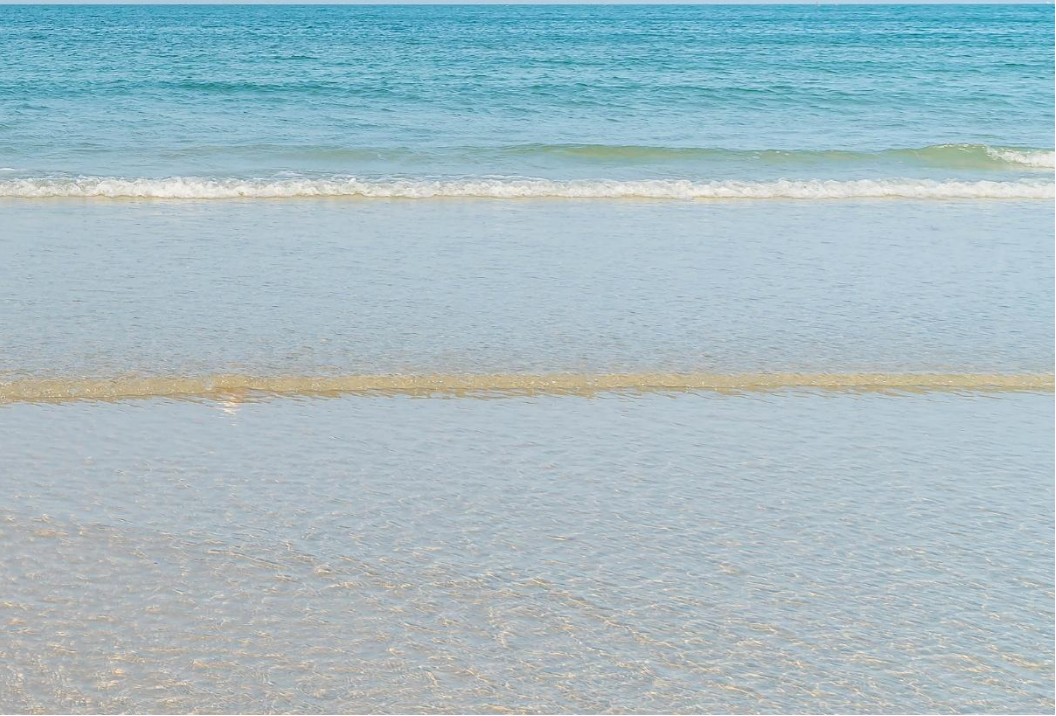


Depression

Fragile

is ***Not***

a ***Flaw***



Style of writing!

I love bullet points!

Don't talk me to death.

Give me your bottom line first and then make your explanation brief.
That is why:

- My table of contents gives the main subjects!
- The Intro. briefly answers each question in the booklet.
- The chapters are brief studies, filling in each point.

Table of Contents

1. It was **Hard** for me to **Face** the **Truth** that
"Fragile is Not a Flaw"!
2. The **First Three Steps** to Victory.
3. A few final thoughts on the **Physical Factors** of
Depression.



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1. It was **Hard** for me to **Face** the **Truth** that
“Fragile is Not a Flaw”!

This took me 40 years to admit and another 10-20 years to apply. My hope is that my long journey may shorten your journey.

(Expanded study in chap. 1 – pg. 1)

2. The **First Three Steps** to Victory.

1. Learn to ONLY Invest Yourself in People Who Want to Change!
2. Choose your friends and mentors carefully.
3. Patiently find a strategy that fits your soul.

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3. A few final thoughts on the **Physical Factors** of
Depression.

1. Medication
2. Exercise
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4. The Manganese Release through Tears

(Expanded study in chap. 3 – pg. 9)

Chap. 1

It was **Hard** for me to **Face** the **Truth** that
“Fragile is Not a Flaw”!

*Is. 53:4 Surely He **Carried** our **Sorrows***

Is. 53:4 is where we begin.

This truth changes everything — not just for those who are “clinically depressed” but for anyone who’s ever been discouraged, weary, overwhelmed, sad, or frustrated.

Depression has many faces.

It’s not always about a hospital stay or a diagnosis.

Sometimes it’s a single day when you just can’t get out of bed.

Sometimes it’s an invisible heaviness — when you smile on the outside but feel hopeless inside.

This message is for you.

The Danger of Wishing you were Different!

Before we go further, I need you to hear this — and hear it deeply.

If you’ve ever said, “**I wish I didn’t feel things so deeply,**” then you have unknowingly renounced a gift from God.

When you say, “I wish I didn’t care so much... I wish it didn’t hurt like this... I wish I were tougher,” you’re saying to your Creator, “You made me wrong.”

*Rom. 9:20 “Will the created thing say to the Creator,
‘Why did You make me like this?’”*

This is the violin saying, “I wish I were a hammer.”

But the violin was never meant to smash rocks.

It was meant to make music.

The Fragile Nature of Your Gifts

Some people are **sledgehammers** — strong, steady, unbothered. They can take hits, bounce back fast, and sleep well at night. They break through obstacles, build things, and move on. They're wonderful people — the world needs them.

But others are **violins** — exquisitely crafted, delicate, and precise. They feel every vibration. They sense every note in a room. They are capable of beauty that a hammer could never imagine — but they also break more easily.

If a violin tries to act like a hammer, it shatters.

And that's what many have been doing their entire lives.

Have you been apologizing for how deeply you feel?
Have you been trying to toughen up, to harden over, to fit in a world of hammers?

God never asked you to be hard — He asked you to be **holy**.

He **didn't ask** you to **stop feeling** — He asked you to **feel for** Him.

John's Story: The Collapse of the Violin

Twice in my life, I've had **total breakdowns**.

One at **nineteen**. One at **thirty-eight**.

The second one terrified me because I had a wife, kids, and a church. I didn't know if I would ever recover — or if my family would be left fatherless.

For almost four months, I was completely incapacitated.

In those 19 years between the two breakdowns, I had over one hundred smaller episodes — days when I could not get out of bed. On those days I simply felt hopeless.

Sometimes I would crawl under the bed and stay there all day. It felt like a coffin. If you've never been there, it's hard to explain. Hopelessness is like suffocating from the inside.

You can live without faith.

You can even live without love.

But no one can live without hope.

When I Finally Quit Fighting How God Made Me

When I was 38, I finally surrendered. I stopped fighting the way God made me. I stopped apologizing for being sensitive. I stopped resenting my fragility.

Something miraculous happened. Within two years, the pain was cut in half, and the joy doubled. I learned to guard the gift.

Please understand that I **still often feel massive amounts** of pain. I still care deeply and often try too hard to help or to do right.

However, I now know how to **direct** that **pain** and to let the Lord use that pain. I am no longer embarrassed or ashamed of the pain I feel. I realize that this pain is a gift from Jesus. He has something to teach me every time I feel massive pain.

Even better, my **joy** is now a hundred times stronger than it's ever been.

And the secret wasn't toughness — it was **tenderness**.

*Prov. 4:23 Above all else, **guard** your heart for out of it flows the **issues of life**.*

Boasting in Weakness

The world boasts in strength. But in God's kingdom, **power** comes through **weakness**.

If you keep **hiding** your fragility, you'll keep **missing** His **power**.

If you keep **pretending** to be strong, you'll keep living **small**.

But if you can say, "Lord, this is how You made me — teach me to live as You designed," then your weaknesses become the doorway for God's power.

*II Cor. 12:9-10 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.*

Confession and Freedom

I eventually sat down with my wife and my pastoral team and told them the truth.

I said, “I **hate to travel**. It wrecks me. Different beds, different food, different toothpastes, it takes me weeks to recover.

I **can’t handle** face-to-face meetings with angry, critical people. I can deal with them by email, because I can pray between paragraphs. But in person, I absorb every ounce of their pain and rage — and it destroys me.”

They looked at me, smiled, and said, “**Then don’t.**”

They **protected** me.

And my ministry, marriage, and mind began to get healthy.

I told them,

- “I **can’t handle** financial stress.
- I **can’t handle** chaos.
- I **can’t handle** movies or television — not because I’m legalistic, but because I feel everything too much. I can watch one movie, and for two weeks I’ll grieve for the people in it.”

They **laughed**, but they **understood**.

They guarded me — and I learned to guard myself.

That’s when **joy returned**. Because the very thing that used to break me — my sensitivity — became the source of my deepest worship.

- I pray with more power.
- I feel love with greater depth.
- I worship with higher freedom.
- I feel God’s presence constantly.

Yes, **part** of this gift is **pain**.

But the other part is **beauty** — the ability to feel love, grace, compassion, and worship at full volume.

The First Three Steps to Victory.

1. Learn to **ONLY** Invest Yourself in People who Want to Change!

Embracing your fragile gift is **NOT** a decision to be more self-centered. It is a decision to be **MORE available** to serve and bless others by **carefully guarding** your gift.

*Prov. 21:20 In the **house** of the **wise** are **stores** of **choice food** and **oil**, but a **foolish** man devours **all** he has.*

Our choicest food and oil are our **Time** and **Caring**. When you are a giving person who cares deeply, people will be drawn to you. You may bless and be kind to everyone, but you **Only** want to **INVEST** yourself in those who **Want** to **CHANGE**.

As a side note, you may want to study the 3 booklets on “**Humility**”, “**Expectations**” & “**Co-dependency**” to see how important this principle is to Jesus.

Some people only want attention and do not want to change. They will drain you quickly and you will have nothing left to give to the hungry heart who really wants to change.

Others are desperate to change and are willing to work hard. The **TEST** is **ALWAYS Homework**. People who **want** to **change**, are **EAGER** to receive assignments and to work hard.

Takers **HATE homework** and will complain bitterly that they are not receiving enough attention.

This principle of only investing yourself in people who want to change is for **EVERYONE**.

However, it is **LIFE** or **DEATH** for **Fragile** souls.

*Gal. 6:2 **Carry each other's** burdens*
*Gal. 6:5 Each one should **carry their own load***

Galatians 6 teaches this principle so clearly in vs. 2 & 5. Put together these verses tell us to **NEVER** work hard to help someone **more** than that person is willing to **work hard** to **help themselves**.

2. Choose your friends and mentors carefully.

I foolishly chose friends who liked to criticize me. When things went wrong these “Friends” quickly blamed me and pointed out my flaws.

God’s Word taught me to more carefully choose my friends.

In II Corinthians, Paul stated that he BELIEVED the BEST about the Corinthians – even though some of them had previously shown poor attitudes. II Cor. 2:3.

Paul CHOSE to “BELIEVE the BEST” about the Corinthians.

However, he also was honest with them that he **expected them** to treat **him** as **well** as **he treated them**.

*II Cor. 6:11-13 We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and **opened wide** our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a **fair exchange**—I speak as to my children—**open wide your hearts also**.*

Being **Fragile** does **NOT** mean being **Foolish**!

I will always choose to “*Believe the Best*” about my friends, but I have learned to be clear in my expectations and to choose friends who also “*Believe the Best*” about me in tough situations.

When you are weary, discouraged, or overwhelmed, the people closest to you will either **magnify** your **pain** or **multiply** your **healing**.

This point of “**Safety**” is often the **turning point** for a fragile soul.

*Prov. 13:20 He who **walks** with the **wise** grows **wise**, but a **companion of fools** suffers **harm**.*



3. Patiently find a strategy that fits your soul.

Psalm 91 is about finding our REFUGE when hurting. I love verse

*Ps. 91:4 He will **cover** you with his **FEATHERS**
and under His wings you will find **REFUGE**.*

Feathers Fit

I love that imagery because feathers are some of the **softest** and **strongest** material in all of creation. They're **flexible**, **intricate**, and **custom-shaped** to each bird. Hundreds of strands woven together to fit perfectly. That's how **God's strategies** work. They're not one-size-fits-all. They're **custom-tailored** to your soul.

I like to say it like this: "You have to find your feathers."

Every fragile person needs to patiently find strategies that fit their soul — not someone else's.



When you're **discouraged** or **depressed**, people love to offer advice. And often, that **advice** will either **heal** you or **crush** you — depending on whether it fits.

- If someone offers a word, a plan, or a challenge that fits your soul, **hope lights up** in your **eyes**.
- If it doesn't, your eyes **dim** with **despair**.

Even if the advice is **biblical**, if it's the wrong **timing** or **doesn't fit** your soul, it becomes **condemnation** instead of **comfort**.

OPTIONS equals HOPE!

When you give someone options, you give people **dignity**. You give them **honor**. You give them **choice**. When you're helping a discouraged person — or helping yourself — the goal isn't to demand one rigid solution. It's to explore the feathers: the strategies that might fit your unique soul.

The Big Ten Areas

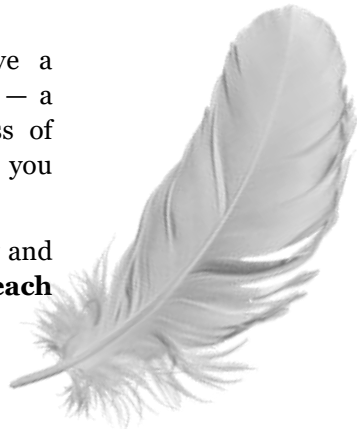
There are ten main areas where God tailors feathers for every person — ten categories of life where strategy must fit who you are.

They are:

1. **Physical** – your body, rest, hormones, sleep, exercise, and chemical balance.
2. **Financial** – how you manage money and stress.
3. **Time** – how you prioritize and rest.
4. **Relationships** – marriage, parenting, friendships, and communication.
5. **Helping Others** – finding freedom in serving while requiring those you serve to work hard.
6. **Past Failures** – how you process guilt, receive forgiveness and learn from your past.
7. **Spiritual Life** – daily rhythms of prayer, worship, and the Word.
8. **Purpose** – discovering and using your God-given gifts.
9. **Boundaries** – learning how and when to say yes and no.
10. **The Church Family** – connecting deeply with others who carry your burdens.

Each of these ten areas have a thousand possible applications — a thousand feathers. The process of finding which feather best fits you can take years.

The great news is that your **joy** and **confidence** will **grow** with **each feather**.



Chap. 3

A few final thoughts on the **Physical** Factors of Depression.

Medication

If you criticize a person for using medication to restore chemical balance, you are being unkind to the weakest of the weak.

Don't yell from afar to someone drowning in an ocean of despair and tell them to let go of their life preserver because "real faith" doesn't need help. That's not faith — that's cruelty.

I have had seasons of taking medical anti-depressants and they were a huge help to me.

*Ja. 1:17 **Every** good and perfect **gift** is **from above!***

Medicine isn't a moral issue — it's a mercy issue.

God gives different gifts — some perfect (like salvation), some good (like medicine). Both come from His hand.

Exercise

Exercise is one of the most powerful anti-depressants.

I have worked with hundreds of individuals to build healthier exercise habits. In **EVERY** case, I emphasize that you absolutely **Must ENJOY** the exercise, or it will never be consistent. Please be patient and kind to yourself and keep trying different models of exercise until you find the ones you ENJOY the most.

Sleep

With sleep, fragile people often need MORE sleep. I personally need about 9 hours of sleep a night to function at full wattage.

I greatly hurt for those who struggle to get a good night's sleep. It can be so discouraging and a major factor in depression. Some take years to find the tools that give them consistent sleep.

Please use the many medical and practical tips available on the internet to find the methods that most help you sleep well. Please also be patient if it takes extended time to find solutions.

The Manganese Release through Tears

When you cry, your **tears** contain **thirty** times the normal level of manganese in your body.

Manganese is a trace element, and just one **one-hundredth of one percent** imbalance can cause **depression**.

When you cry, you're literally releasing chemicals that your body needs to heal your depression.

God made your tears to be a form of therapy.

Conclusion

Is. 53:3 says of Jesus that he was:

*Is. 53:3 A man of **SORROWS** and
familiar with **SUFFERING***

You have been blessed to be like Jesus in feeling pain so deeply.

This is a limp that you may carry all of your life, but it does **NOT** have to **cripple** you.

It is meant to guide you to be **healthier**, more **joyful** and more **effective** in **helping others**.

We also have 100+ booklet studies coming out.

Here is a sample list of 10 of our booklets.

1. Bible Reading:

The Secrets to Sweetness in God's Word!

This study shows how a One Year Bible enables you to cover the entire Bible in one year. In addition, it shows how hunger-based reading is so different from performance-based reading.

2. The Blood of Jesus:

The Most Powerful Words Ever Spoken

This study teaches us to daily live with a clean heart and to keep short accounts when we stumble.

3. Bosses - What They Wish You Knew

This study gives us a bigger picture of the pressures and responsibilities that are carried by every boss.

4. Christianity – the ONLY Logical Religion

This study compares Christianity to all other religions and shows why only Christianity answers the hard questions.

5. Conflicts – How to Remove All Strife from My Life!

The Bible teaches that truth is a belt, and our perspective is a belt loop.

6. The Cross – The Story of the Last 24 Hours

This study combines all four gospels to examine the last 24 hours and what happened on the cross.

7. Grace – the Power to WANT to do Right!

This study teaches us to release God's Grace constantly so that God can change our hearts and give us HIS desires.

8. Marriage – 3 Bottom Lines!

Six times the Bible says that the purpose of Marriage is for the two to become one.

9. Science & the Bible – How They Agree

Many modern scientific breakthroughs were predicted and practiced in the Bible thousands of years ago.

10. Test Yourself:

Do your Life Goals bring you LIFE?

Finish the sentence “*I Want ...*” and see what you get.

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