

Our Depression And God's Faithfulness

1 Kings 19

I. The Causes Of Depression (1 Kings 19:1-4, 10)

- 1) Circumstantial Reasons; 2) Physical/Biological/Chemical Reasons; 3) Spiritual Reasons: Sinful Anger (ie/ Saul); Self-Pity (ie/ Jonah & Elijah); Regretful Guilt (ie/ David, Peter, Judas); Disobedience To God (ie/ Jonah; Prov 5:21-22); Unfulfilled Hope (ie/ Job; Prov 13:12); Satanic Affliction (ie/ Job, Saul)

A. Spiritual Warfare In The Mind (1-2)

- Post-Victory Blues: The VICTORY got to his head (1)
- Negative Thinking – The VIXEN got to his head (2)

B. Physical And Emotional Exhaustion (3a)

C. Personal Isolation (3b)

D. Faulty Perspective (4)

1. Senseless Praying (4a)
 - Where Is God? Wondering About The Presence Of God (Ps 42:3; Mt 11:3)
 - Why God? Pondering About The Purpose Of God (Ps 22:1; Jer 15:18; 20:7-8)
 - The Depressed Needs To Refocus On God As The One Who Receives Them In Their Weakness And Pain (Ps 38:9-10)
2. Self-Pity (4b)
3. Unwarranted Comparisons (4c)
4. Martyr Syndrome (10)

II. The Cure For Depression (1 Kings 19:5-18)

A. Care For Your Physical Needs (5-8)

B. Concentrate On God's Powerful Word Over Dramatic Circumstance (9-12)

C. Commit Yourself To Others (13-18)

Conclusion: Four Things To Do When Life Gets You Down (*Jesus in Mt 26*)

- Reach out for help (37-38)
- Tell God of your pain (39a)
- Confront the reality of the source of depression (39b): 1) Identify loss, 2) Evaluate why God permitted it, 3) Avoid wrong choices to compensate, 4) Perspective over elation
- Set aside our disappointment in our unfulfilled expectations to discover the perfection of God's good will. (39c)

Discussion:

1. When are you most vulnerable to times of depression?
2. How does our battle with depression correlate to spiritual warfare? What is the devil trying to do to us? What is God trying to prove to us?
3. What does depression teach us about God?
4. How can we distinguish godly sorrow from worldly sorrow?
5. Why are we more prone to look for dramatic circumstances that the simplicity of God's Word in our emotional struggles?

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Introduction:

1. Depression is widespread today

- 300 million people around the world have depression, according to the World Health Organization
- 16.2 million adults in the United States—equaling 6.7 percent of all adults in the country—have experienced a major depressive episode in the past year
- 10.3 million U.S. adults experienced an episode that resulted in severe impairment in the past year
- Nearly 50 percent of all people diagnosed with depression are also diagnosed with an anxiety disorder
- It's estimated that 15 percent of the adult population will experience depression at some point in their lifetime.
- 5 percent of the U.S. population experiences seasonal depression in any given year.
- Four out of five people with seasonal depression are women.
- The average age of onset is between 20 and 30 years old
- The median age of depression onset is 32.5 years old.
- The prevalence of adults with a major depressive episode is highest among individuals between 18 and 25.
- 10.5 percent of adults who report two or more races have experienced a major depressive episode in the past year
- 8.5 percent of women have depression
- 4.8 percent of men have depression
- (<https://www.verywellmind.com/depression-statistics-everyone-should-know-4159056>)
- Older Statistics:
 - Statistics: 20% of women and 10% of men are affected by depression at some point of their lives (Kroll & Hawkins, *Prime of Your Life*, p. 79)
 - 5% of Americans, 15 million people, suffer clinical depression at any given moment (Michael Youssef, *If God is in Control, Why is My Life Such a Mess?*, p. 134)
 - Another 5% experience mild depression; aka. Down in the dumps (ibid)
 - 1/2 of Fortune 500 CEO's have gone through depression
 - \$80 billion in wages lost due to depression annually
- "The incidence rate of depression for those born after 1950 seems to be as much as 20 times higher than the incidence rate for those born before 1910." (James Buie, "Me' Decades Generate Depression," APA Monitor, February 1991, p. 18.)
 - Increased choices leads to greater stress in decision making
 - The self-centered generation will naturally be more focused on self than on others (which was the cultural mindset half a century ago)
 - This age of instant results (microwaves and 30 minute sitcoms) makes us impatient with patience
 - The abundance of entertainment and stimulation intensifies boredom and purposeless when entertainment and stimulation is lacking

2. Depression is not a taboo, but an important topic

- It's an important subject in the Scriptures
- It impacts many people in our community
- It impacts so many in ministry
- It is relevant to our spiritual walk and relationship with God
- It is misunderstood by many in the church
- It is a challenge we can gain victory from

3. Believers do get depressed

Psalm 42:5-6 ⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation ⁶and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you.

- The soul is cast down.
- You sense the Psalmist's battle between hopelessness & hope, faithlessness and faithfulness, looking at the circumstance or **periscoping** up to God ("therefore I remember you")
- David Murray: "But Christians don't get depressed!" How many times have you thought that, said that, or heard that? How many times have Christian pastors and counselors made this claim, or at least implied it? If it is true that Christians don't get depressed, it must mean either that the Christian suffering from depression is not truly depressed, or he is not a true Christian. But if this notion is false, what extra and unnecessary pain and guilt are heaped upon an already darkened mind and broken heart!" (2010-11-29). *Christians Get Depressed Too* (Kindle Locations 62-65). Reformation Heritage Books. Kindle Edition.
- John Lockley writes: "Being depressed is bad enough in itself, but being a depressed Christian is worse. And being a depressed Christian in a church full of people who do not understand depression is like a little taste of hell." *Murray, David (2010-11-29). Christians Get Depressed Too (Kindle Locations 144-146). Reformation Heritage Books. Kindle Edition.*
- Ie/ Lady at church, early 50's – hospitalized for depression. Godly woman with a great voice and heart. She lost her husband last year – tremendous surprise. She lost her job soon after his death. Under tremendous financial pressure. She was hired as an optician taking her husband's old job, making less money than before. Because she was widowed, she would pour her life into work. She felt awkward going to her fellowship group because everyone else was a couple and she was a widow. The physical and emotional toll brought her to a point where she had to be hospitalized.
- She was worried that the church wouldn't understand.
- She felt a stigma from suffering depression.
- I assured her it was OK. I shared with her Scripture while she was in a temporary psychiatric hospital.
- I wrote a message to our congregation helping them understand that depression is not a sin or to be stigmatized.

4. The Definition Of Depression: Depression is a negative mindset accompanied by feelings of sadness and dejection. Depression is an indication of and a response to a situation or problem in one's life.

- Depression is to be in the state of being "**pressed down**"
- A popsicle stick can DEPRESS a tongue at the doctor's office
- It just means one is emotionally pressed down – for whatever reason

- "It is the most complicated of all our emotions and yet so common that it's even called the 'common cold' of the emotions. [Depression] is a feeling of gloom or sadness that is usually accompanied by a slowing down of the body. It is not just in the mind, but is experienced throughout the whole body." (Archibald Hart, "Understanding Depression", Focus on the Family, March, 1993)

- "Depression...black as a thousand midnights in a cypress swamp. Loneliness that is indescribable. Confusion regarding God. Frustration with life and circumstances. The feeling that you have been abandoned, that you are worthless. Unloveable. The pain is excruciating." (Luci Swindoll, "Forward", *Depression* by Baker & Nester, p. 7)

- "Depression is a feeling of sadness and dejection accompanied by a gloomy mind-set...Depression is distinguished from simple unhappiness by being more prolonged than circumstances reasonably warrant." (Les Carter, *Mind Over Emotions*, p. 38)

- "It is the most complicated of all our emotions and yet so common that it's even called the 'common cold' of the emotions. [Depression] is a feeling of gloom or sadness that is usually accompanied by a slowing down of the body. It is not just in the mind, but is experienced throughout the whole body." (Archibald Hart, "Understanding Depression", Focus on the Family, March, 1993)

- "A sense of loss is the substance of reactive depression. The person feels that permanence is demolished and the patterns for survival and security are scattered to the winds. The loss, whether real or symbolic, looms so great to the person that he responds by mourning it inconsolably, certain that he can never fill the empty space that it has left." (L. Crammer, *Up From Depression*)

- "Many define 'depression' as a condition marked by feelings of dejection and/or guilt. The result is hopelessness and cessation of activity." (James Broger, *The Self-Confrontation Manual*, Lesson 18, page 4)

Psalm 102:3-7 ³ For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned like a hearth. ⁴ My heart is stricken and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread. ⁵ Because of the sound of my groaning my bones cling to my skin. ⁶ I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert. ⁷ I lie awake, and am like a sparrow alone on the housetop.

Psalm 43:5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.

Psalm 39:2-3 I was mute with silence, I held my peace even from good; And my sorrow was stirred up. My heart was hot within me; While I was musing, the fire burned. Then I spoke with my tongue:

- Steve Bloem, a pastor who struggled with depression himself: "The Psalms treat depression more realistically than many of today's popular books on Christianity and psychology. David and other psalmists often found themselves deeply depressed for various reasons. They did not, however, apologize for what they were feeling, nor did they confess it as sin. It was a legitimate part of their relationship with God. They interacted with Him through the context of their depression." (*Broken Minds*, Kregel, p. 204)

5. The Morality Of Depression

- Depression is not a sin.
- It is a reaction to a loss or situation in life.
- What leads us to depression may or may not be a sin.
- What we do with our depression may or may not be a sin.
- But depression itself is a response.

Ie/ **Jesus experienced depression – or was down pressed.** There was no sinful cause or response. But He was downcast and sorrowful.

Matthew 26:37-38 ³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be **sorrowful** and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly **sorrowful**, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

- "Why do many Christians attach a stigma to depression? It is born out of ignorance. People are afraid of what they don't understand. There are probably many reasons for this stigma, but let me suggest three. First, in our culture we have strong expectations that people should be in control of themselves and their emotions. Depression is seen as a sign that we're out of control. Second, this general fear is exaggerated by our notions of 'perfection.' Depression is seen as failure and is therefore stigmatized. Third, we fear that depression in its severest form is a mental illness. Such a fear is unwarranted, just as is stigmatizing depression." (Archibald Hart, "Understanding Depression", Focus on the Family, March, 1993)

6. Depression is a problem that can strike at anybody

- **Youth**
 - Need for acceptance
 - Hormonal changes
 - Immaturity seeking to catch up to mature pressures
 - Emotionally volatile relationships
- **Midlife**
 - Deal with death of a parent
 - Illness in family

- Marital dissatisfaction
- Divorce
- Job dissatisfaction

- **Ministry**

- 28 years as a pastor at Fellowship Bible Church
- Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, Howard Hendricks, D. L. Moody, Isaac Newton, Charles Stanley have all experienced intense depression
- Martin Lloyd Jones: **Timothy** suffered from a near-paralyzing anxiety (*Spiritual Depression*, p. 93ff)

1 Corinthians 16:10-11 "And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do. Therefore let no one despise him."

- Pastor Don Baker shares his depth of depression in his book *Depression: Finding Hope & Meaning in Life's Darkest Shadow*, Multnomah Press, 1983 (coauthored with Emery Nester):
 - "I could preach with fervor and power, I could share Christ with enthusiasm and success. I would counsel with meaningful insight and socialize with sheer delight. But without warning, any or all of these positive and delightful emotions would suddenly be forced to give way to feelings of gloom and periods of weakness. I would withdraw, and a form of paranoia would settle in. I would suddenly be overwhelmed with feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. On occasion I toyed with thoughts of self-destruction." (p. 16)
 - "I had lost touch completely with reality. God was not real...Life was not real...Love was not real...My wife was not real...My children were not real...Friends were not real...I was not real. All of life was pretense and fantasy – I thought. Life was a blur, completely out of focus." (p. 33)
- Morgan, R. J. – *Nelson's Complete Book Of Stories, Illustrations, And Quotes*
 - "There are dungeons beneath the castles of despair." (Charles **Spurgeon**, who suffered debilitating bouts of depression all his life)
 - "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit and put an end to this miserable life." (John **Knox**)
 - "I had my temptations attending me.... Sometimes I should be assaulted with great discouragement therein, fearing that I should not be able to speak the Word at all ... at which times I should have such a strange faintness and strengthlessness seize upon my body that my legs have scarce been able to carry me." (John **Bunyan**)
 - "Resolute as was Dr. Whyte's character, he had seasons of deep depression regarding the results of his work in the pulpit or among his people." (G. F. Barbour, biographer of Alexander **Whyte**, Scotland's greatest preacher since John Knox)

- “God is to me the Great Unknown. I believe in him, but I find him not.” (Adoniram **Judson**, America’s first foreign missionary, suffering from a deep depression following the death of his wife, Nancy)
- “With the last of her savings drawn out of her small bank account Lottie [**Moon**, the great Southern Baptist missionary to China] lapsed into a period of deep depression. She quit eating, and her mental and physical health declined. A doctor was sent for, and only then was it discovered that she was starving to death. In hopes of saving her life, her colleagues made arrangements for her to return home in the company of a nurse, but it was too late. She died aboard ship while at port in Kobe, Japan, on Christmas Eve, 1912.” (Ruth Tucker, in From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya)
- Charles Spurgeon: “I was lying upon my couch during this last week, and my spirits were sunken so low that I could weep by the hour like a child, and yet I knew not what I wept for – but a very slight ting will move me to tears just now – and a kind friend was telling me of some poor old soul living near, who was suffering very great pain, and yet she was full of joy and rejoicing. I was so distressed by the hearing of that story, and felt so ashamed of myself, that I did not know what to do.” (“The Christian’s Heaviness and Rejoicing”, Sermon, Nov 7, 1858, www.spurgeon.org)
- Spurgeon: “Fits of depression come over the most of us. Cheerful as we may be, we must at intervals be cast down. The strong are not always vigorous, the wise not always ready, the brave not always courageous, and the joyous not always happy.” (“When the Preacher is Downcast”)

Proposition: There are many causes for depression – physical, emotional, spiritual.

- “Physical” is above my pay grade
- “Emotional” is what we deal with a lot in cases of grief, job loss, disappointments
- “Spiritual” is what we encounter in relationship to ministry
- It’s this type of ministry-related depression I’d like to address from 1 Kings 19

I. The Causes Of Depression (1 Kings 19:1-4, 10)

There Are Several Causes For Depression:

1. Circumstantial Reasons

a. Loss Of Meaningful Relationships

- death of a family member or friend
- break-up
- divorce
- miscarriage

b. Family History

- abuse within the family
- family history of depression
- neglect
- critical upbringing

c. Past Pain

- victim of crime
 - sexual abuse and/or rape
 - physical or verbal abuse
 - involved in an accident
 - abortion
 - catastrophe
 - terrorism
- Feelings of sadness are normal
 - Responding correctly to God is still expected

2. Physical/Biological/Chemical Reasons

- infection of brain or nervous system
- generalized body infections
- hepatitis
- hypoglycemia
- glandular disorders
- low thyroid condition
- excessive ovarian hormonal irregularities
- imbalance of secretions from the adrenal
- imbalance of serotonin and norepinephrine
- post-partum
- menstrual cycle related causes
- menopause
- recovery from sickness or surgery
- high blood pressure
- alcohol or drugs
- poor diet
- lack of exercise

How to help: Seek medical attention. Encouraging your counselee to get a physical check up and to seek advice from a medical doctor is prudent, particularly if the cause for the depression is not immediately apparent (ie/ recent death in family, crisis, known sin)

3. Spiritual Reasons

- We can lose God's perspective with the loss of a loved one, job, physical mobility
- We become impatient with God in financial hardships or personal conflicts

a. Sinful Anger (ie/ Saul)

- Anger is revealed subtly – resentment, critical attitudes, frustration, irritability

b. Self-Pity (ie/ Jonah & Elijah)

- both Jonah and Elijah stated that it would be better for them to die than to live

c. Regretful Guilt (ie/ David, Peter, Judas)

Psalm 32:3-4 ³ When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. ⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer.

- David suffered with guilt over his adultery with Bathsheba and the plotting of the murder of her husband, Uriah

Matthew 26:69-75 Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard.... But he denied it before them all ... And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

Matthew 27:1-5 ... Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

d. Disobedience To God (ie/ Jonah)

Jonah 4:1-11 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. So he prayed to the Lord, and said, "Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" ... Then he wished death for himself, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live...."

- Jonah was disappointed in God for showing mercy to the Assyrians in Ninevah
- Jonah placed his will over God's will

Proverbs 5:21-22 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, And He ponders all his paths. His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, And he is caught in the cords of his sin.

e. Unfulfilled Hope (ie/ Job)

Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.

- "We all naturally hope for an end to loss and unfairness. We long for better days. When they don't come, the unsettling pain of delayed or deferred hope sets in." (Jeff Olson, *When Hope Is Lost: Dealing With Depression*, Radio Bible Class, p. 11)
- "Depression is the result of sorrowing without hope. We lose hope when we start thinking and believing that things will never get better, or that there is no purpose

for our pain. Or that no one else has to go through anything similar. When we become convinced that nothing can be done because the situation is hopeless, we experience depression: sorrow without hope." (Jim Berg, "A Primer On Depression", Today's Christian Preacher, article date unknown)

f. Satanic Affliction (ie/ Job, Saul)

- Job faced Satanic affliction, family loss, an unsupportive wife and unsupportive friends

1 Samuel 16:14-16 But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him. And Saul's servants said to him, "Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. Let our master now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well."

- There are a lot of factors that can lead to depression. But the 1 Kings 19 gives us a glimpse of what brought Elijah into a **ministry related depression**.

A. Spiritual Warfare In The Mind

1. Post-Victory Blues: The VICTORY got to his head

1 Kings 19:1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword.

- 1 Kings 17 - Elijah predicts drought for 3 yrs
- 1 Kings 18 - Ahab blames Elijah
- Elijah blames Ahab for following Baal
- 19:19 – A great challenge - 450 prophets of Baal + 400 prophets of Asherah (950:1 odds)
- 19:21 – Elijah boldly proclaims "How long will you falter between 2 opinions?"
- The pagan priests attempted to call their god to burn the bull. The 450 prophets of Baal cried and cut themselves, but there was no fire
- Elijah repaired the altar (v. 30), erected 12 stones (31), drenched the wood with water, cut the bull (extra fluid with the blood), poured 4 water pots 3 times (34) and God responded with fire.
- This led to the false prophets' execution
- Yet, Elijah responded with great depression
- **Elijah took off his spiritual armor thinking the battle is over after a victory**
- After a victory, we feel we can let down our spiritual armor.
- Satan is aware of that tendency and knows how to attack us when we are most vulnerable. We are vulnerable when we let the armor down.
- **The root problem of why we take off our armor is PRIDE.**
 - "We don't need God's protection."

- "Look what I'VE done for God."
- **Elijah's Pride**
 - V. 4 – *it is enough ... I'm no better than my fathers*
 - V. 10 – *I have zealously served the Lord*
 - V. 14 – *I have zealously served the Lord*
 - Now it's about what Elijah did, not what God did
- Ie/ For a few years in my 20's, after every summer camp I directed, I'd get really sick.
- Ie/ When I was single in ministry, I stopped taking Mondays off – I'd get the **Monday Morning Blues**. Getting married helped. But my day off is midweek because of my early struggle with the Monday Morning Blues.

2. **Negative Thinking – The VIXEN got to his head (2)**

1 Kings 19:2 .² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

- Jezebel issues a 24 hour warning to Elijah to get out of Jezreel or die
- F.B. Meyer: "Jezebel's indignation knew no bounds. She was like tigress robbed of her young. ..Crafty, unscrupulous & intriguing, she molded Ahab to her mind. To Jezebel, the crisis was one of the gravest moment. Policy as well as indignation prompted her to act at once. If this national reformation were permitted to spread, it would sweep away before it all that she had been laboring at for years. She must strike and strike at once.
- She was so ruthless, her husband, King Ahab, was intimidated by her and influenced by her
- She had the northern kingdom (16:32-33) and southern kingdom (through marriage of her step daughter, Athaliah, to house of Judah – 2 Kings 8:16-19; 11:1-20) under her godless, pagan, and immoral influence
- She was a woman of power and Elijah focused on that more than God's power
- "God is bigger than the Boogie Man, He's bigger than Godzilla and the monsters on TV" – but we forget that
- Jezebel could have apprehended him by surprise and kill him
- But all she needed to do was instill fear so that he would run
- Israel needed Elijah to be their spiritual leader to live under the power of Yahweh, rather than Baal
- Elijah fled in panic
- **To Elijah, Jezebel became a greater threat than God was as a Protector**
- Satan is our foe and we are threats to him
- If he could instill fear and paralysis, all he has to do is make us run

- Spurgeon: "Satan never kicks a dead horse"
- **Satan targets the mind.**
- Jezebel planted a threat.
- Elijah's mind elevated Jezebel to a great threat than God's protectorate
- "A depressed person has pronounced tendency to think about matters from a negative perspective....Negative thinking is both a root cause of depression and a perpetuator of the problem. It is important to note that though a person is currently caught in a negative-thinking pattern, he may not always have had such tendencies." (Les Carter, *Mind Over Emotions*, p. 40)
- "... the ultimate cause of all spiritual depression is unbelief. For if it were not for unbelief even the devil could do nothing. It is because we listen to the devil instead of listening to God that we go down before him and fall before his attacks." (Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. *Spiritual Depression*, p. 20, Zondervan. Kindle Edition.)

Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ

- Spiritual warfare today is not always a demonic attack, but mostly battle for the mind.
- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, both physician and pastor: "Now we turn to consider the 'wiles of the devil' as they are to be seen in the confusion he creates between the physical, the psychological and the spiritual realms...The subject is one of the most practical we can ever consider. We are strange creatures, made up of body, mind, and spirit; these are interrelated and react upon one another. Many of our troubles in life are due to this fact, and to our failure to realize the place, function, and sphere of each one of these realms." (*The Christian Warfare*, Baker, 1976, pp. 206–208)
- "Christians don't understand how physical, psychological, and spiritual realms interrelate because Satan muddies the boundaries. Many of our troubles are caused because we think a problem is spiritual when it is physical or we think a problem is physical when it is emotional or spiritual."⁹ Murray, David (2010-11-29). *Christians Get Depressed Too* (Kindle Locations 361-364). Reformation Heritage Books. Kindle Edition.
- Controlling the mind (our thoughts) is the key to conquering depression
- Puritan Richard Baxter advise for those suffering with depression: "Avoid your musings, and exercise not your thoughts now too deeply, nor too much. Long

meditation is a duty to some, but not to you, no more than it is a man's duty to go to church that hath his leg broken, or his foot out of joint: he must rest and ease it till it be set again, and strengthened. You may live in the faith and fear of God, without setting yourself to deep, disturbing thoughts." *"The Cure of Melancholy and Overmuch Sorrow," in The Practical Works of Rev. Richard Baxter, 4 vols. (London: George Virtue, 1838), 4.932. Murray, David (2010-11-29). Christians Get Depressed Too (Kindle Locations 884-885). Reformation Heritage Books. Kindle Edition.*

B. Physical And Emotional Exhaustion (3a)

1 Kings 19:3a And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah,

- The distance from Jezreel to Beersheba is 90 miles
- Elijah ran for his life. He would have been physically spent.
- Fear, adrenalin, and suspicion (with a big army & spy system coordinated by Jezebel) also left Elijah emotionally drained
- Emotional Exhaustion: I get more emotionally exhausted in one hour of counseling than 5 hours of teaching.
- J.B. Phillips – well known pastor and Bible translator writes in his autobiography about his struggle with depression: "The feeling of being utterly drained of all emotion and desire persisted and I simply ceased to work..." (*The Price of Success*)
- David Murray: "Much of the increase in depression and anxiety today is largely the result of an unbalanced lifestyle where people are, on the one hand, working too hard and spending too much and, on the other hand, are exercising, resting, and sleeping too little." (*Christians Get Depressed Too*)

C. Personal Isolation (3b)

1 Kings 19:3b and left his servant there

- Elijah unwisely left his servant, Gehazi, and was alone.
- In our most vulnerable times, we need accountability.
- A common tendency when people walk away from God is avoidance of other Christians
- "The depressed believer cannot concentrate to read or pray. As she doesn't want to meet people, she may avoid church and fellowship. She often feels God has abandoned her." *Murray, David (2010-11-29). Christians Get Depressed Too (Kindle Location 128). Reformation Heritage Books. Kindle Edition.*

D. Faulty Perspective

1 Kings 19:4 ⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I *am* no better than my fathers!"

1. **Senseless Praying (4a)**

he prayed that he might die ... take my life

- Elijah prayed that he would die
- Shakespeare (Richard II) - "Discomfort guides my tongue and bids me to speak of nothing but despair."
- In Charles Spurgeon's struggle with depression, he opened his sermon on Isaiah 41:14 to the surprise of his congregation at the Metropolitan Tabernacle: "I have to speak today to myself, and whilst I shall be endeavoring to encourage those who are distressed and downhearted, I shall be preaching, I trust to myself, for I need something which shall cheer my heart—why I cannot tell, wherefore I do not know, but I have a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me; **my soul is cast down within me; I feel as if I had rather die than live; all that God hath done by me seems to be forgotten, and my spirit flags and my courage breaks down ... I need your prayers.**" (Charles Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sermons, Volume 4*, p. 351)

a. **Where Is God? Wondering About The Presence Of God**

Psalm 42:3 My tears have been my food day and night, While they continually say to me, "Where is your God?"

Matthew 11:3 [John the Baptist] said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

b. **Why God? Pondering About The Purpose Of God**

Psalm 22:1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?

Jeremiah 15:18 Why is my pain perpetual And my wound incurable, Which refuses to be healed? Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, As waters that fail?

Jeremiah 20:7-8 O Lord, You induced me, and I was persuaded; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily; Everyone mocks me. For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, "Violence and plunder!" Because the word of the Lord was made to me A reproach and a derision daily.

Judges 6:13-14 ¹³ Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

c. The Depressed Needs To Refocus On God As The One Who Receives Them In Their Weakness And Pain

Psalm 38:9-10 Lord, all my desire is before You; And my sighing is not hidden from You. My heart pants, my strength fails me; As for the light of my eyes, it also has gone from me.

2. Self-Pity (4b)

and said, "It is enough!"

- Elijah imposed his own self-determined limits in his proclamation that he couldn't take it anymore (4)
- Like Scotty in "Star Trek": "Aye Captain, the engines can't take it anymore"
- Paul Tautges: "**Self-pity is one of the expressions of my self-love.** My unhealthy perfectionism often leads me to think I am a failure when I don't fully reach every single one of my goals (I don't think all perfectionism is unhealthy, by the way). When this happens self-pity is my drug of choice. I am finally seeing this as sinful. Thankfully, God has given me a few brothers in my church who are not afraid to tell me the truth, to speak into my life when I get to wallowing." ("Depression: Discerning False Thinking Patterns," <http://counselingoneanother.com/2012/02/03/depression-discerning-false-thinking-patterns/>)

3. Unwarranted Comparisons (4c)

for I am no better than my fathers

Q: Who's comparing you with your fathers?

- I struggled with these unwarranted to comparisons
- I went to a Bible college know one ever heard of – based out of our church
- I went to a seminary that closed before it finished
- I'd go to conferences and dread the question where I went to school
- Then feeling inadequate, I'm pastoring a church with really smart people
- The world baits the believer to measure one's worth based on financial success, personal achievement, and titles. Yet those are unwarranted comparisons before God.
- Other unwarranted comparisons are:
 - how big is your church
 - who raised support the fastest
 - how much do you make
 - how big is your role at church
- The key: **Contentment**
- Be faithful with what you got

4. Martyr Syndrome (10)

1 Kings 19:10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

- Elijah had the "I" problem

Q: Who gave the victory Elijah?

- We often take too much credit and think that we're indispensable to God
- Subjectivity vs. Objectivity
- **Subjectivity:** Only can see one's own need – that's selfish
- **Objectivity:** See own need plus needs of others – that's reality
- Objectivity sees the big picture
- Subjectivity only sees the situation from one's personal lens
- Objectivity takes all the Scripture as practical
- Subjectivity selectively applies Scripture according to one's convenience
- **Elijah thinks he is all alone.**
- Realistically, there are **7,000 other prophets** who did not bow to idols.
- When one focuses on his or her self – he/she can't see clearly
- "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God"
- David Murray describes how depressed people "magnify the negatives and exclude the positives."

II. The Cure For Depression (1 Kings 19:5-18)

A. Care For Your Physical Needs (5-8)

1 Kings 19:5-8 Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. And the angel of the Lord came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." So he arose, and ate and drank; and **he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights** as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

- The angel took care of his physical needs first - **sleep** and **eat**. He didn't begin with a sermon.
- ie/ Do not be like the patient on the psychiatrist couch saying "Doctor, nobody takes me seriously anymore." Doctor replied "You're kidding."
- God continually took care of Elijah via: 1) Raven, 2) Widow, now an 3) angel
- God understands our exhaustion

Matthew 11:28-30 ²⁸ Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

B. Concentrate On God's Powerful Word Over Dramatic Circumstance (9-12)

1 Kings 19:9-12 And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" So he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life." Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

- God demonstrated cataclysmic events, but His presence was not in it.
 - Strong wind that broke rocks, earthquake, fire – all had been used as precursors for the coming of the Lord
 - But God wasn't in it
- We often look for security in size and that which is tangible.

ie/ David sinned by counting his people, because he depended on numbers, not God

ie/ Israel, when attacked by Sennacharab & the Assyrians depended on Egypt, not God (Isa 29:15-16)

- God was not in these tangible events before Elijah
- God then spoke in a still small voice
- Don't trust in big, tangible securities. God's voice is sufficient – even in a whisper.

1. God Is Faithful In Helping Us Not Succumb To Temptation

1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

3 excuses:

- No one understands what I'm going through ("common to man")
- I was overwhelmed, I couldn't handle it ("God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able")
- I was trapped and had no option ("way of escape")

2. God Is Faithful In Helping Us Through Hard Times

Psalm 46:1-3 1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
2 Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

C. Commit Yourself To Others (13-18)

1 Kings 19:13-18 So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life." Then the Lord said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint **Hazael** as king over Syria. Also you shall anoint **Jehu** the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And **Elisha** the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

- Get involved with others
 - Hazael (2 Kings 8:8-11-15)
 - Jehu (2 Kings 9:1-10)
 - Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21)
- Ministry to others takes the focus off self and onto needs of others
- Ministry to others provides encouragement and accountability
- Ministry to others multiplies your ministry - make disciples
- Praying for others helps you to your mind off yourself
- Ie/ Depressed in Bible College – didn't quite fit in HS ministry and sad about a break up
 - Started the Junior High fellowship and poured my life into others
 - There was no time to mope in self-pity

Conclusion: Four Things To Do When Life Gets You Down *(from Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane)*

1. Reach out for help (Mt 26:37-38)

- Jesus, as he approached His private sorrow in Gethsemane, asked 3 friends to be with Him

Matthew 26:37-38 ³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

- A good antidote for **De-pression** is **Ex-pression**.

2. Tell God of your pain (Mt 26:39a)

Matthew 26:39a He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me"

- Be honest
- Tell Him of your hurt
- Ask Him for perspective
- Ask Him for joy

3. Confront the reality of the source of depression (Mt 26:39b)

Matthew 26:39b let this cup pass from Me"

- The cup of God's wrath was the source of His sorrow

a. Identify what we have lost

b. Evaluate why God permitted the loss

- Did God permit my loss because the object of my depression was wrong to have? (e.g. break up with unsaved, mad at parental punishment, financial loss due to gambling in Vegas, related to sin, greed)
- Did God permit my loss because it became an idol which became more important to me than God? (e.g. relationship, job, workaholism, perfectionism)
- Did God permit my loss because He wanted me to grow in my faith?

c. Avoid wrong choices to compensate for depression

- Going shopping to feel empowerment because depression has sapped control from you
- Indulging in sexual fantasies to compensate sadness
- Overeating to feel better
- Taking drugs or alcohol to numb pain
- Dangerous thrill seeking (ie/ wreckless driving) to experience a rush or to dare death
- Ignoring responsibilities at home, work or school to relieve pressure
- Contemplating suicide to end the pain

- "Watch how you muse (ponder/meditate) and what you choose when you lose."
(Jim Berg, "A Primer On Depression", Today's Christian Preacher, article date unknown, p. 8)

d. Understand that elation is not the cure for depression, perspective is

- Instead of identifying the source, many folks in our world seek fun in the world – entertainment, party, alcohol, drugs

- Jay Adams, in *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, p. 381, suggest a path of investigation to the manifestation of a depressed person pursuing elation as a cure which can be classified as a manic depression:
- Elation as overcorrection – trying to pull back to the center
- Elation as solution – laughing to ease the pain, but the problem is not solved
- Elation as denial – euphoria only lasts so long
- Elation as frantic straw-grasping – grasping for a relationship or entertainment fails
- Elation as one part of a way of life – pendulum living – but the more we swing the pendulum, the greater the extreme

Perspective:

- There is a purpose in our loss, the death of a vision, an unfulfilled hope and a thorn in the flesh.
- Each of these hurt and triggers a pressing or a depressing action on our emotions
- Victory is in our perspective
- Why did God allow the loss? Job saw the sovereignty of God.
- Why did God allow the thorn in the flesh? Paul learned the sufficiency of His grace
- Why do we get discouraged in ministry? Elijah lost his Godward focus as he fears became manward.

4. Set aside our disappointment in our unfulfilled expectations to discover the perfection of God's good will. (Mt 25:39c)

Matthew 26:39c "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

- Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, focused on God's will, not His human emotion (v. 39)
- What do we need to do to understand God's will in our circumstance and to submit to it?

How do we "meet De – Press"?

Redirect the camera lens from us to the Lord.

<h4>Discussion:</h4> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When are you most vulnerable to times of depression? 2. How does our battle with depression correlate to spiritual warfare? What is the devil trying to do to us? What is God trying to prove to us? 3. What does depression teach us about God? 4. How can we distinguish godly sorrow from worldly sorrow? 5. Why are we more prone to look for dramatic circumstances than the simplicity of God's Word in our emotional struggles?
