



CHRISTIANS DEALING WITH DEPRESSION

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CHRISTAINS DEALING WITH DEPRESSION

By Jerry M. Gilbert, PhD, ThD

Do Christians sometime become depressed? Absolutely, Christians are still human. All humans, at sometime in their life, get depressed. The good news is that it is perfectly normal human behavior. The better news is that there are definite biblical steps that can be taken to help us deal with that depression.

Life is not a walk down a level path, but a series of hills and valleys. One day we are on top of the mountain, the next day the mountain is on top of us! What can be done about these wide mood swings?

1. The first step is to be sure there are no clinical or physical problems that can be corrected. Often time wide mood swings are a result of a physical problem that we may not be aware of.
2. The second thing is to try to better understand our selves and practice better self control.
3. Look beyond one's self to find our purpose in life. **Don't be content to float down the stream of life like a dead fish!** God has placed YOU here on this planet, in America, (the greatest Nation ever on the face of this earth), for a PURPOSE!

Let me give you an example of how we can practice self-control to keep some small thing from ruining our day. We get up and while getting dressed for work, we break a shoe sting. Little things like this are just everyday life. Do not allow yourself to become upset or angry for something that is simply a part of everyday life. Put on another pair of shoes and thank God that you have more than one pair. Tie the shoestring back together and buy a new set of shoestrings as soon as possible. Do not allow little things spoil a day that God has given you, "to rejoice and be glad in it."

You get tied up in traffic. Instead of honking you horn and going ballistic and out of control, thank God that you have an automobile to drive. Thank God that you are physically able to drive. Many people, even here in America, would gladly trade places with you; being tied up in traffic would be wonderful for them. There is about 70% of the rest of the world population that have never ridden in an automobile.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things.**

Notice Paul is talking about truth, honesty, justice, lovely, (doing something for someone who can not do anything in return for you), and keeping your life in tune with God. This way we do not have the depression of regretting things we have done wrong or good things that we have left undone, that we could have helped our brother with.

The person that you are is determined by what you do, when you are alone, with no one there to influence your behavior. If you can look this person in the mirror and feel, "It Is Well With My Soul," then you will probably never be clinically depressed.

Paul is saying, instead of getting frustrated over something you can't change, change your thoughts instead. Think on something good!

Walk up and down the corridors of your mind and take off the ugly pictures of past



mistakes and failures. Dwelling on mistakes made in the past is a sure way to keep your mouth turned down at both corners. You cannot go back to yesterday or yesteryear to correct anything.

Replace the pictures in your mind with pictures of the times you succeeded. In Paul's words, think on good things. God is faithful and just to forgive you of all sin, and unrighteousness. **GOD HAD FORGIVEN YOU, SO, FORGIVE YOURSELF!**

Psalms 139:14 David said: I will praise thee; for I am beautifully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

GOD MADE YOU, YOU ARE BEAUTIFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

A human is the only animal that is actually made of three parts, body, soul and spirit to make up the whole person. Each part has a cause and effect on the other parts. If the body, (our flesh), is sick, then this affects the spirit, and if we are sick long enough we have to guard against the sickness affecting our soul.

Let me try to clear up what I am driving at. The three parts of a person are as follows: **OUR BODY IS THE HOUSE OF FLESH WE LIVE IN, THE PART THAT IS VISIBLE.**

Many people do not like the way they look. Some things we can change. If we are not happy with our weight, we can change that. There is very little else we can change about our looks.

So, we have a freckle on the end of our nose, if we have a good smile that works spontaneously, no one will notice the freckle. This is so with every preconceived imperfection we think we have. No one notices imperfections of a person that is helpful, outgoing and friendly. If we want friends, we must show ourselves friendly.

OUR SOUL IS THE ETERNAL PART THAT WAS GIVEN US BY OUR CREATOR.

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and **breathed** into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a **living soul**.

This **breath of God** is what distinguishes us as being different from all other animals. We have a soul that will live forever somewhere.

We can choose our destiny by making the right choices in our life here on earth.

1 Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a **living soul**; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

The words quickening spirit means to make alive with the spirit. **John 20:22** And when he had said this, (speaking of Jesus), he breathed on **them**, and saith unto **them**, "**Receive ye the Holy Ghost.**" **This breath of Jesus, (God manifested in the flesh), makes us alive. We are born again, through His Spirit.**

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be **endued** with power from on high.

The word endued means to make alive with. The Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit will make us alive with power from on high. This power can help us overcome depression or any adversity; however, even though, we are still humans and subject to all of the feelings of a human. We now have a source of help in our time of adversity.

We can choose this New Birth experience by repentance, water baptism in Jesus Name, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost. This new birth experience starts us on a new walk, "in



newness of life.” If we choose to float down the stream of time and do nothing to gain Heaven, then the course we set by our actions or our inaction is eternal separation from God and forever to be tormented in, “the lake of fire.”

OUR SPIRIT IS WHO WE REALLY ARE

Our spirit is very important to our mental health. We must feel good about our selves. Our spirit is who we are when we are alone and no one is watching. We often times can put on a good front while we are with others; however, our real inner-person is only visible when we are completely alone with no one there to influence our behavior. This is the person we have to like or we become depressed.

We must like the real person or our spirit, (personality), or our entire self will be affected. Let us look at ways to change the things we do not like about ourselves.

GUILT FEELINGS CAUSE DEPRESSION

There are several questions that we can ask our self to find the source of our guilt feelings.

1. Is this feeling from something I have done or something left undone?

a. Christians have more guilt feelings from things that they have left undone than things they have done wrong.

Example: We raise our hand we will pray one hour on Wednesday. We have prayed only 30 minutes when company comes. Satan will hammer you that you did not pray your hour.

Concentrate on the fact that you did pray for 30 minutes instead of having a guilt trip about the 30 minutes that you did not get to pray. Make it up later. The prayer line is always open.

Let us examine the guilt feelings from things that we have left undone. Can we do it now and correct the situation? If we can correct the situation, then do so immediately, (such as apologize for something you did or said that hurt someone).

Organization is one way of dealing with things left undone, whether it is your work or things you want to do for God, yourself or others. Make a list of things that you want to do. I call this my “To Do” list.

Then put a number 1 on the most important thing. Go down the list and prioritize each item. Do the most important things first. If you do not get the complete list done; at least you have done the most important things. Do this each day and watch your feeling of accomplishment grow. This in return will cause feelings of depression to vanish.

If we cannot correct the situation then face facts, there is nothing that can be done so there is no reason for guilt. Learn from the mistake. Do something good for someone. This would need to be someone that could do nothing for us in return.

Jude 1:16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; **and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.**

If we practice, only doing good or saying nice things, for the ones that can help us in return, this is not the agape love that will hang good pictures on the walls of our mind.

The clock cannot be turned back to yesterday. We live one day at a time, so live for today



only. **Tomorrow is a promissory note, yesterday is a cancelled check, what we do must be done today.**

GUILT FEELINGS FROM SIN CAUSES DEPRESSION

Sin is the major cause for depression. I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us **from all sin.**

When we ask for forgiveness for our sin, the blood of Jesus Christ cleans us from all sin. Since we are forgiven, then we also need to forgive ourselves.

Walk up and down the corridors of your mind and take off all of the ugly pictures that sin may have caused to be hanging on the walls of our mind. Replace these ugly pictures with nice ones.

There have been many times that you have been successful, so replace those pictures that you wish to forget with pretty pictures of success. Do as Paul said to do, “think on these things.”

Micah 7:19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our **iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.**

Our sins are in the depth of the sea, so quit diving for them. God has forgiven you, so forgive yourself!

We need to cleanse the inner self every day. The cleansing of our spirit is essential to overall good health.

WE GROW IN THE VALLEY

Life is not a walk down a level path, but, a series of hills and valleys. One day we are singing the praises of the mountain top, then the next day, we may be so far down in the valley, we have to reach up to touch bottom.

We cannot always live on the mountaintop. Let us look at the place where we sometime think would be utopia, the ideal place to live. The mountain top is a good place to visit and to look at the view from high up; however, let us examine the mountaintop. It is cold and mostly barren, snow covered rocks and dwarf trees. The mountaintop is where most of the trees are dead from being struck with lightening or constant contact with the raw elements.

Let us compare the mountain top to humans. When we are on the mountain top, we feel we know all of the answers. When we stop growing mentally and spiritually, we become dwarf, cold, and selfish. We do not need anyone. We work on staying on the mountain top, even if it means standing on the shoulders of the ones who love us the most to get there again or to stay there.

We all have had footprints on our backs from a loved one or someone we trusted, climbing over us to try to elevate themselves. We must pray for them, forgive them and move on.

Now let us look at the valley. The winds blow and floods come to beat upon the giant oak tree. With every wind, with every flood, the tree that is planted by the river, (in the valley), digs it's roots a little deeper. Birds build their nest in the safety of the limbs of the giant oak. Animals rest under the shade of the old oak tree. The tree is alive, and because of it being alive, it is useful to all who come into contact with it.

Look at our self for the comparison of natural valleys where everything is green, vibrant,



and alive. When we are in the valley, we are searching for answers. These answers we find during our “valley days” not only will help us, but, will allow us to be able help others because of our “valley day” experience. Others can find comfort from our experiences. Like the giant oak tree, we grow in the valley.

SHIFT OUR FOCUS TO AVOID DEPRESSION

I once knew a very successful district manager of a large insurance company. The insurance company was constantly having sales contests. At the end of these sales contests, the manager noticed, there seemed to always be a period of mental fatigue. A huge let down! Whether the sales contest was won or lost there was a period of depression.

We can deal with our successes and failures of life as the district manager dealt with his agents after a grueling sales contest, where, at the end of the contest, everyone was emotionally and physically drained.

If they lost the contest or did not make their sales quota or objective, this was a good chance to ask the following questions:

1. Was my objective too high for my ability?
 - a. It is depressing for objectives or expectations to be constantly too high.
2. Since my objective was realistic, what can I learn to do different so I can meet my objectives in the future?
3. What additional training may be needed?
4. People will accept training and supervision to reach a realistic objective.
5. They have to feel they can obtain their objective.

If they won the contest and made their sales quota or objective, the following questions were always asked:

1. Was my objective too low for my ability?
 - a. Objectives need to be high enough to be a challenge, otherwise we will not continue to grow toward our potential.
6. A let down after a grueling contest is normal and natural.
 - a. The wise manager will shift the focus to a new challenge.
7. A wise manager will shift the focus from the immediate to the end result.
8. The wise manager, after a successful sales contest, which was designed to be a short term shot in the arm, will shift the focus to how the results of this contest will help toward our final objective for the year or toward our long term objectives, promotions, retirement, etc.
9. Pastors can shift the focus from a highly emotional, successful revival to the end result they wish to obtain. Reaching the lost, steady growth, making heaven and taking as many people with us as we can.
10. There does not have to be the emotional let down following a highly emotional event. Refocus and keep our eyes on the prize, the long term objective.

SPIRITUAL CLEANSING IS GOOD FOR BOTH BODY AND SOUL

Matthew 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy **closet**, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward



thee openly.

Psalms 36:9 For with thee is the **fountain** of life: in thy light shall we see light.

Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his **mouth speaketh**.

Spiritual cleansing, by confessing our sins to God in our closet of prayer, opens up the fountains of life for us. It allows light to shine in our dark places. This spiritual light will then shine through us to everyone we come into contact with. To help others is the best medicine for our own spirit and soul.

CARE AND CONTROL OF THE HUMAN TONGUE

More depression arises out of the times we did not control our tongue than any other reason. We cannot take a word back that is spoken in haste or anger. We need to control and care for our tongue with the same diligence we would care for and drive our luxury automobile, if we were fortunate enough to have a luxury automobile. Some of us will just have to use our imagination on how we will care for our luxury automobile when we get one.

All of us have a tongue that needs constant care: A LUXURY AUTOMOBILE NEEDS A LOT OF CLEANING AND POLISH.

Psalms 34:13 Keep thy **tongue** from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

Job 27:4 My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my **tongue** utter deceit.

Psalms 5:9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their **tongue**.

Psalms 52:2 Thy **tongue** deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.

LUXURY AUTOMOBILES NEED TO BE DRIVEN VERY CAREFULLY

Psalms 64:3 Who whet their **tongue** like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:

Psalms 39:1 I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my **tongue**: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me

Psalms 10:7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his **tongue** is mischief and vanity.

Psalms 12:3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the **tongue** that speaketh proud things:

Psalms 12:4 Who have said, With our **tongue** will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

A LUXURY AUTOMOBILE REQUIRES PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Job 6:24 Teach me, and I will hold my **tongue**: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

Psalms 71:24 My **tongue** also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

Proverbs 12:18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the **tongue** of



the wise is health.

Proverbs 12:19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying **tongue** is but for a moment.

Proverbs 15:2 The **tongue** of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

Proverbs 15:4 A wholesome **tongue** is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

Proverbs 16:1 The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the **tongue**, is from the LORD.

Psalms 15:3 He that backbiteth not with his **tongue**, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

Proverbs 21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his **tongue** keepeth his soul from troubles.

A LUXURY AUTOMOBILE NEEDS GUIDANCE OR IT WILL CRASH

James 3:5 Even so the **tongue** is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

James 3:6 And the **tongue** is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the **tongue** among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

James 3:8 But the **tongue** can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

GOD USES TONGUES AS EVIDENCE HE HAS CONTROL OF YOU

James 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and **bridleth** not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

Isaiah 28:11 For with **stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.**

Isaiah 54:17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every **tongue** that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

CLEANSE YOUR SPIRIT BY FORGIVING MEN THEIR TRESPASSES

Matthew 6:12 And **forgive** us our debts, as we **forgive** our debtors.

Matthew 6:14 For if ye **forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: Matthew 6:15** But if ye **forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

Matthew 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? **Matthew 18:22** Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.



Matthew 18:23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. **Matthew 18:24** And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. **Matthew 18:25** But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. **Matthew 18:26** The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. **Matthew 18:27** Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

Matthew 18:28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. **Matthew 18:29** And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. **Matthew 18:30** And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

Matthew 18:31 So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. **Matthew 18:32** Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: **Matthew 18:33** Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? **Matthew 18:34** And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

Matthew 18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts **forgive** not every one his brother their trespasses. **Mark 11:26** But if ye do not **forgive**, neither will your Father which is in heaven **forgive** your trespasses.

Luke 6:37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: **forgive**, and ye shall be **forgiven**:

PRAYER, FASTING AND FORGIVING OTHERS IS THE KEY. THEN GOD WILL FORGIVE US AND HEAL US MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY.

Psalms 103:3 Who **forgiveth** all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Jeremiah 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will **forgive** their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Let us live in the sunlight of HIS Divine love. Love our neighbor as our self. This will put a genuine smile on your face. Remember, “smile and the world smiles with you.”

If they don't smile, at least make them wonder what you are smiling about!