

How to Have Victory Over Depression

"Why are you cast down, O my SOUL? And why are you disquieted within me?"

Psalm 42:5

"He restores my SOUL..." Psalm 23:3

The Biblical description of depression is **"a downcast and disquieted SOUL"** (Psalm 42:5). Depression can cause you to make irrational decisions: for example, to suddenly change jobs, sell your home, or do any number of irrational things without praying or seeking God for direction. It can cause Christians to isolate and not fellowship with other Believers, which only makes things worse. Maybe you've even known of someone you thought was a "strong Christian" who committed suicide because of depression. Depression for a Christian, a born-again child of God, is NOT coming from the spirit, but from the SOUL. If you are suffering from depression, there may be some other contributing physical factors such as fatigue, hormones, or some other chemical imbalance, but **your primary need is for your SOUL to be RESTORED**. Many Christians do not understand the difference between soul and spirit, and they do not understand that God does NOT want your life to be controlled by your soul, but rather by YOUR spirit and the Holy Spirit.

The Bible tells us that we are made up of spirit, soul and body (I Thess. 5:23). In fact, the real YOU is your spirit, you have a soul, and you live in a body. The SOUL is made up of MIND, WILL and EMOTIONS. The "natural man" is governed ONLY by his soul and bodily appetites, because he is spiritually dead (I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-5). You, as a born-again Christian, are to be governed and **controlled by the Holy Spirit** and your own born-again SPIRIT, which is created in the image of God, NOT by your SOUL (Eph. 4:17-24). **Your soul, which includes your emotions, is UNRELIABLE, and you must not trust it.** You MUST renew your mind with the word of God (Romans 12:2; Eph. 4:23) and you are RESPONSIBLE (using your FREE WILL) to be careful of what you put before your eyes and ears and allow to enter your mind, because that will AFFECT your EMOTIONS (see Phil. 4:6-9). If you find that your MIND (thoughts) or EMOTIONS are **OUT of LINE with what God says in His word**, you MUST NOT allow your SOUL to be the final authority. God's word must be the final authority, and **we are told to "take EVERY THOUGHT captive to the OBEDIENCE of Christ"** (II Cor. 10:3-5), which means you must deal with your thought-life and emotions, rather than **ALLOWING them to RULE you**. You must refuse to live by your feelings - your feelings and emotions ("heart" in the Bible) are highly unreliable. When your heart or emotions become overwhelmed, you MUST cry out to God and run to Him!

- **Jeremiah 17:9-10** "The HEART is more deceitful than anything else, and desperately sick; who can understand it? **I the Lord** search the heart, I test the mind..."
- **Psalm 61:1-2** "Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry to You. When MY HEART is OVERWHELMED, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

Again, depression is not coming from within your spirit, because your spirit is ONE with the Lord, and **He is NOT depressed!** (I Cor. 6:17, "But he who is joined to the Lord is ONE SPIRIT with Him"). If you are depressed, therefore, **you have LET DOWN your GUARD** in one or more of the following areas regarding your soul: **1.)** Renewing the Mind; **2.)** Abiding in Christ; **3.)** Being Filled with the Holy Spirit; **4.)** Obeying God in the Area of Praise and Thanksgiving; **5.)** Obeying God in the Area of Fear, Worry and Anxiety; and **6.)** Obeying God in the Area of Taking Thoughts Captive. Let's examine each one of these areas in more detail:

1.) Renewing the Mind – The promise we have from God for renewing our minds is that we will be TRANSFORMED, CHANGED and MADE NEW! If you want to see **positive**

changes in your life, you **must renew your mind** by constantly reading the **WORD of GOD**. Otherwise, you will think, act and talk just like the rest of the world. As your mind (your way of thinking) is changed, you will begin to see things as God sees them, and your outward behavior will change. If you, as a child of God, fail to renew your mind, you will be open and vulnerable to depression just like anyone else! **RENEWING** your mind with the **WORD of GOD** is like re-programming a computer - **you must REPLACE all the old THOUGHT PATTERNS** with God's thoughts (from His word). This is also called "having the **MIND of CHRIST**."

Proverbs 4 shows us the connection between renewing the mind with the word of God and our health and emotions (heart). You must **RETAIN** God's word in **your HEART** as well as your mind, which means **HOW you think affects your emotions**. You must keep God's word in the midst of your heart, and "keep" or guard and watch over **your HEART** with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Depression will seriously affect the quality of your life, and **ALL** your "issues of life" if you do not guard your heart. Please understand that the promises in God's word are conditional to your obeying what He says to do! If you do not keep the conditions of the promise, it will not happen in your life!

•**Philippians 2:5** "Let this **MIND be in YOU** which was also in Christ Jesus."

•**Ephesians 4:23-24** "And be **RENEWED** in the spirit of your **MIND**; and that **you put on the NEW MAN**, which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness."

•**Romans 12:2** "And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

•**Proverbs 4:4** "Let your **HEART** retain **My WORDS**; keep my **commandments** and **LIVE**."

•**Proverbs 4:20-23** "My son, give attention to **My WORDS**;do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of **YOUR HEART**; for they are **LIFE** to those who find them, and **HEALTH** to all their flesh. Keep (guard, watch over) **your HEART** with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

•**Philippians 4:6-9** ".....**guard your hearts and minds** through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is any **PRAISE** – **meditate on these things**. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, **these DO**, and the God of **PEACE** will be with you."

2.) Abiding in Christ – To **ABIDE** in Jesus means to remain in a close relationship and **CONSTANT FELLOWSHIP** with Him. Jesus came to live in your heart when you received Him by faith. He dwells in you by His Spirit - the Holy Spirit. You have fellowship with Him through prayer (just talking to Him) and reading His word (He talks to you). If you have become too busy, and "burned out" trying to do the Lord's work, or just trying to handle all your cares in your own strength, you may be suffering fatigue and depression because you have not been spending enough time just "resting in the Lord" and abiding in Christ. You must learn to be still, and know that He is God. The branch abiding in the vine does not have to "stress out" about bearing fruit - if it is fastened to the vine, and getting its nourishment from the vine, the fruit will just naturally grow. Jesus promises that the spiritual fruit of His **JOY** will remain in you, and that your **JOY** will be full, if you abide in Him.

•**John 15:4-5, 7 & 11** "**Abide in Me**, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear **FRUIT** of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who ABIDES in Me**, and I in him, bears much **FRUIT**; for without Me you can do nothing." "If you **abide in Me**, and My **WORDS** abide in **YOU**, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done

unto you." "These things I have spoken to you, that **My JOY may remain in you**, and that **your JOY may be full.**"

• **John 4:13 & 15** "By this we know that **we ABIDE in Him**, and He in us, because He has given us of His SPIRIT."

• **Psalms 46:10** "Be STILL, and know that I am God...."

• **Matthew 11:28-29** "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you REST**. 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.**"

3.) Being Filled with the Holy Spirit – There is confusion among some Christians about the filling of the Holy Spirit. Some think it is a one-time experience, and therefore do not examine themselves to see if they are **continually ALLOWING the Spirit to be in control** of their lives or not. We are COMMANDED to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is NOT a ONE-TIME experience, but a continuous, moment-by-moment YIELDING of ourselves to the Holy Spirit's control in our lives. The literal translation of the Greek is "**KEEP ON being filled**" with the Spirit. One of the results of being CONTROLLED by the Holy Spirit is having **JOY in your heart** ("singing and making melody in your HEART"). Since joy and peace (the opposite of depression) are part of the "fruit" of the Holy Spirit, it is obvious that the depressed Christian is NOT filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit. Also, depressed people usually **feel they are without HOPE**, but Romans 15:13 says you will "**ABOUND in HOPE** by the power of the Holy Spirit" as a result of letting Him control your life.

• **Galatians 5:22-23** "But the FRUIT (evidence, outworking) of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace, longsuffering (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...."

• **Ephesians 5:17-19** ".....do not be UNWISE, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but **BE FILLED with the Spirit**, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **SINGING and making melody in your HEART** to the Lord."

• **Romans 15:13** "Now may the God of **HOPE fill you with all JOY and peace** in believing, that you may **ABOUND in HOPE** by the power of the Holy Spirit."

4.) Obeying God in the Area of Praise and Thanksgiving – We are commanded to REJOICE or be JOYFUL always. By an ACT of your WILL, you must ALLOW the Holy Spirit to control you, and ALLOW His JOY to fill your heart. That means **you must ADJUST your thinking**, and not LET fear and negative thoughts control you. The **outward expression** of this obedience is to thank God and praise Him for ALL circumstances and situations in your life, because you TRUST Him to be working all things together for your good.

• **Ephesians 5:20** "**Giving thanks ALWAYS** for ALL THINGS to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

• **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** "**Rejoice ALWAYS**, pray without ceasing, **in everything GIVE THANKS** for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

• **Colossians 3:15** "And LET the PEACE of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be THANKFUL."

• **Psalms 40:16** "**LET** all those who seek You **REJOICE and be GLAD in You**; let such as love Your salvation say continually, 'The Lord be magnified!'"

• **Philippians 4:4** "**REJOICE in the Lord ALWAYS**. Again I will say, REJOICE!"

• **Psalms 5:11-12** "But LET all those **REJOICE** who put their **trust in You**; LET them ever shout for **JOY**, because You defend them; LET those also who love Your name be **JOYFUL in You.**"

•**Romans 8:28** "And we know that **ALL things WORK together for GOOD** to those who LOVE God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

5.) Obeying God in the Area of Worry and Anxiety – God commands us to not worry or be afraid. You must meditate on God's promises regarding His protection, provision and guidance. Then, personalize those promises (put YOUR NAME in each one), and pray and BELIEVE that the Lord is taking care of whatever problem you have put in His hands. That is God's answer for all forms of worry, anxiety, fear, depression or indecision. **Fear is the opposite of faith.** Do not be afraid, but have complete trust without doubt, and commit it all into His loving care. James 1:6-8 says "But let him ASK in FAITH, nothing wavering (doubting). For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For LET NOT that MAN THINK that he shall RECEIVE ANYTHING of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." If you're still worrying after you pray and commit it to God, you are being double-minded.

•**Philippians 4:6-9** "Be anxious for nothing, but in EVERYTHING by PRAYER and supplication, with THANKSGIVING, let your requests be made known to God; and the PEACE of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is any PRAISE – meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these DO, and the God of PEACE will be with you."

•**Matthew 6:31-33** "Therefore, **DO NOT WORRY**, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or, 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves? For after all these things the Gentiles (unbelievers) seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But SEEK FIRST the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and ALL these things shall be added unto you."

•**1 Timothy 1:7** "For God has NOT given us a spirit of FEAR, but of POWER and of LOVE and of a sound MIND."

6.) Obeying God in the Area of Taking Thoughts Captive – The area where most Christians fail or fall down is the area of controlling their thoughts. It is **your own CHOICE to obey** what God says in His word, or not. If you obey God and take every thought captive and "guard yourself," the wicked one (Satan) cannot touch you (1 John 5:18). It is when you FAIL TO OBEY, and **you entertain, DWELL ON or harbor those thoughts that are contrary to God's word** ("every high thing that exalts itself AGAINST God"), that Satan is allowed an entrance into your life (see Eph. 4:26-27). If this sin is not confessed and corrected, and if you CONTINUALLY entertain wrong thoughts, you give Satan "ground" and allow him to build strongholds in your life. Depression is one of those STRONGHOLDS. "Ground" means a sphere of jurisdiction that **you VOLUNTARILY give to the enemy**. Many people are MENTALLY LAZY and PASSIVE, and they ALLOW these wrong thoughts to control them, and ALLOW Satan to build strongholds in their lives. They are saved, but **they are miserable** by their own CHOICE. They ask for OTHER PEOPLE to PRAY for them, but they remain in the same condition, because God has told THEM to do something about it, and they REFUSE to do it.

•**1 Corinthians 10:3-5** "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (merely human), but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; **casting down imaginations, and every high thing (thoughts, lies from Satan)** that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity EVERY THOUGHT** to the OBEDIENCE of CHRIST."

Do NOT LISTEN to Satan's LIES – Don't listen to the wrong voices! **You MUST learn to CONTROL your THOUGHTS** and NOT accept or believe Satan's lies. These "wrong voices"

can be worldly advice from other people, demonic voices, or just "old tapes" from the past that you allow to run in your head (failing to take your thoughts captive). Some Christians even **ACCEPT demonic voices** and suggestions as if they were their own thoughts, or else they seem to feel they are helpless against them. You need to hold up the **shield of faith** against the fiery darts of the enemy (Eph, 6:16), **REJECT** any wrong thoughts or **VOICES** in the name of Jesus, and fill your mind with the word of God! Be careful — Satan will not announce that these doubts and sinful thoughts are from him, but will make them seem like your own thoughts.

Okay, so what if you think your depression is demonic? Where does deliverance come into it? Sometimes, depression can be caused by or aggravated by demonic oppression. If in your depression you say, "The promises in the word of God **don't SEEM REAL to me**" or there seems to be **a barrier or blockage** when you try to read the word, this blockage may be demonic. If you are weak spiritually, you may need help in deliverance from the demons initially, by others praying for you, but **AFTERWARDS you MUST learn to take your thoughts captive** to keep the demons from coming back (Matt. 12:43-45).

In summary, the depressed Christian is one who has **ACCEPTED** and **BOUGHT into the lies of the enemy**, and if left unchecked, Satan will eventually "devour" that Christian, making them ineffective for God, and worst-case scenario is a nervous breakdown or suicide. By "devour" do we mean that person is lost and going to hell? No, that can never happen to a true child of God. Why can't you lose your salvation once you are born again into God's family? You can't be un-born, for one thing, and since you were **NOT** saved by your **GOOD** behavior, you do not **LOSE** your salvation by your **BAD** behavior (Eph. 2:8-9). You didn't **EARN** it, you only had to **RECEIVE** it - it is a total free gift! **GRACE** means unmerited or **UNEARNED** favor. The Christian who remains in that depressed and ineffective state, or even commits suicide, will miss out on some rewards in heaven (see I Cor. 3:11-15, I Cor. 5:5), but will still **BE** in heaven. In I Cor. 9:27-29, Paul talks about being "disqualified" by failing to keep his body in submission, which means losing his testimony to others. The depressed Christian has no testimony of God's goodness to give to others, because he or she is down wallowing in the pit (Psalm 40:1-3), rather than walking in the light (Eph. 5:8).

Some people have been taught that if you as a Christian commit suicide, you will go to hell. They use I Cor. 3:17, but this verse is not speaking of the individual Christian, and it certainly is not talking about suicide. In Matthew 15:20, Jesus indicates that it is not the outward things that defile our bodies, but the inward sins of the spirit. The outward, physical act of killing oneself **could not** either defile or destroy the temple of God, for God has promised to raise it up a perfect, incorruptible body at the resurrection. The defiling mentioned here is sin and perversion that would creep into the church as a whole, as a body of believers, and would thus defile it. God's church should be kept pure and holy, and any false teachers who would spread doctrines in the church that would cause believers to commit fornication or idolatry, would provoke God to destroy them - they would bring destruction upon themselves (see Rev. 2:14-16 & 20-24).

- **I Peter 5:8-9** "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary (enemy) the devil walks about like a roaring lion, **seeking whom he MAY devour**. Resist him, steadfast in the faith....."
- **John 10:28-29** "My Sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them **ETERNAL life**, and **they shall never perish**; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and **NO ONE** is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."
- **I Corinthians 3:16-17** "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man **defiles the temple of God**, him will God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."

Please also read "How to be Set Free (Steps To Take in Resisting Satan - Deliverance)"; "Walking in Your Deliverance", Parts 1 & 2; "Knowing Who You Are in Christ", and "Knowing Who You Are in Christ - Using Your Spiritual Authority", Parts 1 & 2" and "Freedom from Generational Bondage"