



**Depression** is typically presented as discouragement, a feeling of prolonged sadness, or the inability to pick one's self up. It is that weakening mood, feeling, or air of hopelessness which becomes a person's reason for not handling the most important issues of life. Symptoms may include insomnia, loss of appetite, weight loss, complaints about one's body, lack of energy, difficulty concentrating, poor memory, trouble making decisions, excessive self-criticism, excessive thoughts of death, thought of suicide (self-murder), despair, guilt, irritability, crying, fear, gloomy outlook, hopelessness, giddiness, inappropriate laughter, pronounced quietness, unusual sweetness, slowing of most activity, withdrawal from social contacts, deterioration of work and personal appearance.

**Depression** is known to typically affect those who are able to set their own schedules. Two groups of people who are vulnerable and quite often affected by this condition are housewives and pastors. This is mainly because they are able to set their own schedules and not fulfill their daily responsibilities which pile up quickly to produce the feeling of being overwhelmed with life's responsibilities. They become feeling oriented and often believe their situation is unique (I Corinthians 9:27; 10:13). Those who have jobs where they punch a clock and someone is checking on them are less likely to get depressed. Unbroken sinful habits of not fulfilling responsibilities given by God, tightly bind the Christian (Proverbs 5:21,22).

**Depression** is a downward cycle, biblically, resulting from an initial problem, circumstance, life challenge or sin, which is not handled God's way. The downward cycle is typically moved from the initial problem to a sinful response, which is then compounded by additional, sinful actions masking the real problems. This condition weighs the believer further down spiritually, emotionally, and in actions in daily life. Depression is emotionally, the result of the mishandling of life's troubles, sins and challenges, causing guilt and its resulting torments. The world teaches a person how to *cope*, the Bible teaches the Christian how to put away and overcome the sinful condition along with putting on righteous actions which change the life.

**Depression** is experienced by a series of plateaus on a downward spiral. The word *depression* is not found in the Bible, however the plateaus describe the condition. These plateaus are discouragement, despair, destitution, and eventually if the condition is not checked biblically, spiritual destruction. The beginnings of depression involve discouragement which leads to despair, etc. In discouragement, a person usually keeps going. In depression a person stops. The Christian needs to learn the truths from Scripture concerning this condition so that he can either pull out of depression or help others come out of this awful condition.

**Discouragement:**

The biblical concept for discouragement means that a person is disheartened and dispirited. He lacks life, courage, and boldness. At this initial stage the Christian takes his eyes off the Lord and begins to focus attention on others, and circumstances instead of Christ and the Word of God (Psalm 73:1-3).

When the erring believer handles the circumstance or problem in a nonbiblical or sinful manner, the believer is led further on the downward spiral of depression (Numbers 21:4; Ecclesiastes 2:22,23; Colossians 3:21). When one's eyes are off God and on others and the circumstances of life, man is prone to be disheartened and prone to self-pity.

The Bible is filled with Scriptures which bring encouragement after the believer confesses the sin of discouragement (Deuteronomy 1:21; Psalm 42:5; Proverbs 13:12; Isaiah 42:4). Refuse be discouraged. Live in victory by stopping depression at this level.

## **Despair:**

The next plateau of depression is despair. The biblical concept means to see oneself at a loss of spiritual resources seemingly without hope. The believer is an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. Discouragement leads one into despair, where despair becomes the dominant thinking of the believer in this phase of depression. The Lord often brings in an additional circumstance to correct the situation (Ecclesiastes 2:20; II Corinthians 1:8-10; 4:7-10). When the believer does not face discouragement and despair, the depression deepens. The results of unchecked despair are a preoccupation with life's burdens (Numbers 11:14,15); a sense of futility (Job 14:1); purposelessness and vanity with life (Ecclesiastes 6); restlessness (Job 7:4); gloominess (Job 17:7-15); overwhelming grief (Psalm 31:9-13); complaining (Psalm 77:3,4); isolation (Psalm (102:3-11); distress (Psalm 109:22-25); blaming (Psalm 143:3,4); and emotionally being wounded (Proverbs 18:14).

Confession of the sins involved, restoration to fellowship, and fulfilling the God-given responsibilities while replacing the sinful actions with righteous actions, are all necessary to bring the Christian out of depression at this level.

## **Destitution:**

The next phase of depression is destitution, which means to rob, defraud, or to be left behind and forsaken. The destitute believer leaves the commands of the Lord behind and typically isolates himself from others, being socially withdrawn at this stage of depression. The depressed individual allows an initial discouragement to make him despondent and despairing until arriving at this plateau where the believer thinks he is not only isolated from others but from God as well (Proverbs 15:21; I Timothy 6:3-6). The results of an unchallenged state of spiritual destitution in this stage of depression are a rebellious turning from God's will and biblical solutions to man's sin. This stage is marked by rebellion (Isaiah 53:6); bitterness against God (Job 9:18); perceived isolation (Job 16:6-11); desperation (Psalm 80:3-7); feeling of dread and anxiety over the future (Psalm 90:7-13); sorrows of death (Psalm 116:3); isolation (Psalm 31:22); rejection (Lamentations 5:21,22); forming idols of the heart (Judges 10:13-16).

The Bible is filled with truths that show the merciful forgiveness of the Lord to believers who are spiritually destitute for having forsaken God's ways in disobedience (Psalm 102:17; 141:8). A restoration to fulfilling God-given responsibilities, along with replacing sinful actions with righteous actions, will insure the Christian against falling into this state again.

## **Destruction:**

Destruction of one's body is the final result of unchecked depression (I Corinthians 5:5). The biblical concept includes feeling utterly destroyed, perishing, and being at a total loss of well being (Luke 15:4,6; 15:24; John 6:27; Matthew 2:13; 8:25; 22:7; and 27:20). In this stage the believer is subject to foolish and hurtful lusts and false teachers (I Timothy 6:9; II Peter 2:1-3). Apart from God's intervention, there is spiritual defeat and ruin (Psalm 73:26-18; Lamentations 1:18-20; Daniel 9:14; I Timothy 6:9; II Peter 2:20). The Christian can be worn down beyond a natural means of repair and can end in suicide, *self-murder* (Isaiah 59:7; Romans 3:16,17). Many do kill themselves.

Believers need to seek God's forgiveness for sins and be restored to fellowship with God. With God, there is deliverance and hope (Psalm 103:3,4). Thinking needs to be changed, the spiral needs to be reversed (Romans 6:11). Idols need to be confessed and replaced with Christ's preeminence (Colossians 1:18c). Right doing needs to take place regardless of feelings (Luke 9:23; John 13:17; James 1:25). If the Christian begins to get behind, no privileges should be allowed until he gets caught up on responsibilities. He needs to studiously avoid all

day-dreaming, TV watching, self-pity parties, and griping. He needs to keep himself busy with godly activities. Schedule work then follow your schedule, not your feelings. God has the answers to man's problems. Do not dwell in a sad state of heart and mind. Draw near to God and know that He is seeking to draw you unto Himself.

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