



Suicide, Anxiety, & Depression

(How the Gospel Changes Everything)

Part 1

Over the last decade, studies have shown a marked increase (40-60%) in **depression** among Americans. This large increase is much higher than previous generations, who endured world wars, major economic depressions, and huge social upheavals. This seems to tell us that something is out of whack in our lives. One study recently showed that **1 in 8** younger Americans had experienced a “**major depressive episode**” in their short lives. These episodes included: *intense feelings and/or desires of isolation, the inability to get out of bed, the inability to feel “normal”, good, or wanted, substance abuse and dependency, unhealthy relationships, and self-harm*. Many are now saying we are experiencing a **mental health crisis** like never before. So, what is at the root of this trend? Why are people so depressed? Why, in a country with so much freedom and blessings, are people in so much pain? Are therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists the only ones who can address such problems? Is there spiritual causality, and therefore a spiritual cure, for such physical conditions?

Depression: Job 3:1-26. “I wish I’d never been born!”

- Job was: blameless & upright, feared God, & shunned evil. What a **compliment!**
- Job had it **all**: 7 sons, 3 daughters, 1,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yokes of oxen, 500 donkeys. Just think what it took to feed them all. Think of the number of servants and shepherds it took to tend to these animals. Can you imagine the sheer space it took to house those animals, the land needed to sustain them?
- Job is called the “*greatest man*” (most well-known, blessed, wealthy) among the people of the East.
- Job’s sons took turns throwing large, opulent feasts, with their sisters in tow.
- Job seems aware that these feasts were **decadent** in nature, so he regularly sacrificed burnt offerings to God on their behalf & had his children purified.
- Now, Satan himself, the **accuser** of the **brethren**, comes to **accuse** Job. Before he begins to tempt and try Job, he first **accuses** God.

- **Job 1:9; “Does Job fear God for nothing?”** Satan is accusing God of a transactional relationship with Job & also charges God with playing & picking favorites. Satan is challenging the **character** and **justice** of God.
- In another sense, Satan is saying Job is using God for blessings.
- We see that God allows Satan to tempt, try, and test Job, not out of a vindictive nature, but out of knowing what is best for Job and for God’s greater glory.
- By **chapter 3**, Job has lost almost everything, including his wealth, his possessions, most of his family, and his health.
- By **Job 3:1**, Job is in the depths of despair & in deep depression as he curses the day of his birth. Just consider what he says in this chapter: *I hate the day I was born, I wish I were never born, I wish the date itself were removed from the calendar, I wish that God would care nothing for that day, & that the day would perish in darkness & deep shadow.* Sounds depressing, right?
- Job then turns to contemplative questions:
 - **Why was I ever conceived?**
 - **Why wasn’t I stillborn?**
 - **Why didn’t I die in delivery?**
 - **Why did someone assist my mother in her birth (doctor/midwife)?**
 - **Why did my mother nurse me?**
 - **Why couldn’t I have rested in the peace of death?**
 - **Why wasn’t I aborted?**
 - **Why was I not hidden in the ground?**
- Job then laments that the station of mankind in **verses 20-22**:
 - **Why is light and life given to those who want to die?**
 - **Why do those who seek death never find it?**
 - **Why is life given to man?**
 - **Why has God hedged me in without giving me the “why”?**
- Finally, Job is exasperated and describes his depressive state in **verses 24-26**:
 - ***“For my sighing comes instead of my bread, and my groanings are poured out like water. For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, but trouble comes.”***
- **Depression** is a real problem, but just taking medication to be less depressed is not a cure; it’s a Band-Aid. If you try and ignore it, it’ll likely get worse.
- While Job was in pain, his first response was to worship God & be thankful:
 - **Job 1:20; “Then he fell to the ground in worship.”**
 - **Job 2:10b; “Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”**
 - **Job 42:3b; “Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful (beyond) for me to know.”**
 - **Job 42:5-6; “My ears had heard of You, but now my eyes have seen You. Therefore, I despise myself in dust and ashes.”**



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