

DEPRESSION

Its Causes, Effects, and Cure



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Numbers 11:14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.

15 And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.

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

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

2 Corinthians 1:8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.

In viewing these passages of Scripture text, we see men whom we commonly view as spiritual giants: Moses, the great lawgiver; Elijah, the very epitome of the prophets; and the great theologian and apostle of the New Testament, the Apostle Paul. As we begin to view these three men, we see that they stood as towers of strength in their respective eras of time.

Moses, the Great Lawgiver

Let us first consider Moses, a unique and very peculiar man who stood alone both in the era of time in which he lived and also today. The Lord used Moses to perform feats unequalled in the annals of history. To the present day, we have never seen another rod converted into a serpent, much less a rod that consumed other rods, or serpents.

We can read of that account in Exodus 7:8-12, which says: "And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods."

We not only read that Moses' rod was turned into a serpent and consumed the other serpents, but that the same shepherd's rod was used to part the Red Sea and cause it to stand in a heap (Exodus 14:16, 21-22). These are events that have remained unparalleled even up to the day and time in which you and I live. It was Moses alone who received the tablets that were cut out and inscribed by the very hand of God (Exodus 31:18). Moses reached the zenith of spirituality. I repeat, Moses is a man who stands unequalled and unparalleled in the annals of history. He stands alone.

Elijah, the Epitome of Prophets

In our companion text in 1 Kings, Chapter 19, we read about the Prophet Elijah. He, too, was a man who was unique in his position in history. Nowhere else in all of the Scriptures do we have record of a man shutting up the heavens for the space of 3 ½ years, but Elijah did (James 5:17). He prayed in 1 Kings 18:37, "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." The Lord sent fire on Mount Carmel and consumed the sacrifice. These events stand out in the history of time.

Jesus verified the preeminent position that these two great men occupied in their respective eras by bringing all of the ages together on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-3). Who did He choose to represent the Law and the Prophets? Moses and Elijah.

The Great Apostle Paul

In our third Scripture text we read of the great Apostle Paul, who was also a special man in his day. There is no other record in Scripture of one who had such a spectacular experience as he witnessed on the Damascus Road and his subsequent conversion in Judas' house (Acts 9:3-17). His own words were that he was "as of one born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15:8). Although he was a man who was stoned and left for dead, God raised him up and sent him back to preach to the same people (Acts 14:19-21). No other man wrote fourteen Books of the Bible, witnessed to Caesar, and established multiple congregations. So we see that Paul was a very unique man.

We need to understand that these were distinctive men in their particular day. We lift Moses, Elijah, and Paul from history as being towers of strength and greatly used of God. Nevertheless, as great as each of them were, we see in our Scripture texts that God saw fit in His wisdom to allow us to catch a glimpse of a side of these men that we seldom consider. It is vitally necessary that we understand this side as much as we appreciate their accomplishments.

A Common Vein of Despair

Although their callings were different and the eras of time in which they labored were different from each other, yet we find in these lesson texts that there is a common vein that runs among these three men. In all three texts God has pulled back the covers and allowed us to catch a glimpse of each of these men when they despaired of life. Each one said: "It is enough. It is too much. I'm done. Take me."

In Numbers 11:14-15 Moses cried: "I am not able to bear all this . . . kill me." Have you ever felt this way? This is a very up-to-date text. Then over in 1 Kings 19:4 Elijah said, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life."

One might say, "Well, that was in the Old Testament." All right, let us go to the New Testament and consider Paul. Paul declared in 2 Corinthians 1:8, ". . . we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life." One version puts it this way: ". . . we were exceedingly depressed." The first lesson we glean from each of our three Scripture texts is that regardless of how spiritual or how greatly used of the Lord a person may be, no one is exempt from the overtures of depression. If our Scripture text dispels anything, it would be the thought of being above the possibility of facing depression.

I have shown you that these men reached an apex that no one else in human history has ever reached. Why then did God allow these men to be portrayed as facing something so human? So that you and I could understand this truth: if depression approached men of such caliber who were towers of strength and epitomes of spirituality, we need not be surprised when it comes knocking on our door.

If there were a spiritual level that you could attain at which depression would not bother you, I dare say at least one of these three men would have attained it. I am not teaching that we must succumb to depression; I am only stating, by the authority of God's Word, that we cannot avoid the "approach" of depression.

Jude 3 teaches that each one of us has a "common salvation." In 1 Corinthians 10:13 Paul said, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." The reason the Lord allowed these texts to be penned was to enable you and me to see, from a scriptural perspective, that there is no pinnacle or plateau of spirituality which we can achieve that will take us beyond the realm of still having human forces with which to contend.

So the first thing this lesson teaches us is that no one, regardless of how spiritual or greatly used of the Lord they may be, is exempt from the approach of human depression. As a matter of fact, the more you launch out and try to do for the Lord, the more likely you are to battle it in a greater way.

James 5:17 says, "Elias [which is Greek for the Hebrew Elijah, the same character as in our text] was a man subject to like passions as we are . . ." Now, what was he teaching us when he said "a man subject to like passions"? The Amplified Bible states, ". . . with a nature such as we have—with feelings, affections and constitution as ourselves]." These great men had the same nature, feelings, emotions, and affections to deal with as those with which you and I must deal.

The Psalmist told us in Psalm 33:15, "He [God] fashioneth their hearts alike." When you boil it right down, one man is no different from another man in his emotional composition or makeup. Our hearts are all fashioned alike.

Salvation is a common experience, and we are subject to the same battles. Some things are just customary to all humanity, and dealing with feelings and emotions is one of these common elements. When you are tempted to be depressed, remember the words of Paul: it is "common to man." Depression has approached and worked upon many great men for a season.

A Despondent Condition

We have already studied how depression worked on Moses, Elijah, and Paul. Now let us consider Joshua, Moses' successor. In Joshua 7:7 we see him on his face, after the defeat at Ai. He said, "Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!" This was the prayer of a depressed man. That is why God told Joshua only one thing: get up. He was in no shape to pray in that condition. Someone might say, "Oh, the solution to depression is just to have a good season of prayer." Well, when you are extremely depressed, it is not always easy to pray as you ought!

Let us consider Job. He said, "My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (Job 10:1). Then in Psalm 42:6 we read the words of David, who said, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me." My friend, there have been many throughout history who have dealt with the approach of depression. The good news is, there is victory. In our lesson text we see that all three of these men despaired of life, but it was not the end. They received a remedy, just as you and I can receive one too. We do not have to give in to depression.

In 2 Corinthians 4:8 Paul said, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair." Many things will come our way. Perplexity will come, but we do not have to go into depression and despair. I trust you will take the lesson in the right way. I am not saying I have attained or that I never struggle with depression myself. I am merely stating that this is a common salvation and every one of us has to deal with depression from time to time. However, there is a biblical route to victory.

An Emotional Condition

Now let us delve into our study. What actually is depression? *Webster's New World Dictionary* gives this definition: "An emotional condition, characterized by discouragement; a feeling of inadequacy." We must remember that depression is an emotional condition, and every emotion and feeling starts with a thought. The production of depression is caused by allowing wrong thinking to be embraced. It starts with a thought. That is why the Bible says to abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). What is the first "appearance of evil"? The thought.

Once a thought comes, there is a warfare. Paul wrote these words: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [or fleshly, the Greek says], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) [what are those strongholds?] Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). When a thought comes our way, a battle ensues. One of two things will occur: either we captivate the thought, or the thought will captivate us.

Ephesians 6:16 tells us, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Many times those darts are simply thoughts that bombard our minds throughout the course of a day. Even though we cannot keep those thoughts from flashing through our minds, we are to take the helmet of salvation to repel those thoughts (darts of the enemy), so they are not embraced and turned into a feeling or an emotion.

Let us understand the progression that takes place. Depression starts with a thought, goes to a feeling, becomes an emotion, and, if you do not divest yourself of it, then becomes a spirit. Unless you and I embrace that fiery dart and entertain that wrong thought which the enemy of souls brings our way, it can never develop into the feeling or emotion of depression.

Again, we must keep the thought before us that depression is an emotional condition. I understand that depression can result from a pathological or physical problem. I also realize there is a time of life that some go through when the composition of the chemicals in the brain and the enzyme system undergo changes that can produce physical and mental disruption. But even in the face of all of that, we can still trust God to bring us victory. In this study, however, we are not dealing with physical reasons for depression. Laying aside any physical reason, I say, my friend, that depression is produced by the embracing of thoughts and perceptions and allowing an emotion to develop from that perception.

What Causes Depression?

Let us study our Scripture text found in Numbers, Chapter 11. Our lesson holds before us the causes whereby these great men were confronted with depression. In verses 4 and 5 we read: "And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick."

Verses 6-15 continue: "But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes. And the manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium. And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it. Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased.

"And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight."

A Perception of Unfairness

This text shows us a vivid picture of Moses wrestling with depression. Verse 11 says, "Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant?" What does this portray to us? Moses felt that he was being dealt with unfairly, and a perception of unfairness produces feelings of depression. When we feel that someone is taking unfair advantage of us or we have been treated unfairly (especially when we believe it is the Lord who has allowed us to be put into that position), it can lead to feelings of depression.

Do you remember the story of Jonah? He did not want to go preach to the people of Nineveh at the outset, but God had a way of correcting his thinking. When he finished preaching the message through all of Nineveh, he went out of the city, ready to watch God destroy it as He said He would.

However, something occurred after Jonah's preaching; the old king got under took a burden and decided to repent. He had all the animals and every person covered in sackcloth and ashes. He even had the animals fast along with the people. Jonah 3:10 states, "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

Then Jonah thought: "That's not fair. You didn't tell them to repent. The message You had me preach didn't include repentance. You told me to preach, 'Forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.' After I have preached Your message, now, You change Your mind and make me look like a fool." So what did Jonah do? He made himself a booth and sat under it in the shadow (Jonah 4:5), depressed because he felt like he had been treated unfairly. This is one example of how a perception of unfairness can produce depression, if you allow it.

Have you ever struggled with the thought that someone may have treated you unfairly and battled discouragement as a result? A perception of being treated unfairly will lend itself to discouraging, depressing thoughts.

Being Overwhelmed

In Numbers 11:12 Moses asked, "Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom . . . ?" Here is a vivid picture of Moses feeling overwhelmed. By viewing the whole scene of everything and everyone altogether, he felt overpowered. The very perception of being overwhelmed will produce feelings of depression. That is why God never intended for us to look at our life in its entirety, but rather, He told us to walk one step at a time, one day at a time. If you look ahead any farther than that, it will seem overwhelming. We do not have grace for the future.

A man once said, "Inch by inch is a cinch, but yard by yard is mighty hard." To the mother of several children, I ask, have you ever had your house get in a bit of disarray? When you looked at the whole house, did you think, "I'm never going to get

this house all cleaned"? You felt overwhelmed. However, if you just take it room by room, it does not seem nearly so uncontrollable, does it? A perception of being overwhelmed can lead to battles with depression.

What did Moses say in the next verse? "Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people?" When someone is battling with depression, almost always you will find, at the core of their depression, is a sense of utter helplessness. They say: "It's beyond me. It's too big. It's too much. I can't handle it." A sense of helplessness produces depression.

The Effects of Depression

I want you to see that the enemy is behind this feeling of helplessness, because he knows the effects of depression can be tremendous. While you and I are sitting on the stool of do-nothing, with our heads in our hands, dear souls are slipping into eternity, and the devil is laughing all of the time.

We find that as Moses, in his writings, portrayed the causes of depression, so the account of Elijah reveals the effects. What are the effects of depression? For an answer, let us consider our companion text in 1 Kings, Chapter 19. The story of Elijah on Mount Carmel is narrated in the preceding chapter. God wonderfully used him to slay eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:40). God did a miraculous work.

Then old Jezebel sent a message to Elijah, in essence saying, "Tomorrow you are going to be just like one of those prophets of Baal." Elijah started rolling her words over in his mind. Many times, right after God has greatly used a person, the enemy is quick to bombard his or her mind.

Also, consider the great victory of the people of Israel at Jericho. Where was their dismal defeat? At Ai, the very next battle. The place of victory can be dangerous if we do not understand how to stand and occupy it.

Flight and Avoidance

Let us study Elijah's response to Jezebel's threat. Verse 3 of Chapter 19 says that he "went for his life." What is one of the first effects of depression? Flight and avoidance. Whenever you start lending your mind to depressing thoughts, one of the first things the enemy of souls will do is cause you to stay away from the worship services, or take flight. He will compel you to avoid the things of God, and that is the last thing you should do. Hearing the Word of God preached under the anointing of the Holy Spirit is where your help will come. You can lay hold of strength and enlightenment by attending the church services.

Depression worked against Nehemiah, too, for a short time, but then the grace of God flooded his soul, and he said, "Should such a man as I flee?" (Nehemiah 6:11). While he did *think* about fleeing, he dealt with it in a biblical manner. So we find that the first evidence of depression is flight and avoidance.

Withdrawal and Inactivity

What is another effect of depression? Back in 1 Kings 19:3 we read that Elijah "left his servant" and "he himself went." What does this verse portray? Withdrawal. Not only will depression make you want to flee, it will also make you go into a shell, so to speak, and withdraw from others, running from your source of help, saying nothing, and just clamming up.

Verse 4 shows a true picture of where the devil wants us to be. It says that Elijah "came and sat down under a juniper tree." Depression leads to inactivity, and that is the devil's main goal. Consider this: there was no fire falling from Heaven while Elijah was sitting under the juniper tree. Nor were any Prophets of Baal slain while he sat there. No mighty works were done while Elijah was inactive and immobilized.

The devil is trying to get every one of us to be immobilized, sitting on the stool of do-nothing, with our heads in our hands, singing, "Woe is me!" Do not tell me you have never been tempted to sing that song. I have sung several verses myself and have even written a few verses of my own! We are studying the effects of depression. Can you see how the enemy of souls is behind it? He will cause you to flee, then withdraw and become inactive.

In verse 5 we read that Elijah "lay and slept." Have you ever noticed that depression brings an unusual amount of fatigue? Sleeping appears to serve as an escape, but when you wake up, your problems are still there. In addition to your original dilemma, you may have caused more problems by your flight, your avoidance, and your inactivity. This situation is common. It tries to work against all of us.

I repeat, notice while Elijah was suffering from these effects of depression, God could not use him. He was inactive and ineffective. No great feats were accomplished during this season. I trust God will help us to understand this.

The reason the enemy of souls likes to use depression against us is because it renders us completely ineffective. It immobilizes us. We cannot have a burden to help anybody else while we are struggling to keep our own head above water. Friend, when the Lord has something on the horizon for you to do, beware lest the devil bring a trial your way to get you completely immersed in your own battle to such an extent that you forget what the Lord is calling you to do. The Lord desires that you not succumb to these feelings.

Looking to Christ

Let us study about Paul when he was facing depression. Someone might question, "What would cause a great man like Paul to become depressed?" Examine 2 Corinthians 11:27 closely. It says, "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." All we need to do is start our minds thinking on the human level for just a little bit. If we allow the enemy to move us from the divine to the human, there are plenty of things to start mulling over in our minds that will start bringing depression.

Consider Paul's experience in 2 Corinthians 1:8. He wrote, "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble . . ." As great a man as Paul was, he had trouble. In Chapter 4, he stated even more strongly, "We are troubled on every side . . ." (verse 8). Working for God is no exemption from trouble. As a matter of fact, you might even be enlisting for more.

Let us look at this in greater depth. Second Corinthians 1:8-9 states: "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed [another translation says 'depressed'] out of measure, above strength [completely out of sorts], insomuch that we despaired even of life: [Notice it does not end here. There is a colon after the word 'life.'] But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God . . ."

Here Paul gave us the cure. It is trusting in God and looking to Him, instead of looking at the circumstance or the situation. I thank God for the Gospel! The Word of God does not merely describe the ailment and then leave you wondering how to claim victory over it. There is a cure!

The story found in Matthew 14:25-33 tells how Jesus came walking on the water one night. Peter looked over the banister rail of that ship and said in verse 28, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." While we can say much about Peter's lack of faith, notice that the other eleven disciples never even made it out of the ship. So, how great was their faith?

Peter stepped down out of the ship and walked on the water. What is the picture portrayed here? Christ is the Word (John 1:1, 14, 17), and as long as Peter's eyes were fixed on Christ, he rose above the level of surrounding circumstances. But when the wind and the waves were boisterous and lapped against his heels, Peter became distracted and looked down.

Similarly, the enemy of souls is working feverishly to distract our vision today. Why? So we will sink. If we keep our eyes fixed on Christ, or the Word, we will not fall; we can keep right on walking victoriously with Him.

Trust in God

Returning to 2 Corinthians, Chapter 1, we read, "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God . . ." (verse 9). The victory lies in not trusting ourselves. We need to quit relying on our thinking and on our judgment. Do not look at matters from a purely human perspective, friend. That is what always gets people into trouble. Someone might say, "Let me tell you what I think." You are already off the track when you say that. Proverbs 3:5-6 says: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding [it is just natural to lean to our own understanding, and that is where we go astray every time]. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Let us consider Luke, Chapter 24, and study the brethren as they walked with Jesus on the Emmaus Road. Their hearts were so heavy; they were in great sorrow. They told Jesus all about the events that had just transpired. Their eyes were holden, so they did not recognize Him. Verse 21 says, "And beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done." The first part of that verse begins by saying, "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel."

Jesus replied by saying, "O fools, and slow of heart." Where did Jesus begin? Verse 27 says, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Later on when the brethren knew who He was, they said in verse 32, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

Someone may ask, "What's the solution?" The Word, Jesus Christ. You cannot separate Christ from the Word. We do not have a bit more of Christ than we have of His Word, and the Word is the cure.

Human Strength Will Fail Us

We need to quit forming perceptions in our minds that are based on human strengths. I am reminded of a story of three blind men who were led to an elephant. One of them grabbed his tail and said, "Oh, I believe it's a snake." Another grabbed his trunk and said, "No, it's a water hose." The third one pushed his side and said: "You're both wrong; it's a brick wall." However, the elephant was not any of those three perceptions. All of them were wrong!

Many times, when we rest on our human senses, our perceptions are wrong. Therefore, when we base conclusions and actions upon those human perceptions, we end up completely off track. Human strength is not to be relied upon either. In Romans 7:18 Paul, talking about his experience before conversion, said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing."

Just because your soul is saved, that does not mean your flesh is any better. You have to keep mortifying the deeds of your body (Romans 8:13). Yes, your humanity will continue to rise up, producing thoughts and feelings that are contrary to godliness. It will be that way as long as you live until you receive your "new body" in eternity.

We need to quit looking within ourselves, our abilities, and our solutions. Give up trusting in who we are, how we feel, what we think, what we can or cannot do. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:9 that "we should not trust in ourselves, but in God." We must realize that stepping out of a ship into water was not the logical thing for Peter to have done. Likewise, we need to get beyond what seems logical and reasonable. Someone said, "Well, I have to reason it out." Then, friend, you never will get it, because doing God's will is far beyond our reason.

Paul felt the terrible weight of his responsibility. In 2 Corinthians 2:16 he said, "To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And [when he felt the responsibility and the weight of it all, he said] who is sufficient for these things?" He started to feel that overwhelming feeling again. However, in Chapter 3, verse 5, the light of revelation broke through, and he said, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."

Keeping our eyes focused is the cure. In all love and kindness, I say that the cure for depression is not in physicians, antidepressants, or therapeutic seminars—it is in God. Pills just deaden our senses; then when they wear off, the depression is still right there to be dealt with. The real cure is in God.

God's Solution—Get Up

We have learned that the cause of depression begins as a perception of unfairness, of being overwhelmed, and of helplessness. Next, the effects produced are flight, avoidance, withdrawal, inactivity, unusual fatigue, and escapism.

In Numbers 11:11 we read "And Moses said unto the LORD." In 1 Kings 19:4 Elijah said "It is enough; now, O LORD." In 2 Corinthians 1:9 Paul said "In God." What is the lesson for us to understand? Every one of them appealed to the proper source. However, God did not just leave them there to pray and then languish in depression, rolling it over in their minds. In every case God gave them a solution that required them to get up and quit being inactive. Have you ever heard the old saying, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop"?

What did God give them? Let us look at the cure in the light of the verses following our text. Numbers 11:16-17 says: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone."

Drop down to verse 23. It states, "And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD'S hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." I want you to understand what these verses teach us. First of all, in order to thwart depression, God could not allow Moses to stay on his face, rehearsing the problem. This is a valuable lesson for you and me. No good will come from rolling a problem over and over in our minds.

God told Moses to get up. Then He told him what activity to take: "Gather unto me seventy men." What was God doing? He was showing Moses that his perception was false. Moses thought he did not have enough ability or spirit to deal with the

problem When God handled Moses' situation, He put His Spirit on seventy men, and He still had an abundance of His Spirit remaining. God was showing Moses, "You are not overwhelmed; you are well able to handle this difficulty."

What did God give Moses as a cure for his depression? He gave him His Word. My friend, the Word is God's cure for depression and depressing thoughts.

How did God respond to Elijah's depression? Elijah became so depressed that he could no longer sit under a juniper tree but had to go into a dark cave. His depression was pretty bad. Someone might say, "Oh, it never gets that bad." I have dealt with people who were in rooms with the shades pulled, the doors closed, and the blankets up over their heads. Now that is depression! But, thank God, there is a cure!

Listen to the Spirit of God

Elijah was in a dark cave and what happened? We can read 1 Kings 19:11-12 to learn the answer: "And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks 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." What is the lesson for us? Quit looking toward natural, earthly things. You will not find any solution there. No help will be forthcoming, because that is not where God is.

The last part of verse 12 says "and after the fire a still small voice." If you read the Hebrew version of this text, the word for "still small" is the Hebrew word *demamah*. The transliteration of it is "silent." This was a silent voice (just like what comes to you and me as an impression), not some audible voice that boomed and caused the mountains to quake.

Someone might ask, "Do you think that's so?" Read on through this chapter. Verse 13 reads: "And it was so, when Elijah heard it [the still small voice], that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice [where?] unto him . . ." It was nothing more than a gentle impression. Concerning verse 12, when it talks about the still small voice, the Septuagint version says "the voice of a gentle breeze."

To understand what that breeze (or wind) typifies, turn to John 3:8. It says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The still small voice is the Spirit. What was God's cure to get Elijah out of the depths of depression? The Spirit of God.

Let us tie the accounts of Moses and Elijah together. God gave to Moses the Word and to Elijah the Spirit. They came together on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-5) and met in Jesus Christ. And in Jesus Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). Everything we need is in Jesus Christ, through the Word and the Spirit. Thank God for that! We do not have to go outside the Word and the Spirit for anything we need. Isn't that encouraging?

Someone might say, "I just wish there was a pill that I could take and make it all go away." There is! It's the Gos-pill. If you start feeling down, take it two or three times a day. It will bring you up. The Gospel—the Word and the Spirit—will lift your frame of mind.

God Will Show Us How Things Really Are

Looking back to the Book of Numbers, what did the Lord do for Moses? He corrected his wrong perception. How did He correct it? By His Word. How is He going to correct our misunderstandings? By His Word. That is what the washing of the water by the Word is for. Throughout the course of a week, we have various misunderstandings come into our minds. But when we come to the house of worship on Wednesdays and Sundays, there God takes the good soap of His Word, like a fuller's soap, and cleans up our minds; He changes our perceptions.

In Psalm 73:1-17 we see a picture of David envying the godless. David said that his feet "well nigh slipped," until he "went into the sanctuary." When he received understanding and when God corrected his perception, he saw that the ungodly were in slippery places. God corrected David's perceptions through the Word.

In 1 Kings, Chapter 19, God corrected Elijah's perceptions by the Spirit. When he started lamenting to God, saying in so many words, "I'm the only one obeying You, and Jezebel is going to kill me," God said, "Wait, Elijah, there are seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed to Baal." God corrected his perception, and it was not long until Elijah was out of the cave, ready to go.

When depression tries to work on us, we are looking at things from a wrong perspective. We are seeing things from an earthly level, not from the divine. If our thoughts can be shifted over into the divine, we can get hooked into the Word and

Spirit; and they will change our perception. God will show us things as they really are, as He sees them, and depression will vanish.

In I Kings 19:18 we read, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." What does the next verse say? "So he departed thence." Elijah was ready to come out of the cave and return to battle. Did the Spirit of God cure his isolation? Yes. The first thing Elijah did was to look up Elisha, the son of Shaphat. Elijah was ready to quit fleeing and eager to start fellowship again, get in the harness, and go to work for God. What caused this transformation? The Word and the Spirit.

I say in all love and kindness that God does not want us sitting around with our heads in our hands, ready to quit, being of no good to ourselves or to anyone else. God has victory for us. Yes, depression will try to come, but we do not have to let it enter into our minds to where we succumb to it and become captivated by it. You might have heard the old saying, "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair." You cannot keep depressing thoughts from approaching your mind, but there is victory over them.

God's Dynamite, His Word

Is there really power in God's Word? Let me digress momentarily. Jesus said in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Now, what will the Holy Ghost do? Jesus said in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." Where is the power? It is not in the Holy Ghost; it is in the Word.

In Romans 1:16 Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ [why?]: for it is the power of God . . ." The Greek word for power is *dunamis*, which is the word from which our English word dynamite comes. The Word is the dynamite of God.

Why do you think the devil fights so feverishly to keep you from God's Word? That is where the power is and that is what the Holy Ghost brings to your remembrance. In Matthew, Chapter 4, and Luke, Chapter 4, we read where Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. He was led of God's Holy Spirit. What did God's Spirit give Him each time He was tempted? The words "It is written." After hearing the Word, the devil had to flee. The Word and the Spirit are still the two vicars of the church. If we will let them work in our lives, there is victory for us. Therein lies the cure for depression.

The Enemy Is a Thief

Dear reader, do not allow the enemy to focus your eyes on situations to the extent that you stew over perceptions that are not so. Study the Word and listen to the Spirit. Many times, the enemy is acting as a thief. While he is causing your eyes to turn inward on yourself, he is not only robbing you, but also everyone else you could help.

Jesus came to heal oppression. Acts 10:38 says, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Jesus came to heal oppression.

Do not embrace thinking that may lead to depression. Someone might say: "Well, it's just natural. We all become depressed." It may be natural, but God is supernatural. He came to lift us up to a higher plane than this old world. God wants a distinction between the way we react and the way the world reacts.

God's Prescription

If you are struggling with depression, the first question you must answer is, "Do I really want victory?" Are you willing to turn your mind, your thinking, and your feelings from yourself and from the supposed harm and unfairness that has been done to you? Are you willing to cast all your care upon the Lord and then trust Him with it? Peter said in 1 Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

If you are unwilling to follow this prescription, there is no cure for you. The cure is in God. However, if you are struggling with depression and want victory, you can receive it if you will submit to Christ, study God's Word, and listen to His Spirit. He will lead you from victory unto victory.



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