

Christians Get Depressed Too

Session 3: What Is Depression? - 2022-05-04

“First, these five areas are all interrelated. We cannot separate our thoughts from our feelings or our feelings from our behavior. What we think affects how we feel. What we think and feel affects our physical health. Our thoughts, feelings, and physical health affect what we do. To illustrate how connected we are, just think of the last time you had the flu and how this impacted your feelings, concentration, mental alertness, physical abilities, and prayer life.” – *David Murray (pp. 32-33)*

Five Areas of Our Lives

1. Our Life Situation

- Murray then writes, “Consequently, we often need an objective view of our lives. Independent people such as a doctor, a counselor, or a pastor can help us look at our lives more objectively. Often, when we are helped to review our lives, we begin to see the real and significant effects our problems or difficulties have had on us and the extent to which they may have contributed to our depression or anxiety.” – *David Murray (pp. 34-35)*

2. Our Thoughts

- a. Murray writes this regarding our thought life, “Perhaps the most obvious symptoms of depression are the depressed person’s unhelpful thought patterns, which tend to distort his view of reality in a false and negative way, adding to his depression or anxiety. As the writers of *Mind over Mood* put it, ‘Our perception of an event or experience powerfully affects our emotional, behavioral, and physiological responses to it.’” – David Murray

b. Murray gives us 10 false thought patterns that contribute to our depression. He also provides examples for each one.

- **False Extremes:** (Job 13:24; 33:10).

- **False Generalization:** (Gen 42:36). “All these things are against me,”

- **False Filter:** (1 Kings 19:10).

- **False Transformation:** (Jonah 4:3-4).

- **False Mind Reading:** (Ps. 116:11).

- **False Fortune Telling:** (John 11:16).

- **False Lens:** (John 21:3).

- **False Feelings-based Reasoning:** (Ps. 31:22).

- **False “Shoulds”:** (Luke 10:40-42).

- **False Responsibility:** (Num. 11:14-15).

3. Our Feelings

a. *Do you feel overwhelming sadness?*

- Job (Job 3:20; 6:2-3; 16:6, 16); David (Ps. 42:3,7).
- **Psalm 42:3 (ESV)** — 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, “Where is your God?”

b. *Do you feel angry with God or others?*

- Murray writes, “A common characteristic of depression, especially in men, is a deep-seated and often irrational irritability and anger.”
- Jonah (Jonah 4:4, 9); Moses (Num. 20:10-11).
- **Jonah 4:9 (ESV)** — 9 But God said to Jonah, “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?” And he said, “Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.”

c. *Do you feel your life is worthless?*

- Job (Job 3:3-26); Jeremiah (Jer. 20:14-18).
- **Jeremiah 20:18 (ESV)** — 18 Why did I come out from the womb to see toil and sorrow, and spend my days in shame?

d. *Do you feel extreme anxiety or panic?*

- Murray writes, “The authors *I’m Not Supposed to Feel Like This* explain what happens when a person is overwhelmed by anxiety: ‘in anxiety, the person often overestimates the threat or danger they are facing, and at the same time usually underestimates their own capacity to cope with the problem.’ Panic attacks are really the rapid onset of extreme anxiety about some imagined catastrophic event. They last only fifteen to thirty minutes, but the person usually wants to flee the situation.”
- David (1 Sam 21:12). Disciples (Matt 8:25).

e. *Do you feel God hates you and is far from you?*

- Job (Job 6:4; 13:24; 16:11; 19:11; 30:19-23, 26)

- **Lamentations 3:1–3 (ESV)** *“I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; 2 he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; 3 surely against me he turns his hand again and again the whole day long.”*

f. *Do you feel suicidal or do you have a longing to die?*

Murray quotes Charles Spurgeon, “as he commented on the experience of Heman in Psalm 88: ‘He[Heman] felt as if he must die. Indeed he felt himself half dead already. All his life was going, his spiritual life declined, his mental life decayed, his bodily life flickered; he was nearer dead than alive. Some of us can enter into this experience for many a time have we traversed this valley of death shade, and dwelt in it by the month together. Really to die and to be with Christ will be a gala day’s enjoyment compared with our misery when a worse than physical death has cast its dreadful shadow over us. Death would be welcome as a relief by those whose depressed spirits make their existence a living death. Are good men ever permitted to suffer thus? Indeed they are; and some of them are even all their lifetime subject to bondage.... It is a sad case when our only hope lies in the direction of death, our only liberty of spirit amid the congenial horrors of corruption.... He felt as if he were utterly forgotten as those whose carcasses are left to rot on the battlefield. As when a soldier, mortally wounded, bleeds undeeded amid the heaps of slain, and remains to his last expiring groan, unpitied and unsuccoured, so did Heman sigh out his soul in loneliest sorrow, feeling as if even God himself had quite forgotten him. How low the spirits of good and brace man will sometimes sink. Under the influence of certain disorders everything will wear a somber aspect, and the heart will dive into the profoundest deeps of misery.”

Job (Job 3:20-22; 6:9; 7:15-16); Moses (Num. 11:14); Elijah (1 Kings 19:4).

4. Our Bodily Symptoms

a. **Proverbs 17:22 (ESV)** A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

b. *Symptoms include:* Disturbed sleep; tiredness; weight fluctuations; digestive problems; loss of appetite; bodily pain; choking feelings and breathlessness;

• **Psalm 32:3–4 (ESV)** 3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah

5. Our Behavior and Activity