

1. The Problem of Depression.

The reality of depression. Twin Truths of the Bible; Man’s Responsibility and God’s Sovereignty.

The trouble for us is closing the distance on understanding man’s responsibility and God’s Sovereignty.

That gap of understanding, which the Bible often refers to as faith or trust, leaves some people grasping at straws with regard to mental stability.

SIG-E-CAPS, DSM-5, Psychiatrists, Secular Depression Assessment

Sleep

Interest

Guilty

Energy

Concentration

Appetite

Psychomotor Responses

Suicidal Thoughts, plans, behaviors.

Depression in: Church History – The Bible – the World – the US- our state/county

5-part grid of dealing with Depression	
Initial Consideration: Salvation.	Saved (Grieving the Holy Spirit) OR Unsaved (leading to salvation)
Next Consideration: Who is Responsible?	I am responsible.
	Someone else is responsible
	Satan is responsible.
	God is responsible.
Action steps to bring joy.	

a. Common Problem in Church History

Finish with a story of Pastor John Newton and William Cowper.

b. Common Problem in the Bible. Examples of causes of depression in the Bible.

External circumstances – physical illness – fear of others – fear of failure – serious sin – the futility of life – sensing the loss of God’s presence – are each biblical examples of causing people to deal with depression.

-External circumstances.

Ps.88:1-18 'I am overwhelmed with troubles and my life draws near to death. I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am like one without strength.'

-Physical illness or exhaustion.

1 Kings. 19:3-6 'he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and

came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said 'It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers.'

Gen. 21:15-16 'When the water in the skin was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, "Do not let me see the boy die." And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept.'

This is normal. It is grieving. It must be a part of your life. Depressing circumstances requiring a depressing response. Don't suppress an appropriate response.

Ps. 6:1-7 'heal me LORD, my bones are dismayed. My soul is greatly dismayed'

Ps. 22:14-17 'I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted within me.'

Ps. 31:9-12 'my eye is wasted away with grief, my soul and my body also. My life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighing, my strength has failed because of my iniquity.'

Is. 38:1-2 'In those days, Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD'

Jonah 1:5 'the sailors became afraid and every man cried to his god' -Fear can cause depression

-Fear of others – can be a cause of depression.

1 Kings 19:1-3 'Jezebel said 'so may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time. And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life'

-Fear of Failure

Ex. 4:1 'Moses said, "What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say?'

Nu. 11:11-15 'Moses was displeased "He said to the LORD, Why have You been so hard on Your servant? Why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all this people on me?...if you're going to deal with me like this, please just kill me'

Serious Sin.

Matt. 27:3-4 'Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and said 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood!''

Ps. 25:16-18 'I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. Look upon my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins.' Unforgiveness can produce depression.

Jer. 14:2-3,7 'Judah mourns and her gates languish; they sit on the ground in mourning and the cry of Jerusalem has ascended...they have been put to shame and humiliated.'

Ezek. 4:16-17 'Son of man, I am going to break the staff of bread in Jerusalem, and they will eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and drink water by measure and in horror, because bread and water will be scarce; and they will be appalled with one another and waste away in their iniquity.' In other words, common grace from God will continue to come but it will not be a blessing to them.

Ez. 7:26-27 -When a nation is under God's judgment, common grace is not enjoyed.

Ez. 12:19 – When repentance is not sought after, loss of enjoyment with what God has created is the common lifestyle.

A sense of the futility of life.

Ecc. 2:17-20 'I hated life for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because everything is futility and striving after wind.'

Loss of the sense of God's presence.

Ps. 22:1-2 'My God, my God why have You forsaken me?' Christ said the same thing on the cross.
Matt. 27:46 Even Christ on the cross struggle with the perception of separation from God.

Causes of Depression in the Bible

External circumstances – physical illness – fear of others – fear of failure – serious sin – the futility of life – sensing the loss of God's presence – are each biblical examples of causing people to deal with depression.

c. Common Problem in the World, the United States, and our County.

-World Stats; nearly 300 million people diagnosis by WHO stats with depression. Globally, depression seems to have more of an effect on women, at least with regard to statistics. Double the amount of women to men. 1 of 6 people around the world will struggle with depression at some time.

-US Stats; The US is ranked 2nd internationally with regard to the problem of depression. The countries with the lowest depression rates were Philippines and Nepal.

Washington state has one of the highest depression rates in the country. This shows a lot of link to substance abuse and work-related statistics. In other words, drugs and personal purpose has a lot to do with mental disposition.

-County Stats; Chelan county has one of the highest rates of depression and suicide in our state.

The costs of depression. The depression industry has for some become a very expensive industry, for others it has become a very profitable industry.

On medication alone, Big Pharma reported over \$13 billion spent by patients on depression medications in 2022.

The average person that struggles with depression spends between \$5-10k per year to address the problem.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) coined a term 'Pharmacoeconomics' in order to communicate the massive financial load that depression has had on our society. In 2018, it was reported that major depressive disorder estimated a \$236 billion economic burden on the US. That was a 35% increase since 2010.

Young adults, aged 18-34 accounted for 48% of the population. Q: Why is the most healthy and age bracket with the most untapped potential the age bracket that has the most per capita depression rate.

"It is striking that the direct cost of treating depression itself accounted for only 11.2% of the overall economic burden," the researchers wrote. For every dollar spent on depression-related direct costs, an additional \$2.30 was spent on depression-related indirect costs.'

It begs to question; is depression being treated with a meaningful effectiveness that gives meaningful resolution.

All in all. Depression is a pervasive problem. Most people deal with depression in one form or another, whether it is with themselves, a spouse/child/parent/loved one or friend. But what I see being taught most often is that when a person feels depressed, that they are blanketed in society with the idea that if you are depressed or you know someone who is depressed, then they are just automatically redendered helpless. At least that is the suggestion from the public narrative.

It is often taught/suggested that if a person has a depression problem, then it is a topic to not be brought up to them. this is merely seen as some private battle and really it is not something that can be pinned down and addressed.

I believe this is a lie from Satan. I believe that Satan has allowed us to have our understanding of this topic shaped by the media and the world instead of God's word. If you could please turn in your Bible to the **book of Philippians**.

Satan is a liar and Satan authors lies in society to oppress and ensare people. This is not God's will for your life, for you to be oppressed or lied to by Satan.

Yes, depression is real. Depression is a real problem, however, it is not a problem that is a **perpetual get-off the hook** from responsible card. And for some people that is what it has become.

I'm downtrodden, so I don't show up to work on time. I'm depressed so I stop working at whatever my duties are. I'm depressed, so I don't greet people with smile or handshake in the streets.

In other words, we have been afforded the opportunity to allow our mental estate to determine how we perform our duties. In doing that, we have afforded our society with the opportunity of not growing in resiliency.

Because of this, People have become hollow-shells. They lack peronal conviction. They lack motivation and drive. They lack hunger to live. As the Westminster Confession of Fatith states they are not '**living for God's glory and enjoying Him in all things**' which is the purpose of our created life.

Living a full life in the Glory of God and enjoying all that God has created is the purpose of your life.

However, we are not naïve. Depression is real. Depression affects many people. And therefore, we need a way to see this that can give us a working understanding to help ourselves get out of the dark woods of depression and onto the high ground of God's glory.

If you are looking at Philippians direct your attention to chapter 3.

Consider this question: Is it possible that God would give a Christian and the Christian church a commandment that they are not supposed to obey or not capable of obey? The obvious answer to that is no! **Phil. 4:13 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'**

I want to start here because starting here gives us footing to stand on. In order to stand in the goodness of God we have to build our life on His foundation. If we have our minds shaped by the world then we can expect the produce of the world.

We must protect our minds and the way we think. This begins with what God instructs in His word.

I imagine, many of you are familiar with the book of Philippians. You are probably aware that it is a Prison Epistle. Paul writes four of these letters in prison. This is one of those letters. He writes the letter in austere, depressing circumstance.

If you looked at chapter 1, you would see Paul talks about '**my imprisonment**' **4 times**. Paul is living in the reality of depressing circumstance. He has done nothing wrong. He has done everything right. And now He is in prison.

Yet, he says his imprisonment has served to provide greater purposes. Greater work of the Gospel and God's glory. He says that this has most-literally changed and refined his life. This imprisonment, as odd as it sounds, has become a blessing to him.

John Bunyan, imprisoned for 12 years, in that 12 years, he did not let himself get depressed, instead he impressed the whole world with a book he wrote called Pilgrim's Progress. That book, a product of Bunyan's 12 year imprisonment, is now the 2nd most published book in the entire world. 2nd only to the Holy Bible.

Phil. 3:1 'Finally, brethren, **rejoice in the Lord**. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.'

Rejoicing in Christ is a safeguard for you. Safeguards are protections. Safeguards keep you from trouble. Rejoicing in Christ protects your life. Rejoicing in Christ keeps you from trouble.

It keeps you from trouble because evil people do not rejoice in Christ. Therefore, they will stay away from you. They are evil, therefore, they have to do evil things and do not rejoice in Christ.

That makes rational sense. That is reasonable. But when we are dealing with something like depression, often our reason and our rational is lost. And, to say this sympathetically, that is understandable because of the nature of the problem of depression.

Depression often causes our minds to think in unreasonable ways and to draw irrational conclusions. This requires an aspect of our life to endure with one another who are struggle with this. But it does NOT mean you capitulate about this commandment from God to rejoice always.

The reason of Paul's verse, the rational of Paul's verse is NOT going to matter to a depressed person. But if a person is saved the command of Paul's verse will matter.

If a person is a Christian they will never disagree with God's commandments. That does not mean they always live those commandments, but they will always agree with those commandments.

The reason they will agree is because of the Spirit that is inside them. This doesn't mean that they will automatically begin to fill joyful. Because that is simply not how any diagnosis or medicine works.

This is an important place to start because we have to understand that joy is a commandment from God. I understand that that isn't the most pleasant thing to say to a person that is struggling with depression, nevertheless, it is the truth. We are commanded in Scripture to be joyful.

Society has afforded us the ability to acquiesce our duties to how we feel instead of what God has commanded. Imperatives are commandments and we see here in this passage and a number of other places that joy is seen as a commandment to these Philippian Christians.

Depression is a real illness, it is real just like getting a cold is real, or breaking an arm is real. But if a person gets a cold every other week, or breaks their arm every couple months; we really need to start to consider what is going on.

IF a person has an infection and they take antibiotics they are usually not better in the moment that you are with them. They pass through a season of time. Depression can be a season of time, that you are going through.

Symptoms of Depression can look like this..

Loathing life -desiring to end your life – deep sorrow – loneliness – perplexing problems – physical exhaustion – despair – escapism... These are all symptoms of depression seen in the Bible.

-A loathing of life and a desire to end life.

Num. 11:15 'if this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me' (Moses response to God when dealing with the rebellious assembly of Israelites)

1 Kings 19:4 'He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die'...'I have had enough Lord,' ' Take my life' (Elijah's request of God in having to endure the evil woman Jezebel and all of her false prophets)

Job 10:1 'I loathe my very life' (Job's expression to God about his situation)

Ecc. 2:17 'I hated my life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, it is chasing after the wind'

Jer. 20:15-18 'Cursed be the man who brought my father the news, who made him very glad, saying, 'A child is born to you – a son!' May that man be like the towns the LORD overthrew without pity. May he hear wailing in the morning, a battle cry at noon. For he did not kill me. In the womb...why did I ever come out of the womb' (Jeremiah's complaint with the office of prophet God had assigned him)

Jonah 4:8 'When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live." (Notice God brought this on Jonah, that is an important consideration)

-Deep sorrow.

Gen. 21:16 'She sat there and thought'...'I cannot watch my boy die and she began to sob.' (Hagar in the desert at the prospect of Ishmael dying in the wilderness)

Jud. 21:2 'the people of Bethel went out and raised their voices and wept bitterly' (The Israelite men had taken an oath that none of their daughters would marry anyone from the tribe of the Benjamites, a lost tribe – being disenfranchised from the work of God can cause sorrow)

1 Sam. 1:10,16 'In her anguish Hanna prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly.' (She was depressed at the reality that she was not able to have a son.)

Ps. 42:3 'my tears have been my food day and night'

Neh. Chapters. 1 -2, Nehemiah has great sorrow before King Artaxerxes

Esth. 4:1-3. When Mordeci learned of Haman's plot to kill the Jews, 'he tore his clothes, and went out into the city wailing loudly and bitterly.'

-Loneliness

1 Kings 19:10

Num. 11:14

-Perplexity

Ps. 42:5

Habb. 1:2

Luke 24:17

Jn. 16:6

-Despair

Job 17:1

Ps. 88:3-9

2 Cor. 1:8-9

-Escapism

Ps. 55:6-8

Looking back at Phil. 3, In this passage, Paul is addressing the topic of joy. Paul is addressing this topic in a depressing situation.

Paul is like the two men that looked out from prison bars, one saw the mud the other saw the stars.

How is it that Paul is able to rejoice despite the fact that his circumstances are depressing?

It is because Joy is not an emotion, it is not a feeling, it is a commandment. Joy is a commandment like loving others is a commandment. Joy is a commandment from God like forgiveness is a commandment. Like not stealing is a commandment. Like giving is a commandment.

How do you know that it is a commandment? Because all commandments in the Scripture are written as imperatives. Imperatives are commandments. Commandments must be obeyed to be in right standing with God and to enjoy those results in your life.

Now, what I am not saying, nor is Paul, is to go around in life with Rose-colored glasses and avoid the glaring problems of life; like depression.

We live in a world, cursed with sin, racked with the effects sin and evil. This, when considered, is very depressing. It leads me to ask the first question among 5 questions.

5-part grid of dealing with Depression	
Initial Consideration: Salvation.	Saved (Grieving the Holy Spirit) OR Unsaved (leading to salvation)
Next Consideration: Who is Responsible?	I am responsible.
	Someone else is responsible
	Satan is responsible.
	God is responsible.
Action steps to bring joy.	

2. Offer a 5-part grid to understanding Depression.

- a. Saved or Unsaved
- b. Who is responsible for the depression?
 - I am responsible.
 - Someone else effecting me is responsible.
 - Satan is responsible.
 - God is responsible.

3. Saved or Unsaved.

- a. **Saved person.** Grieving the Holy Spirit.

If the depressed person is saved there is a reason why they are depressed.

We as Christians can grieve the Holy Spirit in a couple of ways.

First, active and persistent sin. This will cause a Christian to be depressed. It is NOT the only reason a Christian could be depressed, but it is the first thing I would have you consider. God's Spirit enables us to obey Him, He has commanded us to be joyful...therefore, what is going on that we are not?...BUT don't be like Job's friends who draw errored conclusions about other people.

Second, we can grieve the Holy Spirit by being angry, frustrated, and overwhelmed by the world we live in. Look, if you spend more time analyzing the news than you do in prayer, in going for walks with your wife, in finding a new recipe to make, in spending some time in thought of how to help others, of how to get better at your job, etc. etc. ...then expect to be depressed.

- b. **Unsaved.** Everything happening in the unsaved person's life is happening to demonstrate to them how they are in hostility to God. **Everything! It doesn't matter if they have perceived success, high levels of wealth, or mass social approval. Very often those are the very mechanisms that keep that person from coming to Christ.**

It is a great grace of God if He brings a person who is unsaved to a point of depression so that they would learn to turn from sin and trust Christ.

If the unsaved person is depressed there is an all together different reason. The reason the unsaved person is depressed is because in their soul they are not in communion with God. They are in hostility toward God.

So what most often happens for the unsaved person, is they are kept in a perpetual cycle of finding things that **abate their depression**.

Does social media help make them feel better, then they pursue that?

Does food make them forgot their depression, then they pursue food?

Does sex, drugs, alcohol serve as a convenient outlet to help them not address the deep-seeded issues of their spiritual life?

This is how Satan keeps a person from living in God's glory and enjoying all that He has created.

The goal is joy. The problem is depression. Therefore, it must be diagnosed and determined how to move on from it. To come up with a plan.

Next to consider is a 4-part grid of who is responsible for the depression. Some of these may overlap, but they should serve to help highlight where the problem is and how to address it.

4. I am responsible.

a. **My personality.** Introvert vs. Extrovert

Introverts are by design given over to depression more so than extroverts. This is NOT a character assessment of good or bad. It is just a simple observation of personality trait.

People who are given over to internal thought, meditation of world problems, solving problems are often more likely to struggle with depression than people who are highly social.

Introverted people usually do not actively pursue human relationships which are a mechanism, designed by God, to help with depression.

b. **My Habits** – Food, sleep, work/exercise, my tongue/words. The way you speak says volumes about your character.

I don't want to put an over-emphasis on this but these things can definitely have an effect on whether you are depressed or not.

Alcohol is a depressant. So if you drink alcohol, you can expect that result.

Sugar. A lack of sleep. Watching TV and social media. These things have a direct effect on your mind.

I know this is a **really bad four-letter word, but work** has a direct effect on the human mind. God designed work as a means to keep man from sin. Work and remaining gainfully occupied is an important part

James says, the tongue is the rudder of the ship. **The tongue is a consuming fire.** How we speak and language and the vocabulary that we use has a direct effect on our mental estate.

Cursing, slandering, gossiping, these all produce a conscience that is often turned over to anxious thoughts or depression.

When you have integrity of thought you have integrity of purpose.

c. **My Focus and Attitude**– Phil. 4 'whatever things are...'

Mental toughness. What does it take to break you? That's resiliency. What does it take to break you. By 'break you' it doesn't just mean what does it take to quit, it means what does it mean for you to stop giving 100%? What does it take to get you off your best?

Ask yourself this: am I so easily, externally controlled that if someone says something off to me it will completely derail me? OR have I set my mind to be focused on what God has given me to do.

Focus, Attitude, attention... these are markers of mental toughness.

d. **My Direction – Setting Goals. You should have goals in your life. You should be setting regular goals.**

Here's another thing with regard to depression. 'where there is no vision, the people perish' Pro. 29:18

Why is the person perishing in depression? Do they have a vision? Do they have a dream?

You should be setting regular goals in your life. Goals in the categories of Physical fitness, Social connection, Financial well-being, Educational learning, Emotional growth.

Learning new skills. The human mind is like any other organism, if it is not learning it is not growing, if it is not growing it is dying.

Planning for the future. Making a dinner with friends. Giving to help others (people who are not generous are always depressed people).

When Anya and I got married we set a goal to have dinner with 1 new couple every month. That's 24 new people each year.

Here's another important question to ask; If I don't show back up here today, will anyone care? Will anyone notice? Because that is a question not based off external variables, but based off your personal contribution.

It always astounds me, how people can come to church for years and they don't even know the person that sits 10 feet away from them.

Let me ask another rethorical question; Why do we continue to promote and endorse mediocrity? It's simple, because it endorses everyone else's mediocrity.

5. Someone else is responsible.

If someone else is responsible for your mental disposition that's probably one of the worst outlooks to have to endure because you don't have a whole lot of say in the matter.

You end up running the risk of being at the whims of everyone else in your life.

Church fellowship is a very important aspect of helping the family of believers overcome the sins of non-believers in their life. There is joy, encouragement,

- a. Bad friends and Bad work environment. Need Church Fellowship.
- b. Jezebel and Elijah. Moses and the rebellious Israelites. Paul and the Galatians and Corinthians.
- c. Jesus and Satan in Matt. 4, and His impending crucifixion.

6. Satan is responsible.

- a. Paul. 2 Cor 12
- b. Job. Most of the book
- c. Christ. Matt 4
- d. Adam and Eve. Gen. 3
- e. David being inspired to take a census of the army. 1 Chron. 21 'Satan rose up' – God still held David responsible.

7. God. What if God is responsible? Ref. Is. 45:5-7

Establishment of Cyrus as King, though he does not know God.

'I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting people may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster, I, the LORD, do all these things.'

Let's consider this for a minute as the final analysis.

God is responsible for Grace to you. God is responsible for illuminated faith in Christ to you. God is responsible for keeping your heart beating, the world turning, the temperature of the day, the beginning and end of your life.

So, why would we conclude that God is disconnected from our mental estate?

If God is Sovereign over all things, how would He not be Sovereign over my mental estate as well?

Look John 9 'who sinned'

Look John 11 'who sinned'

Nobody – it was for the glory of God.

Now you're never going to see this in the news media. But it is very much so possible that they things that are happening to you, are simulataneously your responsibility and also under God's divine control.

You ask me, How do you explain that? I tell you, I don't know!

All I know, is you and I are responsible for our life, but God is Sovereign over our life. When there is a lack of continuity between our responsibility and God's Sovereignty, it often leads to mental depression or anxiety.

Somebody might say, no that's a problem! Let me say this, It is a whole lot less of a problem than if I am not responsible and God is not Sovereign.

The problem of personal victimhood and the problem of atheism, is far more of a problem to attempt to solve than the problem of personal responsible and God's Sovereignty. **As a matter of fact**, the problem of personal victimhood and atheism is an impossible problem to solve.

And I do find with some people that that (personal victimhood) is what they would prefer. They would prefer a perpetual problem to a responsible solution.

They would prefer a ready excuse to

There are many, many people getting very, very wealthy off the idea that you are depressed and you cannot do anything about it.

Depression is a part of life. It is not reasonable to assume that you will be perpetually happy and without trials.

Depression can be a trial, the result of grieving, the result of pain and suffering in a fallen world. But God's instruction to us in trials is not victimhood, it is joy.

What I'm here to tell you, is don't fall for it! 'Do not let your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Christ' John 14:1

If I am not responsible and God is not Sovereign, then you will have nothing by which to build your life on.

Conclusion.

Finish is Church History illustration from Story of Pastor John Newton and William Cowper.

When the Darkness Will Not Lift by John Piper. **Read P. 70-77**

Questions| Addressing Depression

The Problem of Depression; in the world, the church, the Bible and our state/county?

5-part grid of understanding depression.

1. Is the person saved or unsaved? What does being saved/unsaved have to do with being depressed?

2. Why would an unsaved person be more inclined to depression?
3. How would a saved person fall into depression by grieving the Holy Spirit?
4. What can a saved person do to come out of depression?

Who is Responsible for the Depression?

1. If I am responsible for my depression what can I do to solve this?
2. If someone else is responsible for my depression then what can I do about that?
3. What if Satan is in charge of the depression? Ref. Joseph, Job, Rom. 8:28
4. What if God is in charge of the depression? How should I consider my mental state?

Medications, Treatments, Counseling

1. Should I get on medication if I am depressed? Should I have my children on medication if they are depressed?
2. **How can I help a loved one or friend that is depressed?**