

## **Defeat Depression by the Book**

by Randall Ricker

### **Defining Depression**

The title of this lecture is "Defeat Depression by the Book." Let's start by defining depression. I'll use the *American Heritage Dictionary*. To depress means to dispirit or to sadden. To dispirit means to lower one's mood or emotional state. The word depressed means in low spirits, dejected. Depression means in lowness of spirits or loss of hope. Those are dictionary definitions of depression.

### **Typical symptoms**

Some typical symptoms are feeling sad, tired, useless, overwhelmed. There is too much stuff coming at us. Some cannot sleep. People who are depressed often do not really feel like doing anything. They have no motivation.

### **You are not alone**

If you are listening to this and you are depressed, you are not alone. Before COVID, about 8% of our population was considering themselves to be depressed. In 2021 33% of the United States population was considered to be depressed. This is reported by Boston University.

### **Causes of depression**

There are numerous causes of depression. It can be chemical imbalance, but there has been some debate on that recently. Tragedy in life, something bad has happened in your life - death in the family or injury or whatever it is. Addictions – a person has addictions that can cause depression. Anger, maybe holding a grudge for a long, long time causes depression. Fear and worry about the world conditions, about politics in this country, whatever it might be. Stress, loneliness. People who are depressed are often alone, living alone. Demands on you - sometimes there are just too many demands on us. Or social media. Social media can keep us too active, where we always have stuff coming at us, or we might be mistreated on social media, or some things in social media are not very good. Think of garbage in, garbage out. You have bad things coming into our minds through social media. It is going to have a bad effect. And social media can even be addicting. And there is materialism, thinking that what we have is too important. Maybe no absolute values in life – that there are no absolute rights and wrongs. Or no purpose to our life. There are all kinds of reasons for depression, causes for depression.

### **Defeating Depression**

We can defeat depression. **If the depression is severe, get professional help.** Get some kind of counseling. Be sure the person is reputable, not radical, not using radical treatments, but using an outgoing approach, an outward approach, because with depression, a person is usually looking inward too much. The counselor needs to be directing the thoughts outward at some point. Look at reviews of the counselor.

Let's look at some other methods of defeating depression. When I say depression by the book, the book is the Bible. But for those reading who are not believers in the Bible, stay with me. Please stay with me. You might find some things that will be helpful, even if you don't believe the Bible is inspired by God.

### **Admit our feelings**

First, admit our feelings. Proverbs of the Bible, chapter 15, verse 13.

A merry heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

We admit our feelings that we are depressed, that our spirit is broken.

Proverbs 18:14

The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?

Someone who is depressed is broken spirited, and it is hard to bear. He should admit that he has a broken spirit.

In the book of Psalms, this book of prayers, often the person writing it was depressed and putting his feelings out there.

Psalms 137:1

1 By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down, yea, **we wept** When we remembered Zion. 2 We hung our harps Upon the willows in the midst of it. 3 For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, And those who plundered us required mirth, Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" 4 How shall we sing the LORD's song In a foreign land?

This is after the Jews had been taken captive by the Babylonians. We admit our feelings, but not for too long. Eventually we have to go on to other ways of defeating depression.

### **Phone a friend**

One way is to phone a friend. Not long ago, there was a TV quiz show called "Who Wants to be a Millionaire." If a contestant answered enough questions they got \$1,000,000. If they didn't know the answer to the question, one of their options was to call a friend, to phone a friend. That's where I get this.

Ecclesiastes:4:9

9 Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. 10 For **if they fall, one will lift up his companion**. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up.

We need someone to lift us up. A person who is depressed needs a friend to share their feelings with, to listen, maybe to give the person advice, or maybe just to listen. We need relationships instead of being alone.

### **Be active, start a hobby, help other people**

A way to fight depression is to develop relationships with other people. A way to defeat depression is to be active. Maybe start a hobby, help other people, or be more active. Be more outgoing. Start a hobby, and maybe have a more interesting life, and do other things that can satisfy us. But also help other people.

Matthew 25:31-36, 40

31 When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and **you gave Me food**; I was thirsty and **you gave Me drink**; I was a stranger and **you took Me in**; 36 I was naked and **you clothed Me**; **I was sick and you visited Me**; **I was in prison and you came to Me**.' ...40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren [brothers], you did it to Me.'

There are all kinds of things we can do for other people. Instead of spending time by ourselves and thinking about our problems, do things for other people. There are certainly enough needs out there, as it mentions here, feeding people whether it is cooking the food or delivering the food and drink. Maybe work at a place like a coalition that gives clothing to people. Visiting the sick, taking care of them, visiting prisons, visiting people in prison, all kinds of things people can do. It is very rewarding to do good for other people. We tend to get in trouble when we have too much time on our hands.

### **Think positively**

We need to think positively. The apostle Paul wrote a letter from prison to the people in Philippi.

Philippians 4:8

whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--**meditate on these things**.

Yes, whether things are true, not what might happen or could have happened. No, things that are true. That is what we think about. Whatever things are noble, whatever

things are just, things that are fair. We do not meditate on things that happened to us that were unfair. Think about things that are fair, that are just. Whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, of good reputation, if there is any virtue, in other words, moral excellence. If anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things, trying to be positive.

#### 2 Corinthians 10:5

casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity** to the obedience of Christ,

Sometimes we have to really try to control our thoughts. We realize we are going off in a negative depressed direction. Bring those thoughts into captivity and think about the things that Paul suggested in his letter to the Philippians.

#### Philippians 3:12-14

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren [brothers], I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind** and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Past events may depress us. Don't spend a lot of time thinking about the past. What's done is done. Think about the future, don't rehash the past. God is forward thinking. He has a plan for us. I will talk about that in a little while.

#### Matthew 6:34

Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. *HCSB*

We do not have to worry about what is going to happen tomorrow. Do not dwell on it to the point that it drags us down. Each day has its own problems. Worry about tomorrow, tomorrow. Not today.

#### **Think about how much you have.**

Think about how much you have. That helps to defeat depression.

#### Philippians 4:11, 6-7

11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to **be content**: ...6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

We have to be content with what we have, not be anxious. We don't reflect on what we

don't have.

Proverbs 12:25

**Anxiety** in the heart of man **causes depression**, But a good word makes it glad.

Don't have anxiety about what we don't have. That's just causing depression. We don't want to do that.

Proverbs 13:12

**Hope deferred makes the heart sick**, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.

We can't always get what we want. As we mature, we realize that is just part of life. We are never going to have everything we want. And so we really should not let that drag us down either. Instead, think about how much we do have.

Psalms 92:1-5

1 It is good to **give thanks** to the LORD, And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; 2 To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, And Your faithfulness every night, 3 On an instrument of ten strings, On the lute, And on the harp, With harmonious sound. 4 For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands. 5 O LORD, how great are Your works! Your thoughts are very deep.

We have guitars with four strings or six strings or more. Well, they had an instrument of 10 strings back then.

Be thankful, thankful to God. We should also be thankful to people for what they do for us. They may be doing something for us that they owe to us. Thank them for that. Or maybe they do not owe it to us. They are doing us a real favor. Be thankful for that, too. Have gratitude, and of course, as it says here, give thanks to God.

### **Your life has meaning.**

A depressed person often feels like life just has no meaning. There must be something more to life. Well, there is. Revelation 21 verse seven talks about our purpose of life.

Revelation 21:7

He who overcomes shall **inherit all things**, and I will be his God and **he shall be My son** [or daughter].

Yes, we can inherit all things, the whole universe. There is a whole universe out there, hundreds of billions of stars in hundreds of billions of galaxies. That is all out there for us in the future. And it says, "he shall be my son," or daughter, by extension. We will be like God. We will not be depressed. God is not depressed. Someday we will not be

depressed either, although we can fight that now, fight depression now.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have **everlasting life**.

If we are depressed over what we have done in the past, realize that Jesus Christ paid for it. He paid for our sins. We do not need to be depressed over our sins. It is all taken care of. We can be forgiven.

We are not trying to do this all by ourselves. We have wonderful potential, but we are going to get some help. We can get peace and comfort. Jesus said this:

Matthew 11:28-30

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest**. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

Someone may think that Christianity is restrictive and difficult and depressing. Well, living without Christianity can be even more restrictive and difficult and depressing. Many of us have learned that it is a joyful way to live. Sure, there are things that we are told to do, and things we are told not to do. But we realize it is all for our own good and for the good of those around us. It is a happy life.

Philippians 1:6

being confident of this very thing, that **He who has begun a good work in you will complete it** until the day of Jesus Christ;

God wants us to be in His family. He is working. He began this good work, and He does not want to fail. The creator and owner of the universe does not want us to fail.

### **Pray for help**

If we are fighting depression, pray for help.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Just ask for Christ to strengthen us. He will, and we can do more than we think. That is the principle. I remember years ago that I was paying a mortgage. Then our family had to move into an apartment in a different city. We were paying mortgage and rent at the same time. I thought that was impossible. Yet somehow I was able to. We were able to do more than we thought we could. That is just in terms of a physical thing. We can defeat depression. We can do more than we think, realizing Christ will strengthen us.

John 14:23

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and **make Our home with him.**

God the Father and Jesus Christ make their home in us through the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit. We can do great things in terms of overcoming depression and understanding the Bible.

Psalms 94:16-19

16 Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? 17 Unless the LORD had been my help, My soul would soon have settled in silence. 18 If I say, "My foot slips," Your mercy, O LORD, will hold me up. 19 In the multitude of my anxieties within me, **Your comforts delight my soul.**

The person who wrote this figured he would have been all done for. But he knows that if he says he needs God's help, God will help him and God will comfort him. That is what we need - comfort. We realize that when something is wrong, we want to be fixers, as we say, we want to fix it right away. Sometimes we just need to stand back and be patient with God.

Colossians 3:15

And **let the peace of God rule in your hearts,** to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

We want to have peace of mind instead of depression. In the Bible peace of mind is not being troubled, not being afraid.

**Even people in the Bible were depressed.**

Even people in the Bible were depressed, although they overcame it. Moses, the one who led the Israelites out of Egypt, was depressed. He had 2 million people, and they were all complaining. He said this.

Numbers 11:14

I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me.

"I am not able" thinking he just cannot do the things that are required of him. He said "the burden is too heavy." The burden is too heavy for me, as if he was all alone. He felt alone. God sustained him and showed him how to lead the people, and he would not be all alone. Then there was the prophet Elijah. He thought he was the only one left to worship God. He found out later that actually there were 7000 more people worshipping God. He was not alone. He was depressed for a while. Eventually God helped him out of it.



### **No sorrow in the future, and hope for this time.**

If we want to fight depression, realize that there will be a time in the future when there will be no sorrow, and yet there is hope in this time.

Revelation 21:4

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, **nor sorrow, nor crying**. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

We can look forward to a time when there will be no sorrow, no crying, no depression, but there is hope now.

Romans 8:31, 38-39

31 What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** ...38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, **nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God** which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The creator and owner of the universe is for us. Who can oppose us? Whatever is causing our depression can be OK. God is greater than our depression. God loves us. You are loved.

### **Reviewing our methods**

Let's review the methods for defeating depression that I talked about.

**If the depression is really severe, get qualified professional help.**

Admit our feelings. We can admit we are depressed - for a while.

Phone a friend; have relationships with people.

Be active, start a hobby, make our lives more interesting in that way. Help other people; do good for other people.

Think positively.

Think about how much we have.

Realize that our lives have a purpose to be part of God's family.

Pray to God for help.

There will be a future time with no sorrow, but there is hope even now.

A church congregation can be a place of comfort and fellowship. Sabbath Church of God has worship services in Cary, NC, near Raleigh. If you live within driving distance, call or e-mail for the location because it is not always the same. You will find that you are loved.





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