

Victory Over Depression

Does your happiness depend on everything in your life being just right? If you think you can't be happy until all your circumstances are right, you will never be happy. We all experience times in life when we feel down for various reasons, but we can't allow our circumstances to control our emotions. Satan seeks to fill our minds with negative thoughts and emotions that cause us to feel down. He is a discourager, and he pulls us down emotionally, spiritually, financially, and in every way he can. But Jesus is our Encourager, and He came to lift us up. He came to give us righteousness, peace, and joy, and all these things cause us to feel up!

But you, O LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts my head high (Psalm 3)

Everyone experiences times of frustration and distress over unfulfilled hopes and dreams. When things don't go according to our plans, it is normal to feel disappointment. But we must be careful how we deal with that feeling, because if we remain in a state of disappointment for too long, it can turn into discouragement, despair, and finally depression. Psalm 30:5 tells us that ***...Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.*** Things may make us feel sad temporarily, but we must not stay sad. Just as we cannot afford to stay mad very long, neither can we stay sad very long. If we do, Satan takes advantage of the open door and pushes his way further into our lives, bringing more serious problems with him.

Our number-one enemy is emotions. We tend to be led by how we feel, but we must realize that feelings are fickle, they change from day to day! We should be careful not to follow every thought that comes to our mind because our thoughts and feelings don't dictate truth to us. Some people awaken in the morning with a little voice in their head saying, "I feel depressed." They think it is their own thought, not realizing that it is Satan making suggestions through their minds. As we grow in God we realize that we don't have to follow every feeling and thought we have. We can choose and say, "I will not be depressed." We can ***"put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness"*** that is spoken of in Isaiah 61.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1)

Depression is defined in part as "a hollow; being in a low state; a state of sadness; dejection." The real cause of depression is not where we are, but our attitude about where we find ourselves. We will always have feelings, but we can make our feelings line up with our decisions. That's why God gives us the fruit of self-control. The Bible tells us to ***resist the devil.*** We resist depression and anything that resembles it because it is of the devil. God tells us to: ***Rejoice in the Lord always (gladden yourselves in Him); again I say, Rejoice!*** If we stay filled with the right thing, the wrong thing has no place. (James 5 and Philippians 4)

If you don't let the devil impress you with what he does, then he can't oppress you. And if he can't oppress you, then he can't depress you. So choose to be led by the Holy Spirit and you can have victory over depression. We can choose to keep a hopeful attitude by renewing our minds with the promises found in God's Word. We can claim the promises as our own and stand in faith, believing God to help us overcome our feelings and move forward into better things. We can't control all of our circumstances, but we don't have to let what happens today ruin tomorrow. We can actually turn things around by making a decision to let go of the situations that caused the disappointment and discouragement and move toward the good things God has planned for our future.

Many people are depressed because they can't face truth, but the Holy Spirit came to reveal truth to us. And we can't get past depression until we quit making excuses and blaming everyone else. We must face the truth and take responsibility for our actions. When we do that and ask God to help us, the spirit of heaviness leaves us and we feel light and free. Jesus tells us in Matthew 11:30: ***...My burden is light and easy to be borne.*** Being depressed about circumstances does not change them, and is a total waste of time and a thief of joy. So we must stop letting our feelings, mind, body, and past experiences rule us and allow God to give us a fresh plan, a new idea, a new goal! Thank God, we don't have to be disappointed, discouraged, despondent, depressed, or in despair. Jesus not only is the Way, but He is also the way out!

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. How do I get over being sad and disappointed?
2. How does God want to work with me to deal with my feelings and circumstances?
3. What do I need to do today to live in God's encouragement?