics that must be present daily or nearly every day:

- Depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure

Four of these characteristics (in addition to one of the above two) must be present daily or nearly every day:

- a. Depressed mood (irritability in children and adolescents) most of the day
- b. Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all or almost all activities most of the day.
- c. Significant (+ or - 5% in one month) unplanned weight loss or gain
- d. Insomnia or hypersomnia
- e. Observable psychomotor agitation/retardation
- f. Fatigue/loss of energy
- g. Feelings of excessive guilt
- h. Diminished ability to think or concentrate/indecisiveness
- i. Recurrent thoughts of death (suicide ideation/attempt)

Can you think of people in the Bible who may have been suffering from depression or another mood disorder?

Consider these passages from the Psalms:

Psalm 13:1-6

1 For the director of music. A psalm of David.
How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and every day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?
3 Look on me and answer, O LORD my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death;
4 my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.
5 But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
6 I will sing to the LORD,
for he has been good to me.

Psalm 31:9-16

9 Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress;
my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief.
10 My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning;
my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.
11 Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors;
I am a dread to my friends—those who see me on the street flee from me.
12 I am forgotten by them as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery.
13 For I hear the slander of many; there is terror on every side;
they conspire against me and plot to take my life.
14 But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God."
15 My times are in your hands;
deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.
16 Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.

Psalm 55:1-7

1 For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil of David.
Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea;
2 hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught
3 at the voice of the enemy, at the stares of the wicked;
for they bring down suffering upon me and revile me in their anger.
4 My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death assail me.
5 Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me.
6 I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest—
7 I would flee far away and stay in the desert; Selah

Psalm 69:1-16

1 For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies." Of David.
Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck
2 I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold.

I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me.
3 I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched.
My eyes fail, looking for my God.
4 Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head;
many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me.
I am forced to restore what I did not steal.
5 You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from you.
6 May those who hope in you not be disgraced because of me,
O Lord, the LORD Almighty; may those who seek you
not be put to shame because of me, O God of Israel.
7 For I endure scorn for your sake, and shame covers my face.
8 I am a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my own mother's sons;
9 for zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.
10 When I weep and fast, I must endure scorn;
11 when I put on sackcloth, people make sport of me.
12 Those who sit at the gate mock me, and I am the song of the drunkards.
13 But I pray to you, O LORD, in the time of your favor;
in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation.
14 Rescue me from the mire, do not let me sink;
deliver me from those who hate me, from the deep waters.
15 Do not let the floodwaters engulf me or the depths swallow me up or the pit close its mouth over me.
16 Answer me, O LORD, out of the goodness of your love; in your great mercy turn to me.

Psalm 77:1-4

1 For the director of music. For Jeduthun. Of Asaph. A psalm.
I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me.
2 When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
at night I stretched out untiring hands and my soul refused to be comforted.
3 I remembered you, O God, and I groaned;
I mused, and my spirit grew faint. Selah
4 You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak.

Can a Christian, a Child of God, suffer from depression and still be a believer in God?

- Note from the Psalms of David, quoted above, that being depressed does not mean we have lost our faith
- The sinful nature tempts us to feel hopeless, helpless, worthless,
- The Holy Spirit encourages us to lean on God
- The Holy Spirit encourages us to understand ourselves as God understands us

Romans 7.15-8:1

15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 10 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. 21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this

body of death? 25 Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

OTHER “CAUSES” OF DEPRESSION

- **Biogenetic Predisposition:** Research has not proved that depression is hereditary, Bipolar disorder may be. There is a growing evidence for a “biogenetic predisposition” for depression. This “biogenetic predisposition” needs to be triggered by an environmental stressor. Thus, some people may be more vulnerable to depression than others. (Gender—Depression is more common among women than men.)
- **Biochemical Imbalance:** Neurotransmitters in the brain may either be blocked or overloading at a given synapse (connecting point) between two neurons, resulting in depression symptoms. Antidepressants are used to re-establish a biochemical balance, which allows for normal range of thinking to take place.
- **Physical Disorders may show depression characteristics:** asthma, congestive heart failure, diabetes, endocrine disturbances (e.g., estrogen), hypothyroid, flu, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic pain, vitamin deficiencies. This is not a complete list.
- **Medications and Drug Abuse:** may result in depression characteristics. You should always be sure to ask your pharmacist about any psychological side effects your medications may have.

How may the family system contribute to depression?

Learned helplessness

How to handle stress—learned behavior

Children of alcoholics, drug abusers

Children trapped in poverty

Children of abusive parents

Children of a family in which one spouse is abusing the other

Children who have been disciplined with ridicule

God gives us his tools to fight Depression

1 . Turn to the Lord in Word and Sacrament

2. God’s Word is a Means of Grace, through which the Holy Spirit works

3. Our faith grows and is maintained through God’s Word - Gospel

4. The message of God’s love—is absolutely necessary—in time of depression

5. The remembrance of Baptism—“I am a Child of God” is great comfort.

6. The assurance of receiving the Body and Blood of our Savior in, with, and under the Bread and the Wine for the forgiveness of sins is comforting and strengthening.

Psalm 46:1-11

1 For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamothe. A song.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

5 God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

7 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

8 Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear,
he burns the shields with fire.

10 “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

11 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

Isaiah 43:1-5

1 But now, this is what the LORD says—

she who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

3 For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior,

I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead.

4 Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you,

I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life.

5 Do not be afraid, for I am with you;

I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west.

Romans 8:18-28

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will. 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

1 Peter 1:18-19

18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Psalms 139:13-14

13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Galatians 3:26-27

26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Matthew 26:27-28

27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from It, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

**As we turn to God’s Word and Sacraments
we turn to the Lord for contentment (a trusting reliance on God’s grace)**

We remember and trust:

- That God is in control of all creation and of our life
- That even Satan needs God's permission to do anything to us.
- That when God does give HIS permission to Satan, God also sets limits and provides "a way out."
- That we will not always understand God's plan and purpose for us at this time
- That contentment comes with:
 - Acknowledging God's control
 - Letting go of our perception that other people or conditions have control
 - Relying and depending on God's grace and power in confident trust

Job 1:9-12,21-22

9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. 10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." 12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

21 ...and [Job] said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." 22 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

Job 2:4-6

4 "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. 5 But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face." 6 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

Luke 22:31-32

31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

John 19:10-11

10 "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

Proverbs 19:21

21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

Proverbs 16:9

9 In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.

Proverbs 20:24

24 A man's steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand his own way?

Isaiah 55:8-9

8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

2 Corinthians 1:8-10

8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

As a result of our faith and trust in God's grace and forgiveness and power and love for us, we turn to the Lord in Prayer.

We note that we have placed prayer third on the list and not first.

- Prayer is *not* a means of Grace. It is not a source of faith.
- Prayer is a fruit of faith and an exercise of faith
- True prayer relies on, focuses on, hopes in the Lord

Hebrews 10:22-23

22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Psalm 50:15

15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.”

2 Corinthians 1:10-11

10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11 as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

We also turn to fellow Christians

We note that:

- Isolation and withdrawal are characteristic of depression
- The sinful nature uses this to keep us from finding comfort and encouragement when we most need it
- “church faces” may lead us to think we are the only depressed people around
- the sinful nature uses this to get us to think that we shouldn't burden others with our problems, or that no one wants to hear about our problems.

Romans 12:15

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

1 Corinthians 12:25-26

25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Hebrews 10:24-25

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Eleven ways to stay depressed

1. Dwell on past mistakes and failures
2. Set unrealistic expectations for yourself and others
3. Constantly compare yourself with others
4. Avoid all involvement and responsibility
5. Remain negative and problem oriented
6. Allow yourself to be controlled by others and by circumstances
7. Internalize and personalize the problems of others
8. Don't forgive yourself for anything

9. Seek isolation and avoid contact with those who care about you
10. Do everything you can to please others (need for approval)
11. Base your worth as a person on external things.

(With thanks to Pastor Brian Terrell, Child of God Counseling)

The family is given by God as a place of nurture, support, and loving help.

Ephesians 6:4

4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

1 Timothy 5:8

8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

(Adapted from Curt Lyon, Counseling at the Cross)

Use the Christ crucified for all—or me—approach (baby steps to the cross)

Friend: You tell me that you cannot forgive yourself because of the way that you treated your deceased husband. Troubled: Yes. Now that he is dead I can't even tell him that I'm sorry for all the nasty things I said just before he had his heart attack. I never really got to talk to him.

F. He was a baptized Christian who loved the Word of God all of his life. God has taken him to heaven.

T. Yes, I know that. God loved him and he loved God.

F. You know that Jesus loves him and forgives him and took him to heaven. Let me assure you about the same thing. Jesus loves you and forgives you and will some day take, you to heaven.

T. I know that. I know that Jesus says that he forgives me. I just don't know how to forgive myself

F. If Jesus forgives you, who are you not to forgive yourself. Let me take you on a walk to the cross. We will take some baby steps so be patient with me. Tell me what happened after they sentenced Jesus to die.

T. They made him carry his cross on the way to Golgotha.

F. For the sins of how many people did he carry his cross?

T. For the sins of all people,

F. If it is for all, does that include you?

T. Yes.

F. Does it also include your sin of being mean to your husband just before he died?

T. Yes.

You repeat the sequence (between the lines) for the nails, the crown of thorns, the mocking, the pain of having his disciples run away, the whipping, the resurrection, etc.

Finally you say,

F. Can you tell me how much Jesus has done for you and for your sin of being so mean to your husband just before he died?

T. Yes, I get the picture. Jesus died to pay for all sins and mine aren't left out. He paid for all of my sins too?

F. Tell me how you feel about Jesus' great love for you.

Appendix A

Ten Top Irrational Beliefs (A. Ellis)

A. I MUST have the love and approval of every person I consider significant.

B. I MUST prove to be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving.

C. When people act obnoxiously and unfairly, I SHOULD blame and condemn them, and see them as bad, wicked, or rotten individuals.

D. I MUST view things as awful, terrible, horrible, and catastrophic, when I get seriously frustrated, treated unfairly, or rejected.

E. Emotional misery comes from external pressure, and I have little ability to control or change my feelings-

- F. If something seems dangerous or fearsome, I **MUST** preoccupy myself with it, and make myself anxious about it.
- G. I can more easily avoid facing many life difficulties and responsibilities than undertake more rewarding forms of self-discipline.
- H. My past remains all important, and, because something once strongly influenced my life, it **MUST** continue to determine my feelings and behavior today.
- I. People and things **SHOULD** turn out better than they do, and I **MUST** view it as awful and horrible, if I do not find good solutions to life's grim realities.
- J. I can achieve maximum human happiness by inertia and inaction, or by passively and uncommittedly "enjoying myself."

ABCs to Rational Thinking

A activating event

B belief (irrational; must, should, ought)

C consequence (emotional)

D dispute

1. what truth is in the belief?

2. what do the facts say?

E effective new belief