

DEPRESSION

Depression is a condition that touches the lives of countless people across the world. Maybe you, others in your family or circle of friends, someone in your workplace, a neighbor, or someone else you know have been through the difficult struggles of depression. Christians and non-Christians have experienced it. Depression is hard to understand but those with it can be helped.

Symptoms of Depression

The general symptoms of depression are, at given stages, feelings of sadness, anger, fatigue, and hopelessness. Over time persons with depression lose interest in many things, they become detached from family members and others they love, a feeling of uselessness sets in, and some become suicidal. These general symptoms are triggered by unsettling life circumstances (loss of a loved one, unemployment, divorce, abuse, and others) or some psychological issue, any of which can move persons toward low self-esteem and depression. Healthline¹ elaborates further on the symptoms, saying persons with depression:

Have a hopeless outlook on specific things, or about life itself.

Lose interest in any form of pleasure and begin withdrawing from activities and relationships.

Experience increased fatigue and sleep problems. Being tired all the time, especially with insomnia, only exacerbates the problem.

May have anxiety at the same time with additional symptoms of nervousness, feelings of panic or dread, rapid heart rate, rapid breathing, increased or heavy sweating, trembling or muscle twitching, and trouble focusing or thinking about anything with clarity.

Changes in appetite and weight. Some have increased appetite; others lose their appetite. The resulting weight changes further fuel the depression.

Uncontrollable emotions ranging from angry outbursts to crying uncontrollably.

Irritability in men, along with the possibilities of risky behavior, substance abuse, or misplaced anger. Women more frequently recognize the symptoms of depression and seek treatment.

Looking at death, talking about it, or making a first attempt before succeeding by ending their life. **If you or someone you know is having symptoms of suicide, we recommend the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.**

The Bible and Depression

As with all circumstances in life, the Bible reveals a number of persons who were depressed or had debilitating symptoms that made them question their will to live. Consider:

Moses

One of the first individuals we find in scripture who endured depression is Moses. He continually struggled with a stubborn freed-from-slavery Hebrew people who caused him considerable grief about their situation in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. When he came down from Mt. Sinai with God's instructions for their lives, the Hebrew people were worshipping idols. Not sure of whether he wanted to go on, Moses cried out to God, ". . . please forgive their sin – but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written" (**Exodus 32:32**).

Elijah

Despite his good standing with the Lord and victories over the prophets of Baal, Elijah feared for his life at the hand of Jezebel. In desperation in the desert to which he had fled, ". . . he came to a broom tree, sat down under it, and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors"" (**1 Kings 19:4**).

Jonah

The man who ran away from God's request to preach to the town of Nineveh encountered a storm, was swallowed by a large fish, and rescued by the hand of God. Rather than being thankful, Jonah was angry with God and despondently said, "O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live . . . I am angry enough to die" (**Jonah 4:3, 9**).

David

The mighty David, lowly shepherd elevated to king, fled in fear for his life from Saul, sinned against God in adultery and murder, and lost sons. In his overwhelming fear, guilt, and grief, David said, “My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear” (**Psalm 38:4**).

We are not alone. Others who experienced bouts of depression were Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 20:14, 18**) and Job (**Job 3:11, 26; 10:1**). From the days of these biblical characters to today, persons of varying levels of faith, including strong ones, experienced this terrible condition. Despite this, God was with them and is with us. He will never leave us nor forsake us (**Deuteronomy 31:8; Joshua 1:5; 1 Kings 8:57**).

Getting Help for Depression

With symptoms, we should seek help right away. From a spiritual perspective, our wholeness and wellness are found in the Lord who wants us to live in joy. When that joy is not present, when life circumstances have taken their toll, or when the root of our depression is sin, the New Testament provides scriptures that instruct us back to the path of healing and restoration:

Prayer and Thanksgiving (**Philippians 4:6-7**)

When you are despondent, you may not feel like praying or giving thanks to God. You should try anyway, asking other believers to come alongside you and be praying for your healing. One key is to move focus away from yourself to Jesus and others.

Confessing Sin and Asking for Forgiveness (**1 John 1:9**)

If personal sin or unforgiveness of someone else is the source of your depression, you need to confess it and receive God’s forgiveness, followed by forgiving others and making right any relationships that have faltered. The lifting of the burden of sin can set you free and get you back on a better path.

Fellowship With Believers (**Galatians 6:2**)

Rather than withdrawing from others, including family members, you need the company of others, especially sisters and brothers in Christ who will support you and help lift your burden.

Support Groups

Many congregations have support groups for persons with depression or have information about support groups in other churches that help from a biblical perspective. Seek them out and get involved.

Some depression, however, can be clinical in nature, caused by a physical disorder or something else. Anxiety that can lead to depression is known to be hereditary. The source of the depression may be psychological and classified as mental illness. Though you should always seek healing from God, many of these clinical sources of depression often require professional help, medication and/or counseling, prescribed through a physician, just as you would for an injury. It's okay to seek spiritual and clinical help at the same time.

[More on Mental Illness and Its Causation](#)

With the mention of mental illness, it should be noted that, as previously stated, most mental illness is clinical, requiring professional help. Another source of mental illness, however, is mentioned in the Bible and cannot be overlooked – demon possession.^{2,3} Though many, including Christians, resist this line of thought, Jesus frequently encountered persons who were possessed by a demon (evil spirit).

These troubled individuals included persons constantly attempting to harm themselves or commit suicide. We encourage you to read these biblical accounts in which demon-possessed persons were delivered and made whole through what is known as exorcism:

By Jesus: [Matthew 15:21-28](#); [Mark 1:21-28, 32-34, 5:5-20](#)

By Paul through the power of the Holy Spirit: [Acts 16:16-18](#)

Many pastors and spiritual leaders today still believe God's Word, know that demon possession exists, and stand ready to pray for persons who need deliverance. If you believe demon possession is the source of trouble in someone's life, do further research on this subject and seek spiritual help.

[Closing Thoughts](#)

If you are depressed, the power of God, the support of other believers, and help from other professionals and spiritual resources can heal you. People of faith are not immune from depression, as with other physical maladies. If depression starts to take root in your life or you see the symptoms in someone else, take action, get help. Depression is an opportunity for spiritual growth, no matter what has caused it.

This is an introduction on the subject of **Depression**. Here are other resources you may wish to explore:

1 [9 Depression Symptoms to Look Out For \(healthline.com\)](#)

[What Does the Bible Say About Depression? Examples from Scripture \(biblestudytools.com\)](#)

[What Does the Bible Say About Depression? \(openbible.info\)](#)

[Depression in the Bible - 7 Examples of Those Who Struggled \(crosswalk.com\)](#)

[28 Powerful Bible Verses to Fight Depression - Uplift Your Soul With Scripture \(ibelieve.com\)](#)

[What does the Bible say about depression? How can a Christian overcome depression? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[How to Overcome Depression, Biblically - John15.Rocks](#)

[What does the Bible say about depression? | 412teens.org](#)

[Differences in Demon possession, Mental illness, Depression \(catholicexchange.com\)](#)

[Depression or Spiritual Warfare: What if It's Both? | Christianity Today](#)

[Symptoms | Anxiety and Depression Association of America, ADAA](#)

[25 I Will Never Leave You Nor Forsake You Bible Verses of God's Promise \(biblestudytools.com\)](#)

[robb_oneyanother.pdf \(lhm.org\)](#)

2 [12 Bible verses about Demon Possession \(knowing-jesus.com\)](#)

3 [What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[What the Bible Says about Depression - Biblical Counseling Center](#)