

A Walk with God through the Darkness of Depression

Begin today and take one step at a time!

This may look overwhelming, but what follows will help you on the journey through the days and weeks ahead.

- Begin your walk with God by saying “Lord, help. I need You.

It begins with faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6). He can show us the way, His Word is the truth, and with Him we can live an abundant life. In order to start this new relationship with God, you can express your faith in Him when you “confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). When you do this God comes into your heart and life and you begin to experience His love, strength, help, joy and peace.

You may already be a Christian, but are struggling with depression. You, too, need to come to the Lord in faith and commit this journey to Him.

- With Christ you have the power to do something about your depression - “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). **Make the commitment to do what you can to change your life.** Tell a friend of your commitment and give them permission to ask you how you are doing.
- **Take steps to get healthy**, even if you don’t feel like it. Ask God to give you the help and strength. Review Depression Lecture outline.
- Each day fulfill at least one responsibility that you have let slide (a load of laundry, clean the bathroom, cook dinner, etc.)

Continue doing each of these throughout your journey.

Begin your journey with God by getting a Bible and a journal.

Get a Bible that is written in understandable language. Some good versions are: The New Living Translation (NLT), and the New International Version (NIV). The Life Application Bible is an understandable Bible that also has notes to help explain how the Scripture applies to life (sometimes available at Costco).

At the beginning of your journal **write a prayer to the Lord.** You might say something like: “Lord, I want You to help me overcome depression. Help me to see my life like you see it, and to walk in your ways.”

Read in your Bible each day. I have listed some verses for you to read. Write the verses in your journal, then write how God wants to help you in your journey.

Psalm 46:1 – Write this on an index card. Read it several times a day until you have it memorized.

Matthew 11:28-30

Hebrews 13:6

Psalm 118:5-9, 14

Psalm 18: 6, 16, 28

Proverbs 3:5-6

Hebrews 4:14-16

Other Psalms to read for encouragement and help when depressed: Psalm 1, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27, 28, 32, 34, 37, 40, 42, 139

Resources God gives us for the journey

Write the Scriptures and the answers in your journal.

1. What does God promise us?
 - a. 1 Cor 10:13
 - b. Philippians 1:6
 - c. 2 Peter 1:3-4
 - d. John 4:16-17

2. What are the benefits of reading God's Word?
 - a. Psalm 1:1-3
 - b. Psalm 19:7-11
 - c. Hebrews 4:12

3. How are we to get wisdom for our lives?
 - a. Proverbs 2:1-8
 - b. James 1:5-6

Heart Search

An important step in this walk through depression is to look at the possible reasons for your depression. Begin each day by asking God for wisdom (James 1:5-6) and by praying the prayer in Psalm 139:23-24. Write the prayer in your journal.

1. Ask God to examine your heart and reveal to you any problems.
 - a. Is it a result of sin? All depression is not a result of sin, but it is important to search your heart and see if there is sin that is keeping you from a joyful walk with God. Read Psalm 51. Write down what the Lord brings to mind.

- b. If God does reveal sin, then confess it to God and ask His forgiveness (1 John 1:9). When God forgives, He cleanses us from sin and our load is lifted, our heart is lightened.
 - c. Is your problem a result of not trusting God with your situation? Or not looking at your circumstances with God in the picture? Have you been trying to control things and your depression is a result of realizing you have no control? If so, ask God's forgiveness, turn the controls of your life over to Him, and trust Him. Psalm 84:12 says, "O Lord Almighty, happy are those who trust in you."
2. Ask God to examine your thoughts and attitudes
- a. Are you harboring anger, bitterness, selfishness or the frustration of unmet expectations in your heart? This is not a time to blame others, but to look honestly at your own attitudes.
 - b. Read Ephesians 4:31-32 to get insight on this change.
 - c. When people are depressed, their thinking process is often affected. I call it "depressed thinking," and that is when your thinking takes you deeper and deeper into despair. You think things like: "It will not ever get better," "I'm no good," "I give up," "It's hopeless," "Nobody likes me," etc. You know your pattern. Examine your "depressed thinking" pattern. Write down your most common thoughts and ask God to give you His thinking instead.
 - d. Read Romans 12:2. Write it in your journal.
 - e. Read also Philippians 2:13, 4:8, 9, 13, and Ephesians 3:20. How do these truths help change your thinking?

Action Steps

For success in our journey it is important to put into action some of the disciplines of a healthy follower of Christ.

1. Continue taking care of the body God has given you with good eating, exercise and good sleep patterns. Write in your journal the changes that are taking place.
2. Begin a thankfulness list in your journal. Each day write down as many things as you can think of that you are thankful for. Thankfulness is one of the best antidotes for depression - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.
3. Each day this week show kindness to someone – say an encouraging word, help with a job, etc. Think of others more than yourself – Philippians 2:3-4.

4. Read in your Bible each day. Pick a book of the Bible, like Philippians, Ephesians, James, Psalms, or Proverbs. Ask God to speak to you from His Word and to point out what He wants you to hear. Read until you know what the Lord wants you to hear and then write it in your journal.
5. Worship the Lord through regular church attendance and listening to praise music at home, in the car, or when you exercise. Serving others is an expression of worship to the Lord, and
6. Spending time with other Christians is helpful in the journey. We need the help and encouragement of others – Hebrew 10:24-25. When we are depressed we tend to isolate ourselves, but we need each other. So join a Bible study or Home church and work at thinking more of others than yourself.

Remember you will reap what you sow, so keep on sowing these good things and be patient.

Email me at connie@answersforwomen.net with questions, comments and to let me know how your walk through depression has been going. Was this helpful?