

## What Is Depression?

- “**Depression**” is the psychological term that pertains to the mental, emotional, and behavioral characteristics of a depressed person. For example, those engulfed in the dark waves of depression feel desperately alone and often blame God for their plight. ...

*“You have taken from me friend and neighbor—  
darkness is my closest friend.”*

(Psalm 88:18)

- **Depression** is a psychological state that exists when the heart is pressed down and unable to experience joy. Those suffering with depression feel trapped underneath a dark, heavy blanket of sadness, grief, and hopelessness. ...

*“Darkness comes upon them in the daytime;  
at noon they grope as in the night.”*

(Job 5:14)

- **Depression** is a psychological condition that impacts the whole person: body (the physical), soul (the mind, will, and emotions), and spirit (the source of our deepest inner needs for love, significance, and security ... and the need for God Himself). Many who are depressed feel as though this verse describes them ...

*“All their days they eat in darkness, with  
great frustration, affliction and anger.”*

(Ecclesiastes 5:17)

- **Depression** is an umbrella term that covers dark feelings ranging from “down-in-the-dumps” disappointment to utter desolation. No matter the degree of darkness, the Lord wants us to rely on Him to provide light. ...

*“You, LORD, keep my lamp burning;  
my God turns my darkness into light.”*

(Psalm 18:28)

## Is Depression the Result of Sin?

### Depression is not a result of sin when ...

- Your heart grieves over normal losses. (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4).
- Your body experiences natural deterioration due to the passing of years. Your body chemistry can change and become compromised. (2 Corinthians 4:16).

### Depression can be a result of sin when ...

- You experience the consequences of your sin but don't attempt to change.
- You don't take the necessary steps for healing.
- You hold on to self-pity, anger, and bitterness when you have been wronged instead of choosing to forgive. (James 4:17).
- You use your depression to manipulate others.
- You continually choose to blame God and others for your unhappiness.
- You choose to let others control you instead of choosing to obey Christ and allow Him to be in control of you.
- You are willfully choosing to maintain a sinful life.

*“Godly sorrow brings repentance  
that leads to salvation and leaves no regret,  
but worldly sorrow brings death.”*

(2 Corinthians 7:10)

## Physical Contributors to Depression

1. Hormonal imbalance
2. Medications and drugs
3. Chronic illnesses
4. Melancholy temperament
5. Improper food, rest, exercise
6. Genetic vulnerability

## Emotional Contributors of Depression

1. Unresolved anger  
*“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice”* (Ephesians 4:31).
2. Suppressed fear  
*“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand”* (Isaiah 41:10).
3. Internalized stress  
*“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you”* (1 Peter 5:7).

## Spiritual Sources of Depression?

1. Spiritual Warfare  
*“He [God] reveals the deep things of darkness and brings utter darkness into the light”* (Job 12:22).
2. Conviction of Sin  
*“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:8–9).
3. Guilt  
*“Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.’ And you forgave the guilt of my sin”* (Psalm 32:5).
4. Shame  
*“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us”* (Psalm 103:12).

## Key Verse to Memorize

*“I remain confident of this:  
I will see the goodness of the LORD  
in the land of the living.”*  
(Psalm 27:13)

## Key Passage to Read

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

## Learn to Conquer Depression

- C**onfront all the losses in your life.  
Allow yourself to grieve and to be healed. (Ecclesiastes 3:4)
- O**ffer your heart to Christ and give Him control.  
Confess your sins, and He will cleanse you of sin. (1 John 1:8–9)
- N**urture the thoughts of God’s love for you.  
Notice: His love will not end. (Jeremiah 31:3)
- Q**uit all negative thinking.  
Replace all negative self-talk by focusing on the positive.  
(Philippians 4:8)
- U**nderstand God’s purpose for allowing your personal pain.  
God promises to use your heartaches for your ultimate good.  
(Romans 8:28)
- E**xchange your hurt for thanksgiving.  
Choose to give thanks even when you don’t feel thankful.  
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)
- R**emember God’s sovereignty over your life.  
He promises hope for your future. (Psalm 71:5)
- “Let the one who walks in the dark,  
who has no light,  
trust in the name of the LORD  
and rely on their God.”*  
(Isaiah 50:10)

## Dos and Don’ts for Family and Friends

- **Don’t say:** “You shouldn’t feel that way.”  
**Do Say:** “I care about what you are feeling.” (Proverbs 20:5)
- **Don’t say:** “You must eat! Think of all the starving children in the world.”  
**Do Say:** “Even if we’re not hungry, we need to eat. Cars need gas for energy—we need food for energy.” (1 Corinthians 6:13)
- **Don’t say:** “You need to quit taking that medicine.”  
**Do Say:** “Not all medicines work the same for everyone. I’ll go with you to get a thorough medical evaluation so that the doctor can make sure the medicine is working for you.” (Proverbs 15:22)
- **Don’t say:** “You just need to pray more.”  
**Do Say:** “I’m praying for you, and I’m going to keep praying.” (1 Samuel 12:23)
- **Don’t say:** “You just need to read the Bible more!”  
**Do Say:** “There are several passages in the Bible that have given me much hope, and I’ve written them out for you. May I share them with you?” (Psalm 107:19–20)

- **Don't say:** "You need to get involved in a church."  
**Do Say:** "I'm involved in a church where I've been learning how meaningful life can be. I would love for you to come with me next Sunday, and afterward we can have lunch together." (Hebrews 10:25)
- **Don't say:** "Snap out of it! Get over it!"  
**Do Say:** "I'm going to stick with you, and we'll get through this together." (Proverbs 18:24)

*"Anxiety weighs down the heart,  
but a kind word cheers it up."  
(Proverbs 12:25)*

## How You Can Help

- **Learn all you can about depression**—Read books, watch videos, attend seminars, visit websites, such as the National Institute of Mental Health ([www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)). (Proverbs 23:12)
- **If suicide is a concern**, ask—"Are you thinking about hurting yourself or taking your life?" They may get mad, but it's better to have a mad friend than a dead friend. (Proverbs 18:21)
- **Take all threats of suicide seriously.** (Proverbs 18:4)
- **Be an accountability partner.** (Ecclesiastes 4:9)

- **Initiate regular dialogue**—Frequent phone calls, intentional contact. (Proverbs 16:21)
- **Listen and hear their pain.** (James 1:19)
- **Talk about depression**—Talking helps remove the stigma of depression. (Proverbs 25:11)
- **Find a support group.** (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10)
- **Verbally encourage them.** (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- **Realize the power of touch.** (1 Peter 5:14)
- **Play inspirational praise music** to lift their spirits. (Ephesians 5:19)
- **Bring laughter into their lives**—Funny cards, videos, movies, and people. (Proverbs 17:22)
- **Provide "nutritional therapy"**—For example, B vitamins (including folic acid), Vitamins C and E, calcium, and magnesium are helpful for combating depression. (Ezekiel 47:12)
- **Help them set small, daily goals** that require minimum effort—Check on their progress regularly. (Proverbs 13:4)
- **Enlist help from other family and friends**—Be specific about your concerns. (Galatians 6:2)

HOPE FOR THE HEART's *Biblical Counseling Library* contains our *Biblical Counseling Keys*, providing *God's Truth for Today's Problems* on 100+ topics.

The *Quick Reference Guides* contain excerpts from our *Biblical Counseling Keys* and offer immediate, concise answers with *biblical hope and practical help*. For more comprehensive help and additional resources, refer to our *Biblical Counseling Keys on Depression*.

If you would like more information, biblical counsel, or prayer support, contact:  
1-800-488-HOPE (4673)  
[www.HopeForTheHeart.org](http://www.HopeForTheHeart.org)

The information in this resource is intended as guidelines for healthy living. Please consult qualified medical, legal, pastoral, and psychological professionals regarding individual concerns.

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®  
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™  
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

## Related Topics ...

- Fear
- Forgiveness
- Guilt
- Perfectionism
- Self-Worth
- Suicide Prevention
- Worry



*Together ... Changing Minds.  
Changing Hearts. Changing Lives.*

P.O. Box 7, Dallas, TX 75221