

The Bible & Mental Health (6)

Self Esteem

INTRODUCTION:

A. Distinction between discouragement and depression.

1. Discouragement: a temporary feeling of disappointment or disheartenment resulting from a disadvantageous turn of events – either material, social, emotional, or spiritual.
2. Depression: a protracted period of despondency that greatly curtails, or even destroys, one's ability to function as a healthy and happy person.

CAUSES OF DEPRESSION

A. Physical tragedy (ex: injury from an automobile accident or development of a serious illness). Consider Luke 5:31 and Romans 5:12.

B. Deprivation of material substance. Re: Matthew 6:11; Matthew 6:21; 1 Timothy 6:7-8.

C. Social trauma (ex: forsaken by friend, unrequited love, etc.). Re: Psalm 118:8; 2 Timothy 4:16-17. Also consider the providence of God.

D. Death of a loved one (ex: spouse, parent, or child). Genesis 25:8; II Samuel 12:23; Matthew 8:11; Matthew 17:3ff; Luke 16:9; Luke 16:16ff. We can be comforted by the fact that our creator is aware of our grief. Re: Psalm 56:8; Psalm 103:13; 2 Kings 20:5; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Psalm 55:22. Realize that all our heartaches will be removed in heaven. Re: Revelation 21:4.

E. Personal guilt. Psalm 6:2-7; Isaiah 57:20-21.

CONQUERING DEPRESSION

A. Refuse to be self-centered. Re: Luke 23:34.

B. Refuse to constantly focus on the negative. Proverbs 16:24; Proverbs 23:7; Mark 7:21-23; Philippians 4:8.

C. Remain spiritually active. Hebrews 10:25.

D. Seeking out the companionship of those who will lift you up rather than those persons with similar problems (who may tend to bring you down).

E. Refuse to be constantly critical of others.

F. Be realistic; do not expect quick, magical solutions to your problems.

G. Remember that you possess more than just one trait.

H. Learn to trust God, no matter what the circumstances. Re: Proverbs 3:5-6.

CONCLUSION:

1. God wants you to be happy.
2. Show the world the true joy of living the Christian life.

Most thoughts of suicide are caused by the disease *clinical depression*. Depression was not recognized as a disease in Biblical times, so there are no direct references to it in the Bible. However, depression is a physical illness that can usually be treated with medication and/or counseling to prevent recurrence.

Anyone having thoughts of suicide should promise himself or herself not to take any action until discussing it with a minister, priest, school guidance counselor, physician, psychologist or psychiatrist. All these people understand depression and despair and how to work through it to become an even stronger and happier person than before.

Here is some information from the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention:

Depression is a potentially serious, but highly treatable medical illness. It is not a personal weakness or a punishment for bad behavior. Most cases of depression can be successfully treated on an outpatient basis with prescription drugs and/or counseling.

The symptoms of depression are listed below. If you, or someone you care about, has been experiencing several of these symptoms that have lasted for more than two weeks, it is important to seek help right away. Go to an emergency room or crisis center if the situation is severe. Family physicians, psychiatrists and some other mental health professionals are qualified to treat depression.

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION:

- Depressed mood
- Change in sleeping patterns (too much, too little, etc.)
- Change in weight or appetite
- Speaking or moving unusually fast or slow
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate
- Thoughts of death, suicide, or wishing to be dead
- Anxiety, agitation, or enraged behavior
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse
- Neglect of physical health
- Feelings of hopelessness or desperation