

*Let's Talk About It*  
*Depression*  
Clay Weed

**TALK IT OVER**

Key Scripture:

**Psalm 42:5-6a (NLT)**

*5 Why am I discouraged?  
Why is my heart so sad?  
I will put my hope in God!  
I will praise him again—  
my Savior and 6 my God!  
Now I am deeply discouraged,  
but I will remember you—*

**Psalm 9:9-10 (NLT)**

*9 The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed,  
a refuge in times of trouble.  
10 Those who know your name trust in you,  
for you, O Lord, do not abandon those who  
search for you.*

**Romans 12:2 (NLT)**

*12 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this  
world, but let God transform you into a new  
person by changing the way you think. Then you  
will learn to know God's will for you, which is good  
and pleasing and perfect.*

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NLT)**

*3 We are human, but we don't wage war as  
humans do. 4 We use God's mighty weapons, not  
worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds  
of human reasoning and to destroy false  
arguments. 5 We destroy every proud obstacle  
that keeps people from knowing God. We capture  
their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey  
Christ.*

**Jonah 4:3 (NLT)**

*3 Just kill me now, Lord ! I'd rather be dead than  
alive if what I predicted will not happen."*

**Job 30:15-17 (NLT)**

*15 I live in terror now. My honor has blown away  
in the wind, and my prosperity has vanished like a  
cloud. 16 "And now my life seeps away.  
Depression haunts my days. 17 At night my  
bones are filled with pain, which gnaws at me  
relentlessly.*

**1 Kings 19:4**

**Jeremiah 20:18**

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- How do you weigh out focusing on the positive vs wrestling with the negative, problems, etc, in your life and in the world?

Start **thinking**. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- **Read Psalm 42:5.** In this Psalm, what is David doing with his feelings of depression?
- **Read Psalm 9:9-10.** What is the Psalmist saying about the Lord, and our relationship to Him?
- **Read Romans 12:2.** Does this verse have impact how we should think about our mind, and depression? How does your bible translation compare?

Start **sharing**. Choose a question to create openness.

- Have you or someone close to you experienced depression before? Describe what that was like and what you learned?
- Does knowing that several people in the Bible wrestled with depression or despair at some point in their life change how you view depression?
- Discuss how depression relates to our spiritual, psychological and physical health.
- What is so important about sharing your difficulties with others? What are some potential benefits of being transparent with another believer?
- What are some of the ways we should be asking God to help us battle depression?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Identify one stronghold or negative thought pattern and be intentional about how you give it to God.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, thank you that our battles are from a victory you have already won. And so please help us to remain faithful and joyful, and protect us from the enemy as grow on this walk. -Amen

Start **digging**. For further study.

- Read the 2nd page and discuss it.

## Question: "Is it wrong for a Christian to be depressed?"

**Answer:** Depression is somewhat of a charged issue among Christians. Some flatly declare it to be a sin. The thinking is that depression reveals a lack of faith in God's promises, God's judgment on sinful behavior, or just laziness. We know that God is good and loving and that we are secure in Him, so what is there to be depressed about? Others flatly declare depression to be a medical issue. The thinking is that all depression is a result of chemical imbalances in the brain, so depression is no more wrong than having the flu. And then there are those in the middle who aren't really sure what the ugly beast of depression is. Faith seems somewhat related, but so do brain chemicals. Of course, there are also the depressed Christians, left to feel guilty, defensive, confused, lost, or simply too depressed to even care what the church thinks. So is it wrong for a Christian to be depressed?

The term *depressed* is a fairly loose one. It can refer to a diagnosable medical condition (clinical depression), but it can also refer to a temporary feeling of sadness or apathy or to a nebulous, lingering malaise. This article will attempt to briefly consider several of these meanings of *depression*.

For some people a chemical or hormonal imbalance triggers a depressed state. This is most typical for women experiencing post-partum depression or people on certain medications. Other times, depression is situational, caused by adverse circumstances, life changes, a spiritual crisis, etc. Our emotional response to those crises can in turn trigger a chemical imbalance. Truly, humans are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14), and it should come as no surprise that our biology interacts with our emotions and vice-versa. Once a person is depressed, the cycle of hormonal imbalance and negative emotions can be difficult to break. Whether the emotions cause the biology to change or the biology causes the emotions to change, the resulting symptoms are the same.

Having a medical condition is not a sin. However, what brings a person to that condition could be rooted in sin. For instance, it is not wrong to have diabetes, but it is wrong to be a glutton (and the two are *sometimes* related). Also, how a person responds to a genuine medical condition could also be sinful. For example, it would be sinful for a person with diabetes to use his disease to manipulate others or to adopt a "victim" mentality or an attitude of entitlement.

Yet, often, we hold those with diabetes or other medical conditions less culpable than we do people with depression. For some reason, mental illnesses—especially depression—are associated more often with sinful causes than are physical ailments. Depression is not *exclusively* a medical issue, and it is not *exclusively* an emotional or spiritual issue.

Depression is often viewed as a persistent feeling of sadness. Of course, it is okay to be sad. We live in a world of pain (Genesis 3:14–19; Romans 8:20–22), and Jesus wept over the death of Lazarus (John 11:35). There is no need to always put on a happy face and pretend that things are okay when they are not.

As believers, we are exhorted to see the greater reality of God's plan even in the midst of our sadness and depression. Yes, this world is fallen and often painful. It can be depressing. But God is far greater. He is at work, victoriously. Moses and Elijah received God's provision and experienced His refreshing. Shortly after pouring out his sadness, David praised God. Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Christians are permitted to call trouble for what it is. At the same time, we take heart in God's care. Taking heart does *not* mean pasting on a smile or ignoring the feeling of emptiness that depression brings. It does *not* mean neglecting to treat depression through counseling or medication. It does *not* mean ignoring the relational hurts or the misperceptions that have led to depression (Satan's lies, if we believe them, will lead us to despair). It does *not* mean denying the fact that depression could be a lifelong struggle.

What taking heart *does* mean is bringing all our pain to God. It *does* mean continuing to trust in Him. It *does* mean believing that what He says about Himself and about us is true, even when we don't feel like it is. It *does* mean getting the help we need, battling depression rather than giving in to it. We acknowledge the depravity of the world, but we also acknowledge the sufficiency of God.

It is not wrong to be depressed. But it is wrong—and not especially helpful in overcoming a depressed state—to give up on God when we are depressed. "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God" (Psalm 43:5).