

Overcoming Depression  
His Presence Church  
January 14, 2024  
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Text: Matthew 11:28-29 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

J17 Ministries info ([www.J17Ministries.org](http://www.J17Ministries.org))

### Testimony

#### Purposes:

1. remove some of the shame that often accompanies the topic, esp for believers
2. you know you're not alone if you or a family member suffers with it
3. provide some insight for those who love someone battling with depression

Actionable items and prayer points coming!

#### My story:

- family history both generations
- first diagnosis *after* my first sabbatical – biochemical and/or genetic component
  - enemy piles on
  - Does God heal by medicine or miracles? Yes
- mine was mild compared to some; remained functional
- describe
  - pit (20x in Psalms alone)
    - Psalm 40:2 He lifted me out of the **slimy** pit, out of the **mud and mire**; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.
    - Psalm 69:15 Do not let the **floodwaters engulf** me or the **depths swallow me** up or the pit close its mouth over me.
    - Psalm 88:4 I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am like one **without strength**.
    - Psalm 88:6 You have put me in the lowest pit, in the **darkest** depths. (for others it can be suicidal)
  - ANTS – automatic negative thoughts
  - Wet blanket – makes everything harder, less enjoyable; worn out by end of day
  - Guilt over sin; perpetual guilt only deepens depression
- sought prayer and took meds repeatedly over decades
- worsened in recent years
  - pandemic
  - kids (unanswered prayers) Ps 143:7 Answer me quickly, Lord; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me or I will be like those who go down to the pit.
  - family of origin wounds – conflict, sexual sin

- poor choices I made
  - gave my best energy to ministry
  - didn't exercise as much as would have been helpful
  - didn't pay as much attention to nutrition as would have been helpful
  - sought out adrenaline rushes and dopamine hits
    - sins of omission and commission
    - idolatry from overemphasizing something good; disobedience/rebellion from something not good in any amount
  - gave up hope that it would ever change; made peace with it
  - spiritual life suffered and often was limited to going through the motions (rereading last year's journal each day this year)
- impact on wife and family
- healing
  - new doctor as a result of prayer – Body of Christ led me to him
  - new category of meds that got me over the hump
  - honesty with pastors at the April prayer summit
  - confronted a persistent sin issue, got more help
  - spiritual tools:
    - Jamie Winship, *Living Fearless*
    - Paul Miller, *A Praying Life*
    - 12 step group
    - more time with the Lord through prayer journaling, thanksgiving, Bible, music and worship, devotional and prayer readings
    - increased prayer with others – physical as well as mental healing
  - Transformation affecting more and more areas
    - Rocky Point with kids,
    - marital energy and priority,
    - better vision and productivity in ministry,
    - more other-focused than before,
    - prayer life strongest ever
    - greater trust and dependence on Jesus
    - Greater courage to step into conflict and challenging situations
    - The Lord is my Shepherd
  - Still learning new neuropathways – stress associated with change; OCD behaviors;

#### Statistics (US)

- 50,000 suicides (132/day) in 2021
- 1.7 million suicide attempts in 2021 (4657/day)
- 12.3 million seriously considered suicide (33699/day)
- > 1/3 high school girls seriously considered suicide
- More American soldiers die each year from suicide than war
- Highest age group – over 65
- Adolescent depression doubled between 2009-2019 (*before* pandemic)
- 29% of Americans diagnosed with depression at some point

Psalm 9:2,9 I will be filled with joy because of You. I will sing praises to Your name, O Most High. The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

### What can we do?

- Never give up hope! That's the voice of the enemy. Jenn Johnson song – "Hold on, don't give in..."
  - Matthew 11:28-29 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
- Findinghopeindepression.com (Jamie Winship video series)
- Attack it from all three fronts: biochemical, spiritual, and volitional.
- Be honest and transparent – with self, with others, and with God.
  - "Truth is the beginning of freedom" – Winship
  - John 8:31-36
- Rely on others to help reveal your blindspots – be proactive
  - ANTs
  - Sin issues
- Don't isolate and go it alone. That's the strategy of the enemy.
  - Humility/transparency
- "I trust You."
  - Sarah Young, *Jesus Calling* 1/9. Healing clearly aligns with God's will, so persevere. Don't give up. Overcome obstacles. But God exercises His sovereignty with respect to timing. His ways aren't ours.
- Even after healing, neuropathways remain and have to be retrained. It's an aspect of discipleship.

Prayer for those battling depression

Prayer for those helping someone with depression