

Victory Over Depression

Restoring My Soul – Session #4
Based on *Restoring My Soul* by Bill Flatt
Key Texts: *1 Kings 19, Ecclesiastes 2:17*

Depression Myths

1. *Depression is sinful.* - Throughout history, people have been depressed in every culture and in every religion known to man with very little difference in percentages regardless of cultures or religion.
2. *Depression is a moral weakness.* - It is tempting to think, “If I just tried a little bit harder, then I could overcome it on my own.” Would we try that when dealing with any other physical illness?
3. *The Bible has all of the answers I need.* - Understanding the Bible does not exempt us from any other physical challenges or diseases.
4. *Depression is always due to a chemical imbalance.* - While it might be due to a chemical imbalance, that is not usually the only factor.
5. *Depression is all genetic.* - Genetics might raise your chances for depression, but there are other factors as well. We do better to focus on factors we can do something about.
6. *Depression is all just due to the situation.* - It is tempting for us to think, “I have a good life, a good job, a good family. Why should I be depressed?” This thinking assumes that a person is completely controlled by his/her circumstances.
7. *Depression is all just in your head.* - While our thinking plays an important role, it not likely the sole factor, especially for major depression. It is a real disease that can affect every cell in our body.
8. *Depression is shameful.* – This myth is not as prevalent as it once was, yet we often feel uncomfortable admitting this disease when we shouldn’t be.
9. *Depression is just a lack of faith.* - We show our faith in what God has provided by taking advantage of the medical treatment He has made available.
10. *Depression is temporary.* – We might think that once we have recovered, it will never occur again. It many cases, it does, but it can be treated effectively.

Principles from Elijah's Experience

While not every case of depression is like Elijah's (especially not major depression), his example illustrates how we can handle situational depression. Next week, we will focus on other techniques and resources for different kinds of depression.

Elijah's Recipe for Depression:

1. Physical Exhaustion
 - He faced off with hundreds of false prophets. – 1 Kings 18:29
 - He had those hundreds of false prophets put to death. – 1 Kings 18:40
 - He ran all the way to Jezreel. – 1 Kings 18:46
2. Irrational Thinking
 - He had just stood up to hundreds of false prophets, yet he was afraid of one woman's threats. – 1 Kings 19:1
 - He sits under a tree and asked God to take his life. – 1 Kings 19:4
 - Other men of God felt the same way: Moses asked God to take his life (Numbers 11:15), Jonah wished for God to take his life after the city of Ninevah repented (Jonah 4:1-3), and Paul even despaired of his life (2 Corinthians 1:8).
3. Personal Isolation
 - He was by himself when he faced off with the false prophets on the mountain.
 - He left his servant and went a day's journey into the wilderness.
4. Self-Focus
 - He was focused only on himself and his past successes (1 Kings 19:10).
 - He refers to himself as "the only one."

God's Recipe for Recovery:

1. Physical Rest
 - We often feel guilty for resting. God knew from the beginning that we would need rest; that is why Sabbath Days were created.
 - Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us that there is a time for everything, including rest.
2. Thought Realignment
 - Paul describes the need for us to "take every thought captive" in 2 Corinthians 10:5.
 - In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, we are reminded that God's Word is the corrective to the problems we face, and that includes our irrational thoughts.
3. Christian Fellowship
 - After this, Elijah is introduced to Elisha, who would be partner to him for the rest of his ministry.
 - Ecclesiastes 4:10-11 – Pity the man who falls and has no one to pick him up.
4. Focus on God
 - Do I really have anything to brag about? "I work so hard for Jesus, I often boast and say. I've sacrificed a lot of things to walk the narrow way. I gave up fame and fortune, I'm worth a lot to Thee..." – from the hymn "Follow Me."
 - Like Elijah, we are not the only ones seeking to serve God.