



Can A Christian Be Depressed? – Week One

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Overview

In tough times, we often have tough questions. Join Pastor Steve in a new series called *Tough Questions: God's Answers For Your Life*. Week One of the series explores biblical keys to a question we face amidst today's difficulties: *Can a Christian be depressed?*

Discussion Questions

Were you aware that almost 10% of American adults suffer from clinical depression? You and I are living in one of the most stress-filled times in history. Moreover, stress overload can trigger mental health conditions such as depression. *Yes, even Christians can be depressed.*

- What causes consistent stress in your life? How does fear play a role in stress?

What is Depression?

Depression can range from mild to moderate to severe, and often stems from a great loss, long-term stress, or recurring and unresolved problems. The Mayo Clinic defines depression as "a medical condition that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest."

- What types of things tend to get you down the most?

The Bible tells us the story of Elijah, a prophet of God, and his struggle with depression. **1 Kings 19:1-5 reads**, *When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them." Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died." Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree...*

- For years, Elijah experienced the power of God in his life. Yet during a time of exhaustion and excessive stress, Elijah is devastated by Jezebel's threat. In what areas of your life are you exhausted? What are some things you can do starting today to help relieve that exhaustion?

Why People Get Depressed

1. **We overdo it.**

Like Elijah, we become depleted and depressed when we go through intense seasons of activity and pressure without replenishing our minds and bodies. What do you do to replenish your mind and body? How frequently?

2. **We isolate.**

Depressed and exhausted, Elijah went alone in the wilderness. Isolation sometimes causes us to feel ashamed and can hinder us from seeking a friend's comfort or professional help when needed. Describe one of the loneliest moments of your life. How did you make it through such a difficult time?

3. **We sink into negativity and depression.**

Steeped in self-pity, Elijah wanted his life to end. When we engage in negativity, our problems become magnified and a sense of hopelessness deepens. What are some ways you can remind yourself that God is in control amidst difficult circumstances?

God's Prescription for Overcoming Depression

1. **Eat, rest, and accept help.**

At the angel's command, Elijah arose from a depressed sleep, ate, and rested (**1 Kings 19:5-6**). Overcoming depression includes replenishing our spirit, soul, and body. What are some things you can do to have more rest in your life?

2. **Replace lies with God's truth.**

"I'm the only one left," "It's all up to me," "I'm responsible to make things happen." These are the lies Elijah believed before God revealed to him the truth (**1 Kings 19:14, 18**). We have to identify and replace ungodly beliefs with what God says in His word. Can you name similar lies that you believed to be true? How did God reveal His truth to you?

3. **Keep moving forward.**

Elijah was reminded of the divine assignment God called him to. Part of overcoming depression is to *move forward* by *going back* to do what God called you to do. Describe a time when God spoke to you with a gentle whisper.

Life Challenge

If you are experiencing unresolved stress or depression, commit to taking one of the following steps:

1. Follow the steps for God's Prescription listed above.
2. Seek help from friends or professional counseling.
3. Join a COVID Care Group to help you navigate tough situations. Learn more at ChurchoftheKing.com/covidcare.

Prayer

Father, we thank You that any fear, stress, and exhaustion we face today, we can lay at the foot of the cross. Heal us from depression, Lord. Help us to find rest, know Your Truth, and to walk in the purpose You have for our lives. Pray for the specific needs of the group.