

Depression

Depression is a real thing that affects millions of people. Christians are not exempt from feelings of extreme loss, disappointment, and sadness. Yet, God provides a way through it. You are not doomed to live a life of heartache and despair. The Lord wants you to live in freedom.

When you feel overwhelmed, first pray and seek the Lord. The Bible says to *"cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."* [1 Peter 5:7] Confessing our feelings to God brings what we believe into the light. Reading the Bible and praying God's word over our lives shows whether or not what we feel is true. When what we feel doesn't line up with the truth of God's word, then we know how to ask Him to change us.

When *"David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him...David found strength in the Lord his God."* [1 Samuel 30:6] Nehemiah encouraged the people not to *"grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."* [Nehemiah 8:10] Even when Jesus mourned at Lazarus' death, He found strength in God [John 11:1-43]. The Bible urges us: *"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"* [Philippians 4:4] Rejoicing in the Lord in the midst of sadness is an affront to depression. It's hard, and only God can help you do it.

Next, surround yourself with godly community. Isolating yourself only amplifies feelings of depression. It's a sure way to keep yourself in darkness and loneliness. But admitting you need help gives others the opportunity to help you. We can't do life alone. You cannot overcome this season by yourself and in your own strength. You need God and other people. It may also be a good idea to meet with a Christian counselor or physician. A treatment plan for depression can sometimes include medication. Ask the Lord to make clear what is the right path for you.

Jesus promised: *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* [John 16:33] There is nothing we experience in life that is stronger than God. *"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."* [Deuteronomy 31:8]

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- John 14:1
- Colossians 3:15
- Isaiah 26:3
- Matthew 6:25-34
- Romans 8:6
- Proverbs 3:24

Community Resources:

- GFC Christian Counselor Referral list
- Cloud and Townsend is an online resource that offer books, articles, audio and DVD media resources on emotional struggles, marriage, spiritual life, relationships, parenting, boundaries as well as additional topics.
cloudtownsend.com/resources/question-answers/
- Crisis Center of Tampa Bay - The Crisis Center is a central hub for 4600 services available to the Tampa Bay area. Through their crisis line, they provide suicidal prevention help, a rape hotline, a substance abuse hotline, and a homeless hotline. They also assist elderly, veterans, children, families, and mental health.
211 – crisiscenter.com

Grace Groups:

Freedom – Identify obstacles in your life and get out of ruts that keep you from changing.

Men/ Women – gfconline.com/freedom