

# **Depression - Is It Biblical?**

## **Angela's Personal Testimony**

(Bible Study Below)

I've come to realize that most people who know me now do not think I could know anything about depression because I am generally a very content and joyful individual, almost always trying to look on the bright side of things, etc., but that wasn't always so, and I was also very good at hiding what I was going through inside.

I would like to give my testimony on depression - because I've been there, and I know how it can devastate yourself and those around you. More importantly, I know the Lord wants me to write what I went through and how I dealt with it. I pray it will be a blessing and encouragement to all who read it.

Please read it in its entirety. Even if you've never gone through this, you may be able to help a loved one some day.

I realize I will probably get a lot of flack over this issue, but this issue is certainly one that needs to be dealt with, as it has controlled and devastated too many lives.

I grew up with a mother and father who were both prone to depression, my father especially so. I can remember, as a child, visiting him in a "special hospital" where there were a lot of people who acted very strangely. He went there several times. My mother was frequently upset, having a hard time looking at the bright side of anything. As I grew up in this, it certainly reflected on me, since I didn't know any better. I had no idea life could be any different. I had become a Christian at age 13, but had no basis to expand my faith.

By the age of 20, I had begun to go to a massage therapist who told me she had never seen anyone, especially so young with such locked muscles (she never was able to get them to completely release.)

How bad did all this really affect my life and my family's life? At one point, it ruled my life so much that my health began to suffer. I could easily go into all the details of some of the sorrows I went through, but I don't believe that would honour the Lord, but this one point, the results of my allowing the depression, I feel the Lord wants me to expound on.

It got so bad in 1997 that it didn't matter what I ate, I had an allergic reaction, even to rice, and corn, which I'd never heard of anyone being allergic to before. I had not eaten in over two weeks when I went to see my doctor, and he brought up the possibility of depression, which I avidly denied, because, after all, I was a Christian and didn't believe in such things. But the more I pondered that over the next few days, I knew the answer, and made the choice to stop it, and within a few days, my system had returned to "normal" - whatever that is.

The end result - my body was so worn down that I nearly passed out and ended up miscarrying a few months later.

But still, I hadn't faced everything yet. Over the next few years, I kept having severe rises in heart rate: I was having panic attacks. When I realized what was going on, I finally said ENOUGH!!!!

I finally came to the point where I gave it all to the Lord and just said "phooey" on all this depression stuff. (This was in 2000) Have I had panic attacks since then? Oh yes, my heart tries to take over, but I just so NO! Finally, I don't think I've had a panic attack in in well over six months (I was averaging one every few days.)

Someone might say, "but that's just you!" I say flat out No! There are many others, many I personally know, who have testimonies that are even more dramatic (depression - panic attacks, etc), and yet, have faced it the same way.

So what was the true cause of all this mess - I had made several choices. This might not be very popular with so-called "therapist" who seem to be always trying to get us to blame others for our problems, but the root of depression is a choice.

- A choice to hold a grudge - instead of forgive (Matthew 6:12-15)
- A choice to focus on the negative - instead of being thankful for all the blessing I have (Read John 3:16, 1John 5:11-13, Philippians 4:19,)

- A choice to blot God and his Providence from my mind (read Romans 8:28)

- A choice to focus on myself - rather than look at ways to be a blessing to others - and not expecting anything in return (not even a thank you) (Focusing on ourselves will always wind up in depression - just read Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Why would I want to focus on that for?)

This list could go on and on, but I think you can get a pretty good picture of what I'm driving at.

Depression is a choice to focus on self and forget God. (and it is easy to do) I will even state further, that God calls it SIN - that may seem harsh to some, but I will back that up in the Biblical Study portion of this page.

### **Chemical Imbalances?**

Many will argue that depression is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain. "Specialists" in this area are still divided. When did the chemical imbalance occur, and why? Was it prior to the depression? Or was it due to the depression. I can tell you assuredly that my "chemical imbalance" was a cause of my wilful choice to be depressed, and my own fault. There may be a few actual cases where a physiological problem is the issue, but if the truth were known, how many of them would actually cause the depression and not vice-versa?

Let me make it very clear, there are mentally handicapped individuals with severe problems. I am not minimizing their state at all. They have a genuine problem, but did you ever notice how happy they are?

Do I not have anything that could "drive" me to depression? By the world's standards, yes, but not as a Christian. Once I finally made the choice to focus on the Lord and all his blessings, instead of myself and my perceived difficulties, my perspective on everything changed. I just have too much to be thankful for!

Here's some examples of what the Lord has done for my family and I. I could list some that are specific to us, but I don't want them to be used as an opportunity to accuse the Lord and say "but He doesn't do that for me!" You must look at your own life and see the many blessing you have. So I have chosen to list blessings that are available to all who will make the choice to accept these blessings.

- He's given all of us a precious love letter, the Bible, to be our comfort, our guide, a source of inspiration, and so much more.

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." (Psalm 48:14)  
"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven".(Psalm 119:89) - verses just too numerous to list  
- just read your Bible, the book of Psalms in particular.

- He's left His children the Holy Ghost to comfort us and to intercede for us when sorrow grips our heart so much we can't even speak.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26) "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered". (Romans 8:26)

I could go on and on, but even if the Lord never gave me another good thing in this life, He, most of all, has offered to, not just myself, but all, the greatest gift of all, that can never fade away:

- Eternal life, and a home in Heaven when I die, not because I'm anything special, but because He loved me, and paid for my sins on the cross of Calvary.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto

you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (1John 5:11-13)

You might say, "Stopping depression isn't that easy!" but it is. Just like salvation, getting out of bed, or anything else, it's a choice. Now it's your choice too!

### **Biblical Study Portion**

Now you may be able to argue about my personal opinion, but please read on. After you read the following study, there will be no ground for arguing. For you not to understand some points, I have no problem elaborating on, but I won't compromise or excuse away God's Word.

This is by no means a verse by verse study on the issue. That would literally take volumes, but my hope and prayer is that, by the time you finish reading this study, you will be convinced of how unscriptural "depression" is, and that you will have enough of a foundation to ward off this sin and to rebuke the devourer (Satan) as he tries to get you into a situation where you are not able to be the Christian the Lord desires you to be.

There is not a single instance where depression is condoned, or tolerated by God. On the contrariwise, His children were often rebuked for having the mulligrubs. (The Lord refers to it as murmuring, disputing, unthankfulness, rebellion, and considers the latter as serious as idolatry.) That in itself is a further study I'll try to link in at another time, otherwise this study is going to turn into a book, but I'll briefly summarize it with this verse: "*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.*" 1Samuel 15:23

The Lord doesn't seem to give much room for arguing, does He?

Doing a study on this presents its difficulties, especially since the word depression is never used in the Bible. That in itself is quite remarkable. There were instances recorded where individuals behaved in such a manner as the definition below describes, but the Lord never bothers giving it a name. I've had to look for somewhat close, but not true-synonyms, such as wearied, troubled,

distressed, grief, discouraged, but still, none carry the implication of depression.

### **Basic definitions:**

As found in Webster's Dictionary: (I will just deal with the definition that would be referred to as the depression that weighs individuals down so much, their functioning is impaired.)

**Depression:** DEJECTION (2) a psychoneurotic or psychotic disorder marked especially by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a significant increase or decrease in appetite and time spent sleeping, feeling of dejection and hopelessness, and sometimes suicidal tendencies.

As found in Strong's Concordance: - only listings that pertain to this study will be listed.

**Weary** - 1573 (NT) - ekkakeo - from 1537 and 2556; to be (bad or) weak, i.e. (by implication) to fail (in heart): - faint, be weary

Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

2Thessalonians 3:13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

**Troubled** - (OT) 926 - bâhâl, 6031 - ânâh, (NT) 1298 - diatarasso, 1438 heautou. Stated simply, the definitions imply a self-inflicted state of agitation, anxiety, and so on. "heautou" in particular focuses exclusively on this inward focus.

I hasten to say that the verse, John 11:33 "*When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,*" is speaking about our sinless Saviour as he wept for Mary's sorrow over the temporary loss of Lazarus. "*Weep with them that weep*" Romans 12:15. This definitely has nothing to do with modern day "depression". Our Lord continued in His work, nothing stopping Him.

**Distressed** - (OT) 5065 - nâgas - This definition is quite the eye opener, dealing with this state being a taskmaster - anybody remember the Israelites in Egypt?

1Samuel 13:6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

What an awesome application to this study. The children of Israel in this passage were not following the Lord (they had just demanded a king - against God's will, and when faced with a battle next to their new king (Saul), they fled. Quite the contrast to the attitude of Paul "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31

**Grief** - bitterness, trouble, suffering physical or mental pain or sorrow, to be in heaviness, sad, sorry, groaning

**Discourage(d)** - This is perhaps the closest of all the definitions, with the implication of being so burdened by the circumstance that it leads to a debilitating state where nothing gets accomplished. Let us look at these instances.

Numbers 21:4 / 32:7,9, Deuteronomy 1:28, Colossians 3:21- The Old Testament references speak about the children of Israel's refusal to go in and possess the Promised Land. Hope you all remember the result of that rebellion - wandering in the wilderness 40 years. (I personally don't want to go there!) All these passages deal with the heart of the people being discouraged to the point of inaction or improper action because they took their eyes off the Lord. They lost their focus and rebelled against the Lord, hence the result.

In contrast: Again dealing with the children of Israel. Deuteronomy 1:21 "*Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.*" I think that's pretty self-explanatory, but, consider - where's the focus, "the Lord thy God... the LORD God". In other words, keeping our eyes on the Lord, and off our inadequacies, is the solution to all our problems and obstacles. "*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;*" 2 Corinthians 3:5

Isaiah 42:4 "*He (the Lord) shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.*" The Lord doesn't get discouraged (depressed), so what's our

excuse?

The above definitions and verses give enough of a backing to what I've been saying, that depression is a choice - a choice to sin! Still let us go over the results of these circumstances.

The children of Israel were too discouraged to go into the Promised Land. Read Numbers 13 and 14, God was ready to wipe them all out, and start afresh with Moses alone. Yet, when the man of God interceded, the Lord spared them, but the consequence of their sin was to wander 40 years in the wilderness for their "murmuring", "provoking" against the Lord.

The children of Israel did not want the Lord as their ruler over them anymore, so they demanded of Samuel a king. The man of God wasn't too happy about it, but he checked with the Lord, and, in order to teach them the consequences of wanting their own way, the Lord let them have their request.

Beware what you ask for - you might just get it so the Lord can teach you a hard lesson.

When they did get their king, and the battle against the enemy was nigh, their strength failed them and they were so scared they hid. Doesn't quite line up with God's promise to set to flight the enemy. Leviticus 26:7, 8, Joshua 23:10. But it does line up with what God said would happen when his people turned away from Him. (Verses too numerous to expound on, but I'm sure we could all easily contribute a few, like Leviticus 26:14 till the end of the chapter. (A search on the word "woe" would be a good indicator."))

### **Examples of the Proper Approach to Trials**

In contrast, another wonderful example on how we are to deal with overwhelming situations comes again from our Lord, in Gethsemane, as he foresaw the agony which He was to endure on the cross. Matthew 26:38 "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me."

Was what the Lord about to endure, grievous? Of course! "*And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*" Luke

22:44 But who did He go to, and what was His attitude? "*And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" Mathew 26:39. He went to our Heavenly Father and said repeatedly "*not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" Vs 39, 42, 44.

Jesus did not let Satan or this temptation to give up side track Him from the cross, but He prayed and accepted the Father's will.

Some will say, "But that was our sinless Saviour, and I am unable to deal with situations that way!" I know by scripture that that's a cop out, but, let us look at examples in the life of a man, the Apostle Paul (Saul of Tarsus) and what his approach was to the great trials and afflictions he endured.

Saul of Tarsus: (definition = pride) A name that, at the first, inspired fear and dread in Christians, but spoke of boldness and zealousness to the Jews; then, later became a name that inspired Christians to greater service for the Lord, and drove the Jews to great wrath.

What a contrast for an individual! Paul, (so named by the Lord) became what some have termed the greatest missionary of all time. He served the Lord with as much, if not more fervour, than he had served his Jewish traditions. This man also was not without great trials of afflictions.

The Apostle Paul (definition = little) is a wonderful example of a "sinner saved by grace" who was mightily used of the Lord. Please read the book of Acts thoroughly to get a good understanding of exactly what he endured for the Lord. A full study on the life of Paul would also help all of us to not "think more highly of ourselves than we ought". "*For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*" Romans 12:3

In 2 Corinthians, he lists some of his trials. Realise he is actually using this list as a means to bring to shame those who glory in the tribulations they go through, as though that were to make them more of a Christian, or more special, etc. Read the previous verses of the chapter to get the full story.

2 Corinthians 11:23 *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more*

*abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

*24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*

*25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;*

*27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

*28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

*29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?*

*30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.*

*31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.*

*32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:*

*33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands. You'll say, "see, he's proud of what he's endured."*

Let me clarify by continuing with his comments in the next chapter.

*2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

*8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

*9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

*10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

Notice how Paul was thankful for the "thorn in the flesh" and all his other trials, not because they made him special, but because it kept him humble.

*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 1Timothy 1:15*

He didn't get down in the dumps, and allow these difficulties to give him an excuse not to serve the Lord. He just kept pressing on.

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14

Notice his comments in Philippians 2:17 *"Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."*

And Philippians 4:4 *"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."*

Do you kinda get the idea that he was thankful even in the trials, and take note, he wrote the book of Philippians while in prison!!!!!!!!!!

Also, please read Hebrews Chapter 11, and read how many times the word "Faith" is used. Then try to continue with your excuses as to why you have a right to be depressed.

I'll end with the following poem. Try to top this!

## **God Is**

He is the First and Last, the Beginning and the End!

He is the keeper of Creation and the Creator of all!

He is the Architect of the universe and the Manager of all times.

He always was, He always is, and He always will be...

Unmoved, Unchanged, Undefeated, and never Undone!

He was bruised and brought healing!

He was pierced and eased pain!  
He was persecuted and brought freedom!  
He was dead and brought life!  
He is risen and brings power!  
He reigns and brings Peace!

The world can't understand him,  
The armies can't defeat Him,  
The schools can't explain Him, and  
The leaders can't ignore Him.  
Herod couldn't kill Him,  
The Pharisees couldn't confuse Him, and  
The people couldn't hold Him!  
Nero couldn't crush Him, Hitler couldn't silence Him,  
The New Age can't replace Him,  
and Donahue can't explain Him away!

He is light, love, longevity, and Lord.  
He is Goodness, Kindness, Gentleness, and God.  
He is Holy, Righteous, mighty, powerful, and pure.  
His ways are right, His word is eternal,  
His will is unchanging, and His mind is on me!  
He is my Redeemer, He is my Savior,  
He is my Guide, and He is my Peace!  
He is my Joy, He is my Comfort,  
He is my Lord, and He rules my life!  
I serve Him because  
His bond is love, His burden is light,  
and His goal for me is abundant life.

I follow Him because He is the wisdom of the wise,  
the power of the powerful, the ancient of days,  
the ruler of rulers, the leader of leaders,

the overseer of the overcomers,  
and the sovereign Lord  
of all that was and is and is to come.

And if that seems impressive to  
you, try this for size:  
His goal is a relationship with ME!  
He will never leave me, never forsake me, never mislead me,  
never forget me, never overlook me,  
and never cancel my appointment in His appointment book!

When I fall, He lifts me up!  
When I fail, He forgives!  
When I am weak, He is strong!  
When I am lost, He is the way!  
When I am afraid, He is my courage!  
When I stumble, He steadies me!  
When I am hurt, He heals me!  
When I am broken, He mends me!  
When I am blind, He leads me!  
When I am hungry, He feeds me!  
When I face trials, He is with me!  
When I face persecution, He shields me!  
When I face problems, He comforts me!  
When I face loss, He provides for me!  
When I face Death, He carries me Home!

He is everything for everybody,  
everywhere, every time, and every way.  
He is God, He is faithful. I am His, and He is mine!  
My Father in heaven can whip the father of this world.  
So, if you're wondering why I feel so secure, understand this...

He said it and that settles it.  
God is in control, I am on His side, and  
that means all is well with my soul.  
Everyday is a blessing, for  
GOD Is!

(Author Uncertain)

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