

*"The presence of faith gives no guarantee of the absence of spiritual depression; however, the dark night of the soul always gives way to the brightness of the noonday light of the presence of God." R.C. Sproul, **The Dark Night of the Soul***

Are you feeling really down lately? Do you sometimes wonder, "What's the use?" You're not alone. Many people feel helpless trying to understand or deal with this mentality.

(I) CENTRAL CONCERNS:

(A) Am I Depressed?

(1) We need to distinguish between being depressed, having to do with _____ (1), and having depression, which involves _____ (2). Think of it as the difference between _____ (3), which is _____ (4) and dynamic, and climate, which is long-term and stable.

(a) Being depressed, a mood, may be related to many factors like:

(i) Not have a sense of meaning or _____ (5) in your life. That's why it's so important to consider what you believe about God, about _____ (6), and about nature. In other words, how you see the world can effect your mood and how you _____ (7). For example, if you believe that God is _____ (8) and loving, even when life is tough, then perhaps you can better handle the painful emotions of anger, _____ (9), and depression.

(2) You should begin by finding _____ (10) in your spiritual life, but some specialists say that depression may be spawned by a series of _____ (11), like losing your job, or good _____ (12), or maybe a best friend, or loved one.

(a) Some of these factors like loss of _____ (13) for example, may result in a type of depression that can often be changed by first identifying:

(i) How you view the world

(ii) And how that world-view effects your _____ (14)

(iii) Often changing how you _____ (15) and _____ (16), according to appropriate core beliefs can help diminish and even _____ (17) depression.

(B) Do I Have Depression?

(1) Being depressed can be thought of as a temporary, dynamic state of emotion. This type of emotional state is really related to _____ (18) associated with a life event and one's _____ (19) of that life event.

Treating this type of emotional state is about helping someone change their _____ (20) and allowing time to heal any sense of loss. Having depression, however, is much more complex. It is characterized by a number of different symptoms, including sadness that don't easily respond to _____ (21) and how we think.

(C) What Happens When Someone Has Terrible Thoughts . . . For a Long Duration?

- (1) Frequently, there may be chronic thoughts of loss and/or _____ (22). There are often indicators when the body, particularly the brain, has become effected.
- (2) Two indicators of this are:
- (a) Persistent disturbance in sleep and _____ (23). In both instances, depression may cause abnormal sleep and eating habits.
 - (b) There is often a lack of _____ (24) and concentration
 - (c) Excessive feelings of worthlessness and guilt.
- (3) There can also be a number of vague physical complaints such as:
- (a) Generalized _____ (25).
- (4) If several of these types of symptoms have persisted steadily for more than a couple of weeks, they may be indications that you have depression that needs professional _____ (26). If this describes you, then consult with your physician. There could be any number of medical irregularities contributing to the depression that need to be _____ (27).
- (a) Some of these conditions include: hormonal and cardiovascular irregularities.

Ruling out different factors, it may be necessary that the _____ (28) needs some medical attention through the use of _____ (29) medication. Again, this is

a decision that needs to be made in the consultation with your family, _____ (30), and medical _____ (31).

If you have depression, it is important to become involved in a _____ (32) relationship with someone who specializes in the treatment of clinical depression.

Although the journey can be long and difficult, it is _____ (33) to _____ (34) or eliminate depression and to become more resilient to its effects.

(II) IDEAS:

Here are a couple of ideas to get you started on the right track:

- (A) Stay away from bad _____ (35) (such as white _____ (36), sugars, and caffeine).
- (B) Eating healthier and daily cardiovascular _____ (37) can really aid in your healing process.
- (C) Another important tip . . . is _____ (38). Lack of _____ (39) can cause severe emotional _____ (40) and can be a major catalyst in overcoming depression.

The Bottom Line:

Through all of this, there is only one person in whom we can find complete _____ (41).

The hope and joy you can cling onto is found in _____ (42). Once you take hold of this truth, you'll be able to grasp the reality of why you are _____ (43), which is to love the Lord with all of your heart, _____ (44), and strength, and love your _____ (45) as yourself.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING:

- Unmasking Male Depression: Recognizing the Root Cause to Many Problem Behaviors Such as Anger, Resentment, Abusiveness, and Sexual Compulsiveness, *Archibald Hart*
- New Light on Depression: Help, Hope, and Answers for the Depressed and Those Who Love Them, *David Biebel; Harold Koenig*
- Breaking Through Depression: A Biblical and Medical Approach to Emotional Wholeness, *Donald P. Hall*
- The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom, *Henri Nouwen*



1. mood
2. affect
3. weather
4. temporary
5. purpose
6. people
7. live your life
8. fair
9. sadness
10. truth
11. losses
12. health
13. hope
13. hope
15. act
16. react
17. ward off
18. sadness
19. perception
20. focus
21. change
22. death
23. appetite
24. energy
25. muscle aches
26. intervention
27. evaluated
28. brain
29. anti-depressant
30. pastor
31. professional
32. counseling relationship
33. possible
34. reduce
35. foods
36. breads
37. exercising
38. sleeping
39. sleep
40. instability
41. healing
42. Christ
43. here
43. here
45. neighbor