

DEPRESSION

Introductory Thoughts:

1. Depression doesn't "just happen"... There's always a cause.
2. It is a common problem (1 Cor. 10:13) for which there is hope.
3. It is a serious problem, don't minimize it, get immediate help.
4. Medical attention is sometimes necessary.
5. Depression is no excuse for irresponsible behavior no matter what the cause!
6. Don't ever just deal with the "symptoms" rather than the causes!
7. Take personal responsibility.
8. To change one's feelings Biblically means to change ones thinking and living.
9. Depression is a solvable problem... with God nothing is impossible.
10. It will take the Word of God, the Spirit of God and the people of God, as well as, personal discipline, time and perseverance.

I. Defining Depression

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------|
| A. What it is not: | 2 Cor. 4:8-9 | |
| Jn. 6:66-67 | _____ | yet not _____ |
| Jn. 11:33-35 | _____ | but not _____ |
| 1 Thess. 4:13 | _____ | but not _____ |
| 1 Pet. 1:6 | _____ | but not _____ |
| B. What it is: | | |
| Jn. 16:6 | Ps. 32: | |
| Ps. 38:6-8 | Ps. 88:1-5 | |
| Job 2 | Ps. 69 | |
| Job 3:1,5,9,11,21 | Ps. 73 | |
| Ps. 34:18 | Ps. 102 | |
| Lamentations | Ps. 42 | |
| Isa. 42:3 | Ps. 43 | |
| Matt. 26:37-38..... | Heb. 4:14-16 | |

Depression:

- persistant feelings of sadness that lead to despair and hopeless
- not just feeling down, but being "down & out"
- a spirit of heaviness and gloom that effects every area of life
- when discouragement leads to despondency
- when disappointment/disapproval lead to giving up
- intense emotional pain resulting from continual "breakdowns" in how we think, interpret, respond and live in regards to ourselves, God, our circumstances, the world, our relationships and life.

II. Types of Depression

- A. Reactive - how one responds conceptually and behaviorally to life
 1. hard circumstances
 2. grief
 3. negative/sinful thinking
 4. irresponsible/sinful living
 5. a depression that persists for up to 6 **week**s can easily become "biological".

B. Biological - Physiological

1. endogenous (from within) hereditary
2. physical infections - brain, tumor, hypoglycemia, glandular, thyroid, hormonal...
3. genetic malfunction
4. chemical imbalance
 - a. unipolar
 - b. bipolar (manic depressive)
5. Medical and/or nutritional help may be needed for proper prescribing medication, vitamins, diet...

Diagnosis of Depression

1. Factors involved in diagnosis

	Normal Blues	Mild Depression	Major Depression
	●	●	●
a. Time Factor	Days-2 weeks	2 weeks - 6 months	6 months >
b. Symptoms	0-1	2-3	4 >
c. Pleasure and Responsibility	P+R	R+R	R+R

*Major symptoms of depression:

- 1) **Sleep disturbance** (difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep or sleeping more than usual on a regular basis),
- 2) **Eating disturbance** (unintentional loss of three pounds per week for 3 weeks or more or the gain of three pounds per week for three weeks or more),
- 3) **Vegetative symptoms** (moving, talking, thinking in a slow, regulated fashion),
- 4) **Agitated symptoms** (hyper-activity, inability to sit still),
- 5) **Suicidal thoughts**,
- 6) **Negative thoughts about oneself**,
- 7) **Pervasive forgetfulness**, and
- 8) **Anhedonia** (severely restricted enjoyment of pleasure, particularly sexual enjoyment).

A Self-Rating Depression Scale

Anyone who answers "true" to a majority of the following statements is almost certainly depressed and should seek professional assistance before the depression worsens.

1. I feel like crying more often now than I did a year ago.
2. I feel blue and sad.
3. I feel hopeless and helpless a good part of the time.
4. I have lost a lot of my motivation.
5. I have lost interest in things I once enjoyed.
6. I have had thoughts recently that life is just not worth living.
7. My sleep pattern has changed of late. I either sleep too much or too little.
8. I am losing my appetite.
9. I am too irritable.
10. I am anxious of late.
11. I have less energy than usual.
12. Morning is the worst part of the day.
13. I find myself introspecting a lot.
14. When I look at myself in the mirror, I appear to be sad.
15. My self-concept is not very good.
16. I worry much about the past.
17. I have more physical symptoms (headaches, upset stomach, constipation, rapid heartbeat, etc.) than I did a year ago.
18. I believe people have noticed that I do not function as well at my job as I did in the past.

III. Symptoms and Characteristics of Depression

- A. Scriptural Examples - Note the behavior and thinking that caused the feelings
- Observe the symptomatic results. How's depression described?
 - How is God involved?
 - What are the solutions given?

Gen. 4:1-7

1 Kings 19

1 Kings 21

Jonah 4

1 Sam. 1:1-8

Ps. 32

Ps. 38

Num. 11:10-15

B. Common Characteristics:

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1. | 16. |
| 2. | 17. |
| 3. | 18. |
| 4. | 19. |
| 5. | 20. |
| 6. | 21. |
| 7. | 22. |
| 8. | 23. |
| 9. | 24. |
| 10. | 25. |
| 11. | 26. |
| 12. | 27. |
| 13. | 28. |
| 14. | 29. |
| 15. | 30. |

Here are some questions⁴ a person could ask himself to determine if he is manifesting the characteristics of depression. These questions may assist you in determining the extent of an individual's depression.

1. Are you tired even when you have had enough sleep?
2. Do you have difficulty getting yourself into action in the morning?
3. Do you accomplish less than you want?
4. Are you restless?
5. Have you lost interest in life such as family, work, sex, etc.?
6. Are you unable to make decisions?
7. Are you continually angry and resentful?
8. Do you often have feelings of dread? Do you expect something awful to happen?
9. Are you a chronic complainer?
10. Are you critical of yourself and do you feel inferior or inadequate?
11. Do you spend much time daydreaming?
12. Does your mood fluctuate? Do you have some weeks that are "up" and some that are "down"?

All of the above are common symptoms of low-grade chronic depression.

Severe or clinical depression is often indicated by positive responses to the following questions.

1. Do you cry often?
2. Have your sleeping habits changed so it takes you longer to fall asleep or you wake up much earlier?
3. Do you sleep more than you used to?
4. Have you lost weight without dieting? Does the thought of food almost make you sick?
5. Do you have a lot of guilt?
6. Do you think of ending your life?
7. Do you feel as though you are in a fog and things are unreal?
8. Are you unable to concentrate and do you go over certain thoughts?

What Is Behind Depression?

Almost anything can be at the root of a person's depression: a recent illness in which they get behind in their work, hormonal changes, a reversal of their ease in life, the consequences of simple negligence, guilt over a particular sin, self-pity arising from jealousy or a disadvantageous turn of events, bad feeling resulting from resentment, worry, etc. The important fact to remember is that a depression does not result directly from any one of these factors, but rather comes from a cyclical process in which the initial problem is mishandled in such a way that it is enlarged in downward helical spirals that eventually plunge one into despair.

The downward cycle of sin moves from a problem to a faulty, sinful response, thereby causing an additional complicating problem which is met by an additional sinful response, etc. That pattern needs to be reversed by beginning an upward cycle of righteousness resulting in further righteous. Here the reverse pattern may be seen: a problem met by a biblical response leads to a solution which strengthens one's ability to solve new problems. The downward cycle enslaves one in hopelessness and guilt, thus bringing on a slowing or cessation of activity, called depression. Proverbs plainly warns against the slavery of sinful habits:

"For directly before the eyes of the Lord are man's ways, and all his paths are well considered. His own iniquities seize the wicked, and he is held fast by the ropes of his own sin". Prov. 5:21, 22, Berkeley)

Sinful habits are hard to break, but if they are not broken, they will bind a person ever more tightly.

Sin leads to guilt and depression, sinful handling of sin further complicates matters leading to greater guilt and deeper depression, ad infinitum. In the downward cycling the depression certainly contributes to further failures as it often becomes the excuse for a faulty handling of the sin itself. But, in contrast to those who would speak of changing the feelings in order to change the behavior, God reverses the order. He declared to Cain clearly,

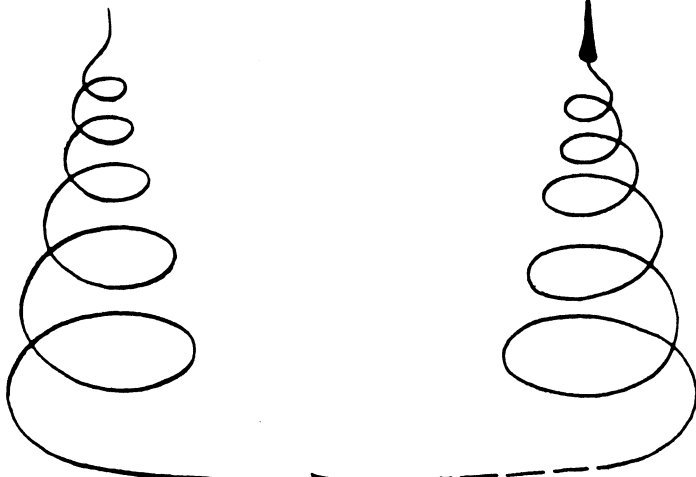
If you do what is right, there will be a lifting up of your face - you'll feel not only better but happier! Therefore "bad feelings", depression that results from wrong thinking and living can change when one replaces it with God's ways.

DOWNWARD SPIRAL
[enlarges problems]

UPWARD SPIRAL
[reduces problems]

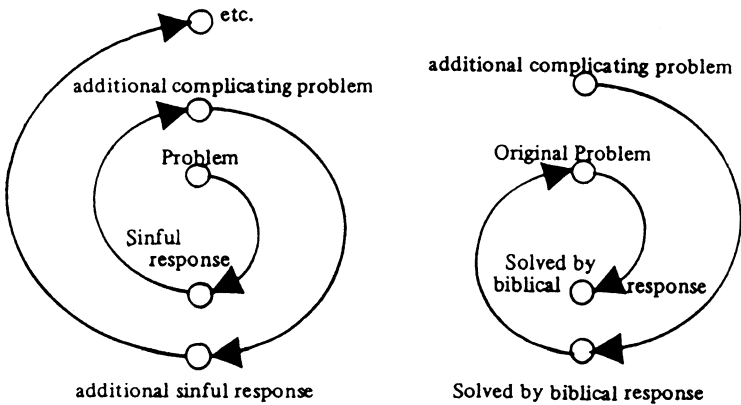
(side view)

Good Feeling



Bad Feeling

(top view)



See Christian Counselor's Manual pps. 375-383.

Our feelings are a result of what we're thinking and doing! If our interpretations, responses, attitudes, thoughts, actions, and lifestyles are "right"... so will our emotional state. (Study Gen. 4:1-7 & Js. 1:22-25). Obedience to God means (most of the time) "going against our feelings", "Walk by faith not by sight" 2Cor. 5:7.

IV. Causes of Depression & Suggested Solutions

In a 1971 issue of *Science Digest*, a study by Dr. Eugene S. Pakyel was reported. Three hundred seventy-three people were asked to rate the most "upsetting" events in their life. The twenty-five most distressing events (and those which can induce a depressive reaction), in order of importance, were

1. Death of a child
2. Death of a spouse
3. A jail sentence
4. An unfaithful spouse
5. Major financial difficulty
6. Business failure
7. Being fired
8. A miscarriage or stillbirth
9. Divorce
10. Marital separation due to an argument
11. A court appearance
12. Unwanted pregnancy
13. A major illness in the family
14. Unemployment for a month (Additional studies indicated that four out of five marriages end in a divorce when the man is out of work for nine months or more.)
15. Death of a close friend
16. A demotion
17. A major personal illness
18. Start of an extramarital affair
19. Loss of personally valuable objects
20. A lawsuit
21. Academic failure
22. Child married without family approval
23. A broken engagement
24. Taking out a large loan
25. Son drafted

A. Physiological - endogenous, bio-chemical (about 10%)

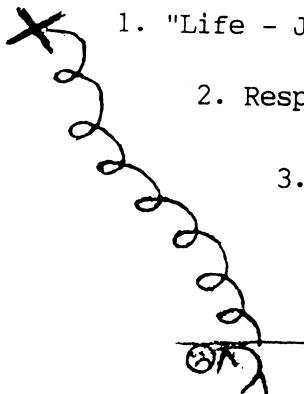
1. Organic, genetic, hereditary
2. Chemical imbalance - serotonin depletion
3. Nutritional, vitamin, food deficit
4. Biological malfunction, glandular, thyroid, endocrine
5. Reaction to drugs, alcohol (toxic depression)
6. Sleep loss, insufficient rest

When one faces even the possibility of a biochemical depression seek medical attention immediately. Whenever 3 or 4 major symptoms (p. 2) persist longer than a month you should go to the doctor to be checked out. Anti-depressant medication may be needed to regulate, stabilize, or supplement imbalanced chemical activity within the brain. (For more information see my paper on "Norepinephrine and the Advisability of Anti-depressant Medication"). Realize this however, no medication can deal with the causes, it only affects the "symptoms". You may feel better to varying degrees and think things are okay, but don't be deceived, the real causes must be "resolved" not just "masked"! Therefore, get Biblical counseling to make sure you resolve things and live "God's way". Psalm 1 promises us we'll be blessed (happy, prosperous, successful, fulfilled) when we don't walk in the counsel of the ungodly! So start building on the true foundation that will endure victoriously the storms of life. (Mt. 7:24-27). Begin to own Prov. 3:5-6!

B. Mishandling a hard situation

1. Death of a loved one
2. Abusive home situation
3. Difficult childhood
4. Loss of _____ (job, health, home, possession... something significant)
5. Terminal illness/prolonged sickness
6. Unresolved past conflicts/relationships - hurts
7. Being sinned against
8. Current stress factors (financial, marital, divorce)
9. Major adjustments/changes
10. Rejection
11. Relationships & circumstances not coming through for us
12. Unmet needs, desires, goals, longings ...frustration
13. Any "problem" or decision with anyone or anything
14. Not accepting _____ or relinquishing our "control"
15. Not trusting God's sovereign control and purposes... Rom. 8:28

Note the progression of the depression:

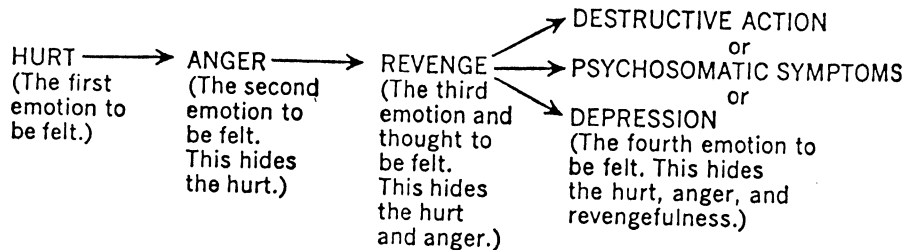
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1. "Life - Jolting" Situation
 2. Response (a wrong one) - I can't handle it
- (anger, hatred, denial...)
 3. Self Absorption - continually interpreting the situation
in relation to my self apart from God's wisdom.
 4. Further consequences of mishandling it
 5. Under the "weight".

If you are struggling with a hard situation and don't know how to respond right and handle things God's way, be sure to get help. There are many excellent Biblical resources available for spiritual help. Even Christian bookstores offer a wide selection of materials that deal with "everything" from a Scriptural perspective. Still be careful with what even may be called "Christian". The most important thing is to get moving, prayerfully and in God's direction - one step at a time. Be honest with God, yourself, and others about what you're facing and most of all talk with a Biblical counselor who can connect you up with the appropriate resources, principles and "life restructuring" needed. Replacing the wrong responses and beginning to handle things according to Biblical examples and truths will reverse the downward spiral. Remember for every situation we face God promises to provide what we need to be transformed, set free and spiritually prosperous. He has never intended that we live defeated lives! He created us, knows us best and has provided the Ultimate Instruction Manual. Let's just follow the "manufacturer's" directions on how to...

WHAT ABOUT ANGER ?

When one mishandles a hard or "life jolting" experience, it leads to hurt, resentment, anger, bitterness, self-pity, _____ & depression! Much depression is a result of "Anger-Turned-Inward"!

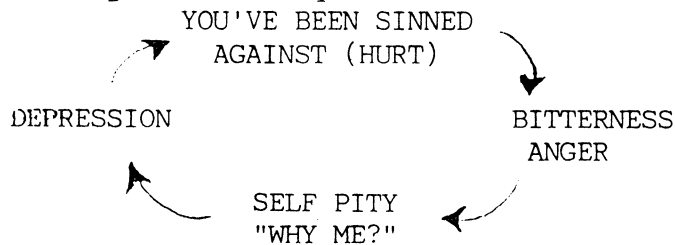
What happens, then, when one is frustrated, resentful and angry? If the anger is denied or pushed out of our minds, it festers "under cover" and eventually "gets us down." The following diagram illustrates this process.



If one does not respond God's way to hurt, disappointment, or being sinned against, it will inevitably build up. Problems do not "just go away"! Then, if the anger is not resolved honestly and Biblically the emotional tensions and energies become so internalized that one reacts extremely, either by (1) ventilation, hostility, "blowing up", revenge, "somebody is gonna pay", lashing out in vengeance,

or some other destructive or violent behaviors. They may react by (2) internalization "clamping up", turning negative and sinful emotional energy inward. Holding it all in leads to further resentment and bitterness which causes further complications of not only depression but psychosomatic symptoms (rapid heart beat, high blood pressure, nervous stomach disorders, colitis, ulcers...ones mind will affect their body). (see Anger study).

Both these extremes rehearse and replay the original starting hurt/problem over and over again creating a vicious cycle.



Many people have faced extremely difficult circumstances and have overcome depression by enduring struggles victoriously. The Scriptures are full of examples of how God's people dealt with persecution, affliction, suffering, rejection, disappointment, torture, ridicule, failure, loss, grief, misunderstanding, false accusations, and every kind of abuse. Study the lives of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, David, Job, Jonah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and all the prophets. Then in the N.T. think of Peter, James, Silas, Paul, and of course Jesus Christ Himself. It is true that everybody at some point in their lives faces the same problems as everybody else... it's just a matter of degree! In order to build your courage, confidence, faith and hope write out these fantastic powerful promises. As your thinking changes so will your feelings!

1 Cor. 10:11-13

Rom. 15:4

Phil. 1:6

2 Cor. 12:7-10

2 Tim. 3:16-17

1 Pet. 4:12-16, 19

Rom. 8:26-39

1 Pet. 5:9-10

These are just a few motivational texts from God's Word. Ask Him to reveal Himself to you through His truth and that He would give you wisdom (Js. 1:5) to respond to these trials God's way. Keep your mind stayed on Him (Isa. 26:3) because that's the guarantee of PEACE & VICTORY... it all depends on WHO'S VOICE you listen to. It's time to "change tapes" (see Thought Life Study).

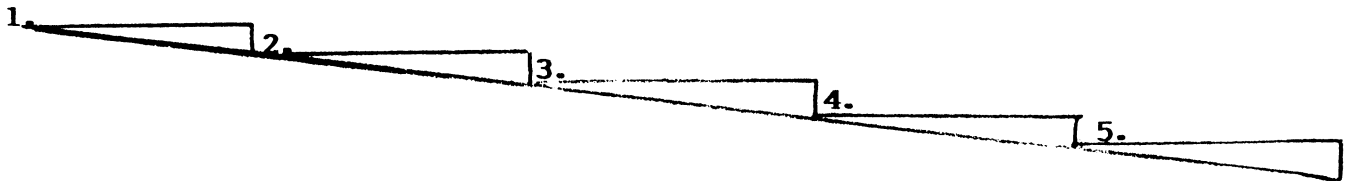
Causes of Depression (Cont.IV)

- C. Sin, disobedience, failure, irresponsibility in our thinking and living
 1. Asserting my will, "my control" above God's will (Gen. 4:1-7, Ps. 32)
 2. Basing my decisions and choices on "feelings".
 3. Selfishness in motivations, focus, demands, and in our living.
 4. Pride - putting ourselves above _____ (Isa. 14:12-15)
 5. Neglecting responsibilities, priorities, self discipline
 6. Covetousness, greed, jealousy, envy (Ps. 73)
 7. Sinful anger (turns inward or vengeful)
 8. Purposelessness, aimlessness, no goals...
 9. Unforgiveness, resentment and bitterness
 10. Wrong perspectives, not thinking according to God's wisdom
 11. Procrastination - getting behind in _____, putting off _____
 12. Breaking any of God's laws (1 Jn. 3:4), lying, cheating, stealing, adultery...
 13. Falling short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23)
 14. Any rebellion toward God (Isa. 1:2)
 15. Unbelief (making God a liar) (1 Jn. 5:10)
 16. Going your own way without seeking God (Isa. 53:6)
 17. All unrighteous is sin (1 Jn. 5:17)
 18. Unrepentance - unwillingness to change (Mt. 27:3-5)

19. Sinful/negative thought life - about self, world, life, others, future...
20. Not doing what we know we should (Js. 4:17)
(Bible reading, prayer, meditation, spiritual gifts, church involvement, witnessing, being a "doer of the Word", serving others, loving God with all your heart, loving your neighbor...)

The list could obviously go on and on, but the point must be made - when we sin... we FEEL GUILTY! Guilt is one of the leading causes of depression. Since guilt is a symptom (a result of sin) we can't deal with it until we uncover/confess (Ps. 51) and repent of the sin (Prov. 28:13; 1Jn. 1:9). When we experience God's forgiveness there is no guilt feeling or condemnation any more... He promises (Rom. 8:1). Also, if others are involved we must pursue peace with all (Rom. 12:17-21) and do our part to be reconciled (Mt. 5:23-24). It is wise to also get some godly counsel and direction in applying the appropriate Scriptures in order to effect lasting change! See Study "Help I've Fallen... But I Can Get Up" and "Biblical Change".

STEPS DOWNWARD TO DEPRESSION



- D. FAULTY BELIEF SYSTEM (False hopes, Unmet longings, Blocked goals, Unattainable dreams)

What we truly believe motivates us. In fact all behavior is motivated by some form of internally (mental) forming conclusions about how to get what we want, need or think we need. We're motivated, even driven by our longings and desires. If one is honest with themselves, it won't take long to analyze why we really do what we do. As we continue to tract down the answer to "why", (rooted in the core of our being) we discover some foolish and selfish motives. These are reflected in a variety of different statements. All of which are manufactured by "man's thinking and natural inclinations", rather than God's revelation of truth and wisdom which sheds light on those matters. For the sake of convenience I've chosen to fit these wrong belief systems into 3 categories (certainly they could be broken down in many ways). I also recognize that the complex combination of these categories are intertwined with one another and it's not an easy matter to sort out. One's personality, experience, circumstances, and relationships (past, present, and future) all play a part in shaping ones perceptions. Therefore, in my communication on this subject I do not want to minimize the complexities of depression nor do I want to complicate it beyond understanding. It takes time for a counselor to unravel the "cognitive themes" (thought patterns) and help someone understand how it all relates. Most assuredly, however, this is where God's Spirit and God's Word give wisdom and work together in transforming one's mind. The solution(s) involve applying the appropriate Biblical thinking to replace the faulty thinking. We shouldn't think any less than God's best. This becomes a process of tailor-making prepared planned responses into ones daily thought life. Think though the following categories and trace how the "hold", of some of these untrue thoughts has controlled your living. Then realize that these counterfeit foundational "strongholds" have failed and only led you to "empty wells" and frustration.

1. Worldly Values

"I'll never be happy/successful... unless I have _____".

"If you want to be somebody you've got to have _____".

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|----|
| a. beauty | f. youthfulness | k. |
| b. intelligence | g. control | l. |
| c. talent | h. prestige, position | |
| d. wealth, money | i. strength | |
| e. power | j. possessions (materialism) | |

Now we can easily understand why 1Jn. 2:15-17 is so on target when it speaks about: the lust (cravings) of the flesh
the lust (desires) of the eyes
the pride of life

Temporal values/material things may bring pleasure for awhile and one may attempt to full their life with all kinds of even "good" things and activities, but there is an inner emptiness that only Christ can fill. Trying to prove ourselves or base our happiness on what advertizing, Hollywood, Wall Street or the Jones say or do will never satisfy our thirst. Observe what God's Word says:

Jn. 7:37-38	Ecc1. 3:11-14
Isa. 55:1-3	Ps. 1:1-6
Matt. 5:1-16	Matt. 18:1-4
Lk. 10:25-27	Lk. 10:38-42
Lk. 12:15-21	Phil. 3:3-14
Phil. 4:6-19	Jer. 9:23-24
Rom. 12:1-8	1Tim. 6:6-11
Josh. 1:8	Matt. 6:33

2. Unbiblical Standards (that we operate from but can't live up to, resulting in depression)

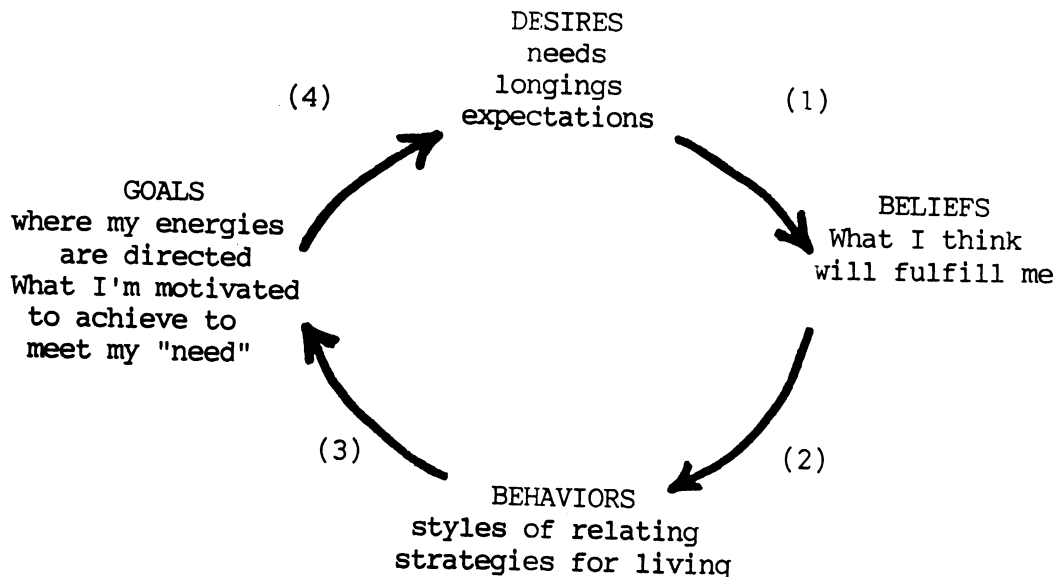
- "I won't sin anymore (1Jn. 1:7-2:2).
- "I should not struggle/have those problems as a Christian" (Rom. 7).
- "If I just _____ God will accept me" (Rom. 15:7; 3:21-26; 4:21-5:11).
God "accepts" us on the basis of Christ's work on the cross for us - not on our performance. (See Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3:5; Gal. 2:16).
- "If I don't measure up, I'm no good... worthless".
- e.

3. Unrealistic Expectations (false hopes, unattainable dreams/demands)

- "Everything should go _____ (perfectly, smoothly, my way...)"
- "I should have /get everything I want".
- "_____ (life, others...) will make me feel secure (loved)".
- "_____ " " " " " " " significant (purposefully important)".
- "Everyone should cater to me".
- "All my needs and desires will be fulfilled".
- "_____ better come through for me by giving me _____".
attention approval
affection acceptance
appreciation affirmation
- h.
- i.
- j.

Many or these unrealistic expectations are corrected by recognizing them, realizing how we've operated unfairly towards others, and then repenting of them. However, many are rooted in a very selfish perspective of life and

others, which must be refocused. Rather than resorting to a manipulative style of relating to others, replace it with a "ministry-minded" mode of living. Develop a servant's heart! Seriously study Phil. 2:3-13 & Rom. 12:1-8. These and many others will set you free from the inner "demands" placed on others which only strain relationships and set people for other problems and depression. The question may arise, "While serving others who will meet my needs?" This is answered in Jn. 15. Most of the causes of depression can be understood as they fit into this simple diagram. The flow of this thinking originated from Dr. Larry Crabb. In fact it is a great model to plug almost all of life into. Think about it in terms of how it relates to your experience.



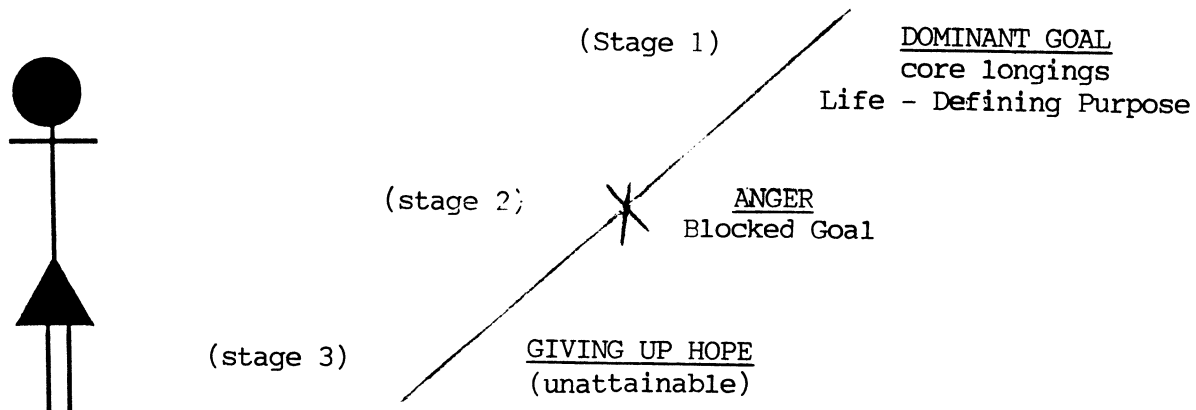
Arrow #1 represents the fact that my desired... propel me to think in terms of what will satisfy me.

Arrow #2 shows that my conclusions (so far) motivate me to action. I do what I do because I believe it will...

Arrow #3 shows that all behavior is directed toward accomplishing something. What I'm I getting out of the things I do? I always do what I do with some goal in mind.

Arrow #4 shows that when/if I reach my desired goal I will evaluate whether or not my deep longings have been fulfilled. Since the "temporal" things are not the eternal things (2Cor. 4:18) they will never meet the emptiness that ones soul demands and thus the vicious cycle repeats over and over leading to frustration, despair and depression. Observe one final illustration revealing a 3-stage development of depression:

Development of Depression



Stage 1 - Even though one may not have verbally articulated these things, inwardly we've defined what we want out of life, what makes life worth living. It's simply what we must achieve to be _____ (happy, successful, fulfilled....).

Stage 2 - THEN... "horror of horrors" someone/something gets in our way, or doesn't cooperate with us... and our goal is blocked! (This is a good way to understand anger. When you're angry ask, what goal is being blocked?) At this point anger is such a propulsive emotion - it gets you going and many times motivates us to get around the block! There is a desperate increase of anticipated hope that "maybe this will work". If it doesn't we try moving in other directions.

Stage 3 - The "block" seems permanent and the goal unattainable. There's no hope! This is what Proverbs 13:12 says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick". Many resign themselves over to the deadness of depression in order to keep away the agony of no fulfillment, thus giving up hope.

Whether we're driven by keeping up with the Jones, craving recognition, longing for happiness or simply demanding our own way, it's all "banking on an empty account!" If those deficit motivations persist in our thinking we might be tempted to use them in some distorted way and they could easily become "self - serving falsehoods". Self-serving in the sense that I could use them to manipulate others or serve my agenda, my wishes, my wants, or my happiness. At last when we've moved on to other "idols of the heart", some counterfeit "god" made to suit us, which will fail us over and over, our conclusions lead to despair and depression. Some common conclusion are: "People don't care", "life is cruel", "nothings fair", "I'll never be...", "I'm no good", My expectations have been dashed for the last time, "I quit!" These are on the way down the spiral of defeat to depression. We even protect ourselves through defensiveness, rationalization, justifying of ourselves, blameshifting, denial, making excuses, covering up and blaming God! (See Gen.3). What we need to do is humble ourselves before God, take personal responsibility for our thoughts and actions (Js. 4:6-10) and begin to replace the wrong thoughts and motivations with what God says about these areas (Eph. 4:20-32; Phil. 4:6-9; Col. 3:1-4:6). We will begin to overcome depression. These references above are the solutions to faulty thinking. Look them up and prayerfully study them. Ask God for wisdom to connect His truths up to where you need to be transformed in your thinking the most. Write them out and carry them with you to fill your mind with "truth". Change the "tapes" you've been playing there. You will need to talk these areas through with a Biblical counselor as well, to not only point you to the best resources but to hold you accountable in your commitment to refocusing, replacing and rebuilding your innerbeing God's way! (Heb. 3:13)

Understanding the Context of Influences from the Past

These three stages reveal a deeper development of depression that goes beyond an easy diagnoses of just present outer circumstances and causes. Many times it is necessary to understand a person's past to determine what some of those "dominant goal(s)" might be that have triggered it (Stage 1). We can trace many present attitudes, actions, feelings, behaviors and perceptions regarding ourselves, God, others, and life to deep rooted patterns. These patterns are directly connected up to past influences such as past hurts, rejection, abuse, parental expectations, or lack of parental involvement, love and relationship; ways in which one may have been sinned against; family background and upbringing; being churched or unchurched; the social, financial, educational, political, cultural, and spiritual environment, and the list goes on. Make no mistake about it, this issue of the "influential factors" in no way excuses ones behavior! No one can justify their sinful behavior, because everyone is responsible and accountable to God for how they respond and what they choose to do. No amount of "analyzing" can "explain away" one's responsibility. Even in understanding one's background, there is no place for blameshifting or making excuses to explain away one's present behavior if one isn't living in obedience to God's Word. We are always responsible to obey God's word and make the right decision! However, in some cases of depression one may need to be "set free", by seeing the connection of how past influences contribute to present struggles. So in order to find out what's really going on behind this "Dominant Goal-depression" Dr. Larry Crabb suggests understanding the "deep longings" that are still unmet by:

1. Getting a good history of one's life in relation to evaluating the "real goal". Who and what are you really living for? This reveals the idolatry of the heart - what's really been going on under the water level. This is where counseling is necessary.
2. Through counseling one must face up to the things controlling their world. There are styles of life that they've formed, patterns of self-protections, avoidances, resistance, ways of responding and dealing with people ... all resulting from unmet longings.
3. Start to take responsibility for what's driving you, see it for what it really is!
4. Repentance, from self focus, dying to "self protections" and turning to "showing love" is the solution-oriented direction.
5. Begin to make legitimate choices, in terms of ones longings, by living God's way, committing those things to Him and then loving and **serv**ing others (Phil. 2:3-13).

Be patient through this transition of time, counseling and understanding. As soon as you start making the right choices out of obedience to God, things will change for the better. Just don't pull up your blanket of depression to cover over your pain. That may even be a tempting and convenient escape from the pain of unmet deep longings. Here's where you must go against your feelings and get the help that will lead you out of this vicious cycle of bondage to really knowing Christ, as the truth that sets you free (Jn. 8:32).

V. Concluding Solutions and Steps to Overcoming Depression

Throughout this study I've referenced numerous scriptures and explanations about depression. We've looked at definitions, types of depressions, symptoms, characteristics, causes and solutions, as well as, how depression develops and how to diagnose it. Now it's time to personalize all this and make it practical by putting into order some of the vital suggested steps. While there is no quick simple solutions, these serve as guidelines to get you moving in the right direction. Be patient and take one step at a time.

- A. Humble yourself before God and ask Him for wisdom, grace, help, and guidance... Js. 1:2-12; 4:6-10; Heb. 4:14-16; 1Cor. 10:13. You can face it as you acknowledge your dependence on Him and seek Him like never before. So stick with it (Rom. 8:28-39).

- B. Look up the scriptures on your own and write out the special insights that God reveals to you in a separate "journal".
- C. Carefully and prayerfully evaluate the causes, gather data, understand the facts about what's going on and why. Here are some key questions to get answers to: (After reading these it is important to make sure to read the following paragraph).
1. What do you mean when you use the word "depression"? Explain what you're feeling, thinking, doing or not doing, symptoms...
 2. When are you depressed? Time of day, surrounding events, people...
 3. How often? How long does it last?
 4. How long have you been depressed?
 5. When did all this start?
 6. What happened at this time? (who, what, when, where, how, why?)
 7. How did you interpret these events?
 8. How did you respond to these events?
 9. Do you think this is what caused your depression? Why or why not?
 10. Why do you think you're depressed?
 11. What is going on? Are there any other contributing factors?
 12. How has this effected your _____(marriage, family, job, finances, time, schedule, friendships, relationships, sleep, recreation, diet, ...)
 13. What might be some consequences and compounding problems that you're presently facing resulting from all this? (resent failures, sin, avoidance of others, anger ...)
 14. What have you tried to do about any of this?
 15. What do you think God wants you to do about this?
 - 16.
 - 17.
 - 18.
 - 19.
 - 20.

Now, if just in reading over these you feel overwhelmed, this is the point at which you need outside help. Depending on the depth of your depression (see p. 2-3) you may need a medical doctor; remember medical solutions can't solve the root cause . In any depression things must be talked out and understood God's way. Since some present stress and depression can be linked directly to past hurts, parental expectations, rejection, lack of love, abuse ... it's necessary to get Biblical counseling that will dig deeper into one's background growing up (see p. 13).

- D. Discover the specific cause(s) of your depression. To the degree that you honestly evaluate and identify what's going on - that's the degree to which you'll solve it! So, let God's Spirit and Word transform your inner being specifically in the areas of struggle.
- E. If your depression is strictly caused by organic, biochemical or biological breakdowns then a medical doctor will correct it through prescribing necessary vitamins, diet ... (see p. 2 & 6).
- F. If the depression is the result of mishandling a hard situation, a "life jolting" situation, review pp. 6-8 and study out the Scriptures.
1. Realize how it all happened.
 2. Take personal responsibility - no blameshifting, excuse making, procrastinating, denial ...
 3. Confess your wrong sinful responses to God and others if necessary.
 4. Repent, turn from your way and replace it with God's way. (How does Scripture tell you to respond to this?)
 5. "Retrace your steps" by applying Scripture to the areas of breakdown.
 6. Replace the wrong response with the right responses.
 7. Rebuild your thinking around God's word and make this a positive testimony.

- G. If your depression was caused by sin, irresponsibility or some failure on your part (p. 8-9), then follow the above steps, confession (Ps. 32:51; IJn. 1:9), repentance (Prov. 28:13), replacement - "put off - put on" (Eph. 4:20-32 - see Biblical Change Study), and reconciliation (Mt. 5:23-24).
- H. If depression has resulted from a faulty belief system (pp. 9-11) then define what's going on (above steps) and replace:
- false hopes with true hope
 - faulty beliefs with God's truth
 - unrealistic expectations with realistic thinking
 - unmet longings with Christ's fulfilling presence, promises...

The verses listed on p. 10 will start you moving in the right direction necessary to interpret things from the Biblical perspective. (If you need help understanding how these verses connect to your particular problem or need further resources ... see me).

- I. Realize the spiritual battle. Satan's goal is to defeat you by getting your eyes off Christ and on to yourself, your problems and failures, your feelings, negative critical thinking, self pity, misconceptions about God, fear of others, past regrets and guilt trips, present frustrations, future anxieties and a whole list of thought life "ruts" that plunge one into a downward spiral of grief and bondage! So don't ignore the obvious sources of God's power into your life.
1. Maintain daily devotions- meditate on God's word daily (Ps. 1; Josh. 1:8).
 2. Learn to praise, worship, and pray to God daily. Focus on His presence, power, protection, provision, purposes, and promises!
 3. Get to church every Sunday and Wednesday. Bible teaching and fellowship together with other believers is a vital part of your spiritual growth.
 4. Know how to be controlled by God's Spirit (see study) Eph. 5:18.
 5. Develop an attitude of gratitude- make a list of what you're thankful for. Think about the goodness and mercies of God.
 6. Deal with problems daily. Solve them immediately, don't let them build up (see me for additional studies on Biblical Solutions to whatever you might be facing - guilt, resentment, worry, anger, fear, relationships...
 7. Learn to trust God. He is greater than your problems! (IJn. 4:4). Daily acknowledge your dependence on Him for grace (2Cor. 12:9-10) and wisdom (Js. 1:5). Also study Rom. 8:26-39 for ½ hr. a day for one week.
 8. Learn what He wants to accomplish and teach you right now in your life. Are you cooperating or resisting?
 9. Discover, develop and exercise your spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:3-8).
 10. Start looking for ways to serve others (Heb. 13:16; Gal. 5:13).
 11. Learn how to use your struggles as a positive testimony to share with others what God is teaching you and use it as an opportunity to witness.
 12. Keep persevering in the disciplining of your life in these ways and keep looking unto Jesus!

For these 12 concepts there are hundreds of verses, if you would like them on any particular point for further reinforcement, understanding or motivation, see me.

- J. Other Helpful Guidelines in Overcoming Depression
1. Get up and get out of the house (at least for a walk or drive) for a change of environment.
 2. Make a list of fun things you'd like to do and do one enjoyable thing daily.
 3. Make a list of your priorities and responsibilities and put things into a schedule. Organize your life. Know where and when things fit in.
 4. Plan your months, weeks and days in order to keep your life in perspective.
 5. Invite someone over, twice a month. It will force you to clean up, but most of all develop close friendships with godly people.
 6. Take care of your physical needs- proper food, diet, sleep, nutrition, exercise...

7. Keep up your daily routine, but don't push yourself or try to do too much too fast.
 8. Communicate honestly about what's going on with someone you can trust who can hold you accountable to moving forward in God's will.
 9. Use a timer or alarm to remind you throughout the day to "take a break", regroup your thoughts, or memorize a scripture verse.
 10. Develop some new interests, hobbies, sports, activities, recreation...
 11. Learn to laugh (Prov. 17:22; 15:13). There's some good comedy out there!
 12. Keep Christian radio, music, tapes playing throughout the day to keep your mind fed and focused on Truth.
- K. Practical Bible Study Projects (see me for these helpful studies)
1. Help I've Fallen and I Can Get Up! Restoring your relationship with God.
 2. How to Forgive God's Way! Overcome bitterness and resentment by knowing God's forgiveness.
 3. Study the book of Philippians- Discover how Paul got his eyes off of himself and reached out to others! Learn his "secrets" to peace, contentment, and joy!
 4. Get a Biblically Accurate View of Self & Who You are in Christ.
 5. Biblical Change - Avoid negative people, places, things (TV) which might make provision for the flesh and pull you down into sin (Rom. 13:14). Learn what to "replace" these things with (Eph. 4:20-32).
 6. Thought Life - Replace the wrong tapes (voices) in your mind that have been defeating you (what holds the mind, molds the life). Start thinking on the things that are true, pure, right...(Phil. 4:8) and keep your mind stayed on Christ and He will keep you in perfect peace (Isa. 26:3). Learn to prepare yourself with prepared responses so you will stand in the armor and power of God's word (Eph. 6:10-18).
 7. Basic Factors for Living - A Biblical and practical study of our goals, schedule, priorities, discipline and motivation!
 8. Do a Psalms study - devotional exercises to bring you into the presence of God!
 9. Overcoming Temptation - Jesus defeated Satan and gave us the example on how to do it (Matt. 4:1-11). Also memorize Rom. 6. You can be victorious.
 10. What God Teaches Us Through Trials and Suffering - The more you know, the more you benefit!
 11. Mid Life Crisis, Spiritual Dryness & Burn Out - They all have in common the same characteristics, causes and cures!
 12. Happiness is a Choice (Minirth & Meier) pp. 136-147, 174-195
 13. Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome - Dr. Robert Hicks
 14. Depression Studies & Resources by Dr. Wayne Mack, Dr. Jay Adams, Dr. Larry Crabb, Dr. Norman Wright, Dr. Gary Collins, Dr. Tim LaHaye, Dr. Clyde Narramore, Dr. Ed Hindson, Dr. John Bettler, Don Baker, Theodore Irwin, Howard A. Eyrich, Emery Nestor - since no one person has all the answers, I've had to draw from the observations and writing of these people to broaden my scope of understanding. I trust you will honestly and seriously work through this study and then help others through too! (Ps. 51:12-13)
- You can and must go against your feelings when they're contrary to God's will. The power comes in the doing (Phil. 4:13) so start making the right choices. The sooner you do you generate hope and the more you do the right thing the easier it becomes! Faith, is the victory, that only comes through God's word (Rom.10:17)!

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES DEALING WITH DEPRESSION

Prov. 12:25
 13:12
 14:30
 15:13

Prov. 17:22
 18:14
 Ps. 27:13-14

MORE GREAT PROMISES FOR OVERCOMING DEPRESSION

Isa. 35:3-4
 40:27-31
 41:10
 42:3
 43:1-3
 Mt. 10:29-31
 11:28-30
 I Cor. 10:13
 2 Cor. 3:4-5
 4:6-11
 4:16-18
 5:7,9
 Rom. 8:26-39
 Prov. 3:19-26
 19:23
 Ps. 3:5-6
 4:7-8
 18:1-3,6
 18:46-50
 23:1-6
 25
 27
 31
 34
 37:1-11
 37:39-40
 40:1-4
 42

Phil. 4:6-9
 4:13
 2 Tim. 1:7
 Heb. 12:1-3
 13:5-6
 1 Pet. 1:5-7
 4:12-16
 4:19
 5:6-10
 Jn. 14:1-31
 15:16-17
 Ps. 46:1-2
 46:10
 50:23
 55:16
 55:22
 56:8-11
 62:1-2
 63:1-7
 69:29-32
 71:19-21
 73:23-28
 118:5-9

SCRIPTURAL INSIGHTS ON HAPPINESS (BLESSEDNESS)

Josh. 1:8-9	Prov. 3:13
Ps. 1:1-6	8:32,34
2:12	16:20
5:11-12	22:9
9:14	28:14
13:5-6	Isa. 56:2
16:5-11	Jer. 15:16
19:8	17:7
32:1-2	Acts 20:35
34:8	13:52
40:4	Mt. 5:3
41:1-3	5:4
51:12	5:5
65:4	5:6
71:23	5:7
81:1	5:8
84:4-12	5:9
89:15	5:10
90:14	5:11-12
106:3	11:6
112:1-2	Lk. 2:10
119:1	11:28
119:2	24:52
119:11	Jn. 3:29
127:2-5	13:17
128:1-6	15:1-12
137:8-9	16:22,24
144:15	20:29
146:5	Rom. 14:17
Neh. 8:10	15:13
Rom. 4:7-8	Phil. 4:6-9
Gal. 5:22-23	2Cor. 12:8-10
Phil. 1:4	Js. 1:12, 22-25
1:25	5:11
4:1,4	1 Pet. 1:8
4:12	3:14
1 Thess. 1:6	4:14
5:11	1 Jn. 1:4
5:16-18	2 Jn. 1:12
	Rev. 1:3
	14:13
	16:15
	19:9
	20:6
	22:7
	22:14