

RESCUE

RESCUE, PART 1: DEPRESSION

Who can I talk to about depression? I've asked this. Maybe you're asking this. Let's talk about depression. Sound okay? No? No one starts a conversation like that, but maybe we should. Maybe the stigma only remains because we choose to keep it hush-hush. And unfortunately for too long, the church has remained silent—or even worse—thrown stones with those struggling with depression, anxiety, or thoughts of suicide. But no longer. Today, let's choose to talk about depression even if it feels uncomfortable at first.

BIG IDEA: I matter most when I make what matters most the center of my life.

This week, Pastor Chris discusses the number one health problem in the world—depression. While we show grace and empathy for those who struggle with physical illness, a stigma tends to remain when it comes to talking about depression. This stigma often prevents those suffering from depression from receiving the help they need.

“Depression is like being trapped in a snow globe. I swim at first, wanting to get out and fight. I hear people tapping on the outside of the glass trying to free me. But, eventually the cold and numbness take over. The taps faint as I drift toward the bottom, cold and empty. I can't lift my feet to trudge through the snow and water. Who can I talk to about depression? No one. I'll stay alone.”

Pastor Chris and Psychologist Jenn Menn shares how we can fight depression from a biblical standpoint and how important it is to understand that our illness is not our identity. ***It's okay to not be okay—sickness is not a sin.***

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Chris said that the church has remained silent over the issue of mental health and depression. Why do you think the Christian Church has shied away from this topic? By not talking about it, what has this communicated to people who struggle with depression?
2. Chris and Jenn mentioned 4 causes for depression: *worldview, sin, life circumstances, and health*. In your opinion, which one of these do you think causes depression the most people today?
3. Chris mentioned that when you take God out of the picture, no hope exists. *With your Bible or Bible App, read Ephesians 2:11-12.*

Don't forget that you used to be outsiders. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You lived in this world without God and without hope.
Ephesians 2:11-12 (NLT)

4. Paul describes our situation without Jesus. What was our condition? Why does Paul begin these verses with the reminder, “Do not forget?”
5. *With your Bible or Bible App, read Psalm 143:3-4, 7.*

My enemy has chased me. He has knocked me to the ground and forces me to live in darkness like those in the grave. I am losing all hope; I am paralyzed with fear. Come quickly, Lord, and answer me, for my depression deepens. Don't turn away from me, or I will die.
Psalm 143:3-4, 7 (NLT)

6. How free is David to express his true feelings to God? What is painful about the immediate circumstances? (v. 4)
7. Chris said, “Depression is the inability to construct a future.” Why was David struggling constructing his future, even though he knew that God had anointed him to be the next king of Israel?
8. The second reason we said can cause depression is *sin*. *Sins that we have done, and sins done against us*. Let's tackle the first one—*sins that we have done*. Jenn said that many times, we confuse depression with guilt. What do you think she means by that?

9. Look at the story of Jonah. His emotions were all over the place because he failed to obey God. He asked God twice to kill him, and even told the sailors to throw him overboard so he could die. Have you ever experienced guilt and shame from doing what you know is wrong? If you can, talk about it.
10. What's the fix and the way out of *sins that we have done*?
11. Chris said, "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay." How have you seen this practically played out in people's lives?
12. Now let's look at *sins done against us*. Jenn mentioned that, "When people hurt us, it is supposed to hurt. Forgiveness makes the hurt stop."
13. *With your Bible or Bible App, read Ephesians 4:32.*

Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.
Ephesians 4:32 (NLT)

14. Why is it so hard to forgive other people? What makes it easier to forgive other people in Ephesians 4:32? *Remember, forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling!*
15. The third cause of depression is *life and circumstances*. Jenn mentioned that anything that changes in life—in our normal rhythms—can cause depression: birth of a baby, moving, losing a job, losing a loved one, grief, and war. Have you ever struggled with any of these life circumstances? What about any others?
16. What loss have you failed to grieve? How has it affected you physically, emotionally, and spiritually?
17. How do you know when it is time to finish grieving?
18. What does it look like practically to allow others to grieve and support them in their time of loss?
19. *With your Bible or Bible App, read Habakkuk chapters 1-2. Here are a few excerpts...*

Why do I call for help, but God, you do not listen! "Violence is everywhere!" I cry, but you do not come to save. Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.
Habakkuk 1:2-3 (NLT)

20. Has there been a season you ruminated on bitterness, despair, or fear and allowed it to shape your perspective? What healthy ways did you use to resolve this? What unhealthy ways did you try? How would you handle it now?
21. The fourth cause for depression is *health reasons*. What areas in your life could be made better by getting physically or spiritually healthier or by drawing closer to others?
22. Jenn mentioned 6 things that you should do when you have depression: *Tell somebody, get a physical, Read the Bible, Journal what you're grateful for, exercise, and worship.* *With your Bible or Bible App, read Habakkuk chapter 3. Here are a few excerpts...*

A Prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, set to wild, enthusiastic, and triumphal music. I will wait quietly for the coming day when disaster will strike the people who invade us.
Habakkuk 3:1, 16

In the face of an apparently hopeless situation, Habakkuk still had this to say about God:

Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the LORD! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!
Habakkuk 3:17-18

23. Chris said, "When you focus on big God, problems become small." How have you seen worship change your attitude and perspective when it comes to your problems?
24. Has there been a time in your life when God gave you joy even though your circumstances appeared hopeless?
25. Habakkuk moved from hopelessness to joy over the 3 chapters of this book. In what areas of your life would you like God to take you from hopelessness to joy?

MOVING FORWARD

Ask God to reveal ways in which you can grow more spiritually healthy. Ask Him to show you any things you should reduce or remove from your life that have become sources of destruction, fear, or depression. Identify people with whom you can share your life. If you have no one you can talk to, search out new relationships in which you can take off the mask and share what's really going on. Small Groups are a great way to meet people with whom you can share.