

DEPRESSION

1. First, cover the preconditions to God's promises in the outline "You can Change".
2. Knowing God does not solve the problem of depression.
3. Depression can be a result of sickness, tragic loss (death), loss of sleep, overwork, hormonal imbalance, crises (financial loss, etc.), failure to meet responsibility, or a sinful reaction to a problem.
 - a) Find out the cause.
 - b) If the cause is a sinful reaction to a problem, depression can arise from a failure of self-control and/or self-discipline.
4. One of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to produce discipline in us by teaching us to be faithful in our obedience to His Word.
5. We should seek to please God by doing what He says to do, rather than by doing what we feel like doing (Galatians 5:17).
6. When we fail to meet our responsibilities properly, our conscience triggers bad feelings that may well lead to depression (Psalms 32:4).
7. The guilt that underlies depression comes from the failure to handle problems God's way. The result is that we become less functional and debilitated. Our body functions slow down, and we feel like we have no energy or motivation. Finally, we do nothing.
8. Failure to heed these warnings and trying to silence them by abusing drugs or alcohol constitutes added failure, which compounds the guilt. As the intensity of our bad feelings increases, depression grows.
9. We must begin with God's solution, refusing to allow setbacks and hardship to keep us from doing what we know we ought to do (2 Corinthians 4:8-9).
10. A depressed person is one who refuses to "get back up" when he is down.
11. It is important to understand the difference between depression and simply being disappointed or feeling blue, low, or physically depleted.
12. Discouragement, confusion, or perplexity need not lead to depression (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). Depression comes when we do not handle these things God's way.
13. Depression arises when bad feelings hinder us from carrying out our duties. We end up following our feelings instead of performing our obligations to God, our family, and our neighbors.
14. Feelings of guilt make us feel worse. Bad feelings are additive, and we can end up becoming worse.
15. If we simply follow our feelings, we will be led into deeper depression.

16. Bad feelings can come from sin or sickness. The result is that our work piles up, we seem to have less strength, and we think, "I'll wait until I feel better." This is an indication that we are on the way to deeper depression.
17. The key to avoiding depression is this: do not follow your feelings when you have a responsibility to discharge. Do it even if it seems you are simply going through the motions. Always do it to please God.
18. God will reward you with a sense of satisfaction, and enthusiasm will follow (Philippians 4:8-9).
19. Don't wait for your feelings to change. You may never finish the task. Also, do not try to change your feelings, because you can't.
20. Do what you know God wants you to do, whether you feel like it or not. Good feelings will follow as a by-product. "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22); "Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12: 13).
21. This is the secret of turning back the tide of depression. There is no other way.
22. If you do what you know God wants you to do, and you do it to please Him whether you feel like it or not, He will bless you and strengthen you and eventually change your feelings.
23. Make a list of all the things you know you ought to do but have not done because you haven't felt like it.
24. Get to work doing the things on your list to please God and to help others who are depending on you (your spouse, your family, your boss, your roommate, etc.). Keep at it no matter how you feel. As you see the task completed, you will begin to feel differently. Do not put it off to a more convenient time.
25. What about the future? You must avoid further depression the same way you pulled out of it: by doing whatever God requires of you in any low period of your life, whether you feel like it or not. Schedule your life in the future and stick to it, no matter how you feel (James 1:22-25).
26. If necessary, get someone to help you with a schedule. Ask them to help monitor it until you become used to it. That is what a Christian helper is for (Hebrews 10:24).
27. God Himself plans and schedules, and you are created in His image. You need order in your life. God requires it. There will be no time for self-pity.
28. Summary: What to do to get out of depression and stay out.
 - a) Confess your sin of failing in your responsibilities (and any other sin you have failed to confess).
 - b) Begin to do what you know God wants you to do in order to please Him, whether you feel like it or not.

- c) Deal biblically with any particular sin that may have triggered the bad feeling In the first place. The feeling may not have originated in sin, however, e.g., illness, financial reverses, hormonal changes, etc.
- d) Avoid pity parties, blue funks and gripe sessions.
- e) Schedule your work, then follow your schedule, not your feelings.
- f) Develop a think list - things to think on (Philippians 4:8-9).

Factors that feed depression:

Nursing a grudge	Bitterness
Self-pity	Putting off decisions
Gripe sessions	Despair
Brooding	Envy
Over-eating	Sleep loss
Refusal to eat	Any life-dominating problem

Scriptural references (NASB):

Genesis 4:6-7 - God asked, "'Why are you angry? And why has your face fallen?' God then pointed the way out. 'If you do right, will not your face be lifted up?'"

Psalms 32, 38, and 51

Proverbs 18: 14

1 Timothy 4:2 - The seared conscience

1 Peter 3:10-12 - To have good days, you must do good things

1 Peter 3:16