

## Christians Get Depressed Too

### Session 6: Help for Caregivers - 2022-05-29

Well we've reached the end of our six-week study. So far we've talked about...

1. How to approach the subject of depression (week 1).
2. What depression is (week 3).
3. Some common causes of depression (week 4).
4. Some things that help with depression (week 5).

And finally today we're going to provide some help for caregivers.

### STUDY (1)

Murray writes this,

"As Christians, we surely want to be the person to whom our loved ones turn in time of need. And when they do turn to us, we want to be able to help them and not hurt them further. It is imperative, therefore, that we learn about depression in order to avoid the common mistakes that lay people often make when dealing with the depressed and in order to be of maximum benefit to those who are suffering." – David Murray

Murray recommends the following resources for study.

1. Study how Jesus dealt with the ill, the weak, and the distressed.
2. *I'm Not Supposed to Feel Like This* by Chris Williams, Paul Richards, and Ingrid Whitton (275 pages – \$15 new)
3. *Overcoming Spiritual Depression* by Arie Elshout (120 pages - \$12 new)
4. *Broken Minds* by Steve and Robyn Bloem (304 pages - \$17 new)
5. *A Practical Workbook for the Depressed Christian* by Dr. John Lockley (However, Murray strongly disagrees with of the material in chapter 19) (312 pages - \$5 used)
6. *Spiritual Depression* by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. (Does not deal with every aspect of depression. It rather focuses on some of the spiritual consequences of depression.) (304 pages - \$12 new)
7. *Blame It on the Brain?* (204 pages - \$15 new) & *Depression: A Stubborn Darkness* (257 pages - \$16) Dr. Edward Welch

I would add...

1. Spurgeon's Sorrows by Zach Eswine (144 pages - \$10 new)
2. Christians Get Depressed Too by David Murray (112 pages - \$10 new)
3. Why Am I Feeling Like This?: A Teen's Guide to Freedom from Anxiety and Depression by David Murray (144 pages - \$13 new)
4. Why Is My Teenager Feeling Like This?: A Guide for Helping Teens through Anxiety and Depression by David Murray (160 pages - \$16 new)

## **SYMPATHY (2)**

Murray defines sympathy this way,

“By sympathy, I mean an ability to communicate that we truly understand the problem and the symptoms, that we are deeply concerned, and that we will do all that we can to help.” – David Murray

Murray asks us to consider the following quote from Russell Hampton, who suffered from depression:

“If there were a physical disease that manifested itself in some particularly ugly way, such as postulating sores or a sloughing off of the flesh accompanied by pain of an intense and chronic nature, readily visible to everyone, and if that disease affected fifteen million people in our country, and further, if there were virtually no help or succour for most of these persons, and they were forced to walk among us in their obvious agony, we would rise up as one social body in sympathy and anger. There isn't such a physical disease, but there is such a disease of the mind, and about fifteen million people around us are suffering from it. But we have not risen in anger and sympathy, although they are walking among us in their pain and anguish.” – David Murray

### **SUPPORT (3)**

Really support is the natural overflow of sympathy.

1. It involves being available to listen or talk.
2. It includes praying with them.
3. It means unconditional love. Even when you don't agree with every decision a loved one makes. Even when they sin against you.
4. It requires practical help such as baby sitting to enable a young mother a few free hours each week. Or taking an elderly person out for a drive to change the scenery.

Murray writes, "The benefits of such supportive friendship cannot be overestimated." He then quotes from John Lockley from, *A Practical Workbook for the Depressed Christian*.

"The presence, the availability, just the existence of a friend like this provides a tremendous degree of comfort to the depressed person, as it demonstrates in physical terms how much he is cared for, accepted, loved, as he is, warts and all. It is not difficult for the depressed person to go on to realise that if individual Christians can love him that much, how much more will God do the same... Unconditional friendship is the key, as is loyalty. The real friends are the ones who can accept the depressed person as he is—on good days, bad days, sad days, frightened days and angry days. Friends like this don't put pressure on in any way, but allow the sufferer to be himself, however horrid that may seem to be. As one of my depressed friends said, 'It's a relief not to have to put on a disguise.'" – John Lockley

### **STIGMA (4)**

Murray goes on to write,

“People who follow the first three steps in this chapter will help to reduce the stigma. But the church can also help by making clear that Christians do not have to be problem free and by demonstrating that when people do experience problems, they will not be ignored or avoided.”

## **SECRECY (5)**

Murray then stresses this,

“There must be no ‘sanctified’ gossip: ‘I’m just telling you this so that you can pray about it.’ ... The church is in desperate need of Christians who are known to have this simple talent—they keep confidences.”

## **SELF-ESTEEM (6)**

So how can we help as caretakers? Murray writes,

“... we should ... encourage depressed people to have a more realistic view of themselves by highlighting their God-given gifts, their contributions to the lives of others, their usefulness in society, and, if they are Christians, their value to the church. For example, a depressed young mother may feel like a total failure in every area of her life because she doesn’t have a perfect home or perfect children. We can help such a person see that she achieves a lot in a day, even though she might not manage to do everything she would like. We might remind her of all the meals she makes, cloths she washes and irons, and the shopping she manages, helping her see herself and her life in a more accurate and realistic light.”

## **SUBJECTIVISM (7)**

Murray writes,

“One of the most common tendencies for those with depression is to focus on feelings and to base beliefs and conclusions on these feelings. This is especially true of Christians. For example, they may feel forsaken and conclude they are forsaken. Also, in an effort to restore true feelings, there is the tendency to read Bible passages and books that address the feelings. But such a focus on the subjective tends only to make things worse.” – David Murray

## **SPEAK (8)**

In general, it's best to listen more than you speak. Murray provides a list of things not to say.

- Pull yourself together.
- But you've got nothing to be sad about.
- Don't get so emotional.
- Oh, you'll soon get over it.
- It's a sin to be depressed.
- Just believe the promises.
- Smile, it can't be that bad.
- Well, things could be worse.
- At least it's nothing serious.
- You should confess your sins.
- You are not still on medication, are you?

## **SUICIDE (9)**

Murray writes, “by asking, you may allow the suicidal person to admit his plans and seek professional help. This is vital and urgent if he tells you that he has gotten to the stage of making a plan.”

Pastor Steve Bloem gives a list of reasons he has, at times, used to convince himself not to commit suicide:

- It is a sin and would bring shame to Christ and His church.
- It would please the devil and would weaken greatly those who are trying to fight him.
- It would devastate family members and friends, and you may be responsible for them following your example if they come up against intense suffering.
- It may not work, and you could end up severely disabled but still trying to fight depression.
- It is true—our God is a refuge (Ps. 9:10).
- Help is available. If you push hard enough, someone can assist you to find the help you need.
- If you are unsaved, you will go to hell. This is not because of the act of suicide but because all who die apart from knowing Christ personally will face an eternity in a far worse situation than depression.
- If you are a Christian, then Jesus Christ is interceding for you that your faith will not fail.
- God will keep you until you reach a day when your pain will truly be over.

## **SLOW (10)**

Dr. John Lockley counsels.

“Patience is essential, because, by the nature of illness, the depressed person is likely to go over the same ground time and again, needing the same reassurance that was given a day, a week or a month ago.” – John Lockley

“In the meantime let us take our depressed Christian brethren continually before the throne of grace and plead, “Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick.” – David Murray