

RETHINKING DEPRESSION

A GUIDED SCRIPTURAL STUDY
WORKBOOK

Rethinking Depression

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This guided Scriptural study workbook is based on Dr. Daniel Berger's book "Rethinking Depression: Not a Sickness, Not a Sin."

You'll know when quotations can be turned to directly in the book, because they are noted in this manner and page numbers are given.

Chapter One

Introduction and Purpose

Why a study to rethink depression? Because we want to help our friends in their struggles? Actually, depression isn't something that happens to only some of us; it is a human condition encountered by everyone at some time.

Popular music sings it. Consider R.E.M.'s soulful anthem, *Everybody Hurts*. Michael Stipe's haunting refrain pierces the hearer's heart with:

Everybody hurts sometimes...

Take comfort friends...

When your day is night, hold on, hold on, hold on, hold on...

The Rolling Stones (*Paint it Black*) sing: "I look inside myself and see my heart is black, I see my red door and must have it painted black." There are days like that for all of us, and the raw honesty strikes a chord in us.

As you look over the following list, which experiences are familiar to you?

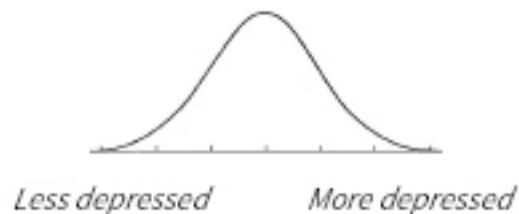
- Crushed dreams
- Grief over tragedy
- Loss of a loved child
- Loss of someone you never had the chance to reconcile with
- Chronic painful illness
- Injustice in the way you've been treated

- Violence
- False accusations against you
- Trauma
- Painful rejection

We wrongly think of depression as a yes/no condition, as if we must choose one side of the line.



Actually, depression is more of a bell curve issue. A bell curve looks like a one-dimensional hill drawn on paper. The hilltop represents most people—the average experience of depression. Approaching the hill, you have people with very low experience of depression, and leaving the hill, people with very high experience of depression. But everyone is on the curve somewhere. On the bell curve below, where do you think you are in the experience of depression -- average, low, or high? Place a mark there.



The following list describes several ways our hearts might experience depression. Place a check next to those with which you identify, even if several:

- A raw heart that feels as if its been through a meat grinder
- A riled up heart that quivers under catastrophe
- A hard heart that ignores what's going on
- A wallowing heart bathing in melancholy
- A fake heart wearing a false face
- A hidden heart that covers up reality
- A hiding heart that finds a shelter to crawl behind
- A numbed heart dependent on drugs. Pop rapper Lil Wayne sings: "I am a prisoner, locked up behind Xanax Bars... Only once the drugs are done, I feel like dying." (*I Feel Like Dying*)
- A hopeless heart tuning toward suicidality

If you've had another experience of depression other than described above, write it here: _____

In the finger-snapping song *Witness*, Katy Perry voices the universal cry for help. "We're all just looking for connection, yeah, we all want to be seen... Just looking for a witness to get me through this..." What is that witness to "get us through this?"

The scientized community points to biological mechanics. The solutions include medication (please note that we are not talking about a true biological disease where medication can be of great value), or various forms of therapeutic attachment. Though most people widely trust and obey the teachings of psychiatry and psychology, we're not doing better. Rather, psychiatrists insist that depression is now "the world's largest health problem, accounting for more disability than any other disease worldwide." (*Rethinking Depression*, page 5, citing James Murrough)

The medical model of depression has not just failed; it is a fictional and damaging belief that must be discarded at its philosophical and practical levels...it is uncharitable, unethical, and unscientific. (*Rethinking Depression*, p 10)

In this study, we're going to look to the witness of true lasting hope. Rather than theories, this hope is solidly grounded in the Rock of Ages. Rather than mechanically prescribed solutions, this hope brings true internal healing.

We have more than just a witness to get us through this. We have reliant and efficient answers for depression. We have lasting refuge. God calls to us, as in the song by Hillsong United: "Come, now, tired, broken, scared, or just in need..."

- Come to the strengthening Word
- Come, find hope for your waiting soul
- Come to know steadfast love that answers and saves

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Psalm 119:28 "My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word!"

Describe the writer's feeling(s) of depression: _____

Where will the writer turn for hope? _____

Psalm 130:1-2, 5 "Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD, O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy...I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope."

Describe the writer's feeling(s) of depression: _____

Where will the writer turn for hope? _____

Psalm 69:2-3, 13 "I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God... But as for me, my prayer is to you, O LORD. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness."

Describe the writer's feeling(s) of depression: _____

Where will the writer turn for hope? _____

For Further Rethinking...

You're doing a great job considering all these passages! Keep going. Please read *1 Corinthians 10:1-13*

In verse 4, how is Jesus described? _____

In verse 11, we learn why God gave us His Word. For what reason was the Bible given to us? _____

What do you think God wants to teach you through this study of His Word? _____

Please read *Psalms 103:8-13*

From verse 8, write down the declaration of God's love: _____

Verses 9-13 announce five benefits of God's love. List them here: _____

Verses 11 and 13 clarify that these benefits are for those who fear the Lord. If you're not sure what it means to fear the Lord, three "A" words can help you remember:

- Awe
- Appreciation
- Apprehension

Are you in awe of God? What behavior of yours today indicated awe of God? _____

Do you appreciate God? What creation of His have you stopped and admired today? If you haven't, read Isaiah 40:25-26, and do as it tells you, then write down your appreciation here: _____

Are you apprehensive of God's judgment? Have you chosen to receive and believe His salvation? _____

Please read *Habakkuk 3:17-19*

In verse 17, famine drains hope. But verse 18 begins with “yet.” What choice does the writer make in the middle of circumstances that seem void of joy? _____

Ask the Lord to be your source of joy and strength today. Write your prayer here_____

Chapter Two

Understanding Depression

The conditions currently named “depression” or “bipolar” have carried various labels over the years, such as melancholia, neurasthenia, moppishness, or affective psychosis (emotional condition of the soul). At this time, depressed thoughts and feelings are understood as “mental illness.” But, in “Rethinking Depression,” Dr. Berger reveals that this belief, depression as mental illness, is unsupported among leading scholars in the field of psychiatry.

When someone receives a clinical diagnosis of depression, it merely means that a person in a clinic who believes in the labeling system of the DSM-5 assigned that label. The DSM-5 (originally intended more as an observation tool than a diagnostic tool) is an attempt to describe the trials of humanity and group them into categories so that a predetermined treatment can quickly be prescribed to the one given the label.

In this chapter on understanding depression, we will consider the three core observations of the DSM-5 regarding depression. We will turn to the Bible and begin to see what it offers regarding these three emotional conditions.

The three major criteria noted in the DSM-5 for depression are: 1) deep impairing sorrow 2) a sense of hopelessness, and 3) guilt or shame. In this study, you will come to realize that sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt need not be viewed as a debilitating, genetically-induced disease called depression, which can at best be numbed by medications with dangerous side effects and neuro-toxic results.

Realities of sorrow, hopelessness and guilt

Sorrow, hopelessness and guilt are impairing

Sorrow can beat against our souls like waves of the sea and drag us down in its undertow. It's as if the tangible heaviness of grief wakens the sorrowing one and holds sleep at bay. Hopelessness can stop us from getting up and living the day. Guilt and shame, when valid, do impair, yes, but can also serve the purpose of pushing toward proper resolve at the cross of Christ. Invalid guilt and shame merely impair.

Sorrow, hopelessness and guilt are honest

Sorrow, hopelessness and guilt are honest assessments and reactions to life in a fallen world such as our earth.

Sorrow, hopelessness and guilt are metaphysical

Sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt do not carry physical qualities. "Meta" means beyond. The Bible confirms physical effects, such as in Psalm 77, but sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt themselves are invisible and immaterial -- beyond physical. For example, hope is evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1, Romans 8:24).

Though the medical model has tried to bring depression under the physical, biological umbrella, it is accurate to view the core factors of depression as spiritual rather than physical. (For further information on this topic, see Dr. Berger's book *The Chemical Imbalance Delusion*).

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In this chapter, we'll look together at a just a few verses and skim the surface of the deep riches God has provided for dealing with the sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt of depression.

Deep impairing sorrow

He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. Isaiah 53:3-4

Jesus is described as a man of _____ who is acquainted with _____
_____. What has he done with our griefs and sorrows? _____

Please turn in your Bible to the Gospel of John. Read *John 16:20 and 16:22*

What did Christ say about sorrow? _____

Please read *John 11:33-35*

What did Christ model for us in the face of sorrow? _____

A sense of hopelessness

Please turn in your Bible to Psalms. Read *Psalms 42:5, 42:11, 43:5*

How is the soul described? _____

The solution begins with three words: Hope in God. When we place our hope in God, what shall happen? _____

Please read *Psalms 119:43, 81, 114, 147*

What brings hope? _____

For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:3-4

From the verses above, what is the purpose of Scripture? _____

Guilt or shame

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. Isaiah 40:1-2

What comfort is offered to the people regarding the guilt of their iniquity? _____

So you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 2 Corinthians 2:7

Guilt leads to overwhelming, excessive sorrow. What is the solution? _____

Sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt are fundamental components of human nature and primary concerns that the gospel of Jesus Christ addresses... realize just how intertwined these very real human struggles are within God's plan to save His people from both their fragility and depravity."

(Rethinking Depression, p 36)

Chapter Three

Establishing Normalcy

How would you define normalcy? Early in our marriage, as my husband pursued a hockey career, we changed location often. When he arrived in the top league, the NHL, I no longer needed to rent Uhaul trailers every few months. We even purchased a home near Philadelphia PA, home of the Flyers. As if it were yesterday, I remember a conversation with another Flyer wife in the same situation, laughing together over the question, “Are we normal now?”

Shall we define normalcy by comparing a nomadic lifestyle (such as experienced by an athlete or military person) with a settled lifestyle (such as experienced by a generational farmer or tenured professor)? Though my hockey friend and I defined normalcy as settling in, we had no idea of the sorrow and despair that would mark the following decades. If today we asked each other the “are we normal now” question, I fear the laughter would be missing.

It is a common belief that people are normally happy, full of hope, and do not struggle with valid and false guilt for lengths of time. But what if being normal is to struggle through one's life with deep impairing sorrow and guilt, having been born into a hopeless condition? These are certainly important questions. (Rethinking Depression, p 40)

Psychiatry and psychology build their claims in regards to depression on the philosophy that a point of abnormality has been reached, a point of mental dysfunction and disorder. This point of abnormality is called individual degenerationism. In this philosophy, the

individual degenerates into abnormality because of either biological defect (nature) or environmental trauma (nurture).

The Philosophies of Abnormality and Normality

The philosophy of abnormality and shamanism

The philosophy of abnormality has been around for a long time. According to psychiatric literature, it is the philosophy that guided shamanism (witch doctors, medicine men). Common cure tactics—professionalized and standardized and authorized and well-documented—include mind-altering drugs. It is an approach based in sorcery, though couched in the sophisticated language of “biological disorders.”

The philosophy of abnormality and humanism

The philosophy of abnormality is also core teaching of humanism. Denying a Creator God, humanists believe that within humans there is possibility and responsibility for positive direction and self-realization, or actualization. When man’s inner wisdom, will power, and esteemed goodness are not able to resolve sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt, then an abnormal state of disorder or dysfunction or disease (for our discussion, depression) has been reached.

Depression and normality

Psychiatrists and clinicians do generally admit that some sadness, hopelessness, and guilt is normal for humanity. They hold that a line of severity demarcates abnormality. Where is that line? There’s no objective answer. Rather, the severity axiom must be subjectively discerned, aided by observations which have to do with time and level of distress or functionality.

The APA admits to no objective distinction between normalcy and what it asserts to be an abnormality. (Rethinking Depression, p 58)

Thankfully, the Bible offers absolute truth, not just conjecture and subjective discernment. Furthermore, we will see that the Bible addresses the normality/abnormality question.

Genesis 1-3 teaches not individual degenerationism, but universal degenerationism. This poor Earth is fallen, and mankind is depraved and fragile. All people are in need of joy for sorrow, hope for hopelessness, cleansing of guilt and shame. Depression is normal. Not the end game, but a normal encounter along the journey, to which the Bible speaks and holds out healing.

Rethink Sorrow

Please open your Bible to Genesis 3, to learn what humanity should expect regarding sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt. Read Genesis 3:16-19, and underline each time you see the word “pain” or “sorrow.” That word is *itstsabown* in Hebrew, a word that refers to that which brings pain, labor, worrisomeness.

In Genesis 3:16, what is the context of the word *itstsabown* for women? _____

Obviously, women know difficulty in the childbirth and motherhood process. Diseases have been created around this reality (i.e. post-partum depression, PDD, and PSD), but it’s a sorrow that is to be expected. Baby blues, post-partum depression, and menopausal difficulties all stem from the same fallen-ness. Jesus understood this. Read His words:

Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. John 16:20-21

As well as expecting sorrow, what perspective does Jesus turn us toward? _____

The more people see life as God sees it and accept the human condition as it truly is, the more they will be able to accept and endure the sorrows of this life and the joy that is to come. (Rethinking Depression, p 69)

In Genesis 3:17-18, what is the context of the word *itstsabown* for men? _____

As with women, sorrow is the common experience of men. The psalms of King David and Asaph reveal acceptance of this brokenness, and point us to the answer.

Turn in your Bible to Psalm 107: 6, 13, 19, 28. Write what you learn here: _____

Why cry out to the Lord? Because Scripture teaches us that sorrow is normal to the earthly human experience.

Even in laughter the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief. Proverbs 14:13

What is humanity's true nature? _____

For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity. Ecclesiastes 2:23

What are man's days full of? _____

Because he did not kill me in the womb; so my mother would have been my grave, and her womb forever great. Why did I come out from the womb to see toil and sorrow, and spend my days in shame? Jeremiah 20:17-18

What reality of life does Jeremiah express? _____

The Bible declares precisely when sorrow will no longer be a part of normalcy for those who place their faith in Jesus Christ (Rev 21:4)... From the beginning of human existence (Genesis 3) until the end of this age (Revelation 4), sorrow is the norm... Sorrow – though distressful, impairing, and undesirable – is a normal feature of human nature that has meaning and purpose, and even how people reference and define happiness is never apart from their reality of sorrow. (Rethinking Depression, p 71-72)

Rethink Hopelessness

Hopelessness is not a state that people fall into, it is the genuine reality of our fallen state, whether acknowledged or not.

Please read Genesis 3:22-24. What did the cherubim guard? _____

Since Genesis 3, death is part of man's reality. Everyone is dying, facing eternal judgment for their sin and separation from God.

To view hopelessness as sin or sickness is to view it as something apart from normalcy. When you know the root of your hopelessness and turn to Jesus for hope, you know a new reality.

And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.
Rom 15:12-13

In Romans 15:12-13, where does hope come from? _____

The problem of false hope

To complicate matters, we've become good at creating temporal or false hopes. Some of these are listed below. Place a star next to areas which you have counted on for hope in the past:

- Achievement of an educational goal
- Work-related success
- Being accepted by a certain group of people
- Having close friends
- Being in marriage relationship
- Bearing children
- Children behaving as you want them to
- Vacation dreams
- Good feelings
- A post-fixer-upper house
- A perfect church

One test as to whether these have become false hopes in your life is to ask whether you become upset or lose good cheer when they don't happen.

The aspects of true hope

True hope has three aspects: past, present, and future.

1. PAST: Hope remembers God's power and fulfilled promises of the past. Hope is reasonable for God's people because He is faithful to the promises He gives. Hope is based on faith in the objective reality of the immutable promises of God who cannot lie.

Please turn to and read *Jeremiah 29:10-11, 14*. The Lord carried them into exile, as promised if they did not obey, thus He can offer them promise of return. How does God's fulfillment of past promises as revealed over and over in the Old Testament provide hope for you today? _____

2. PRESENT: Hope endures present exile, trials, and discipline with patient joy in Jesus. In Romans 5:3-5, Paul outlines how present afflictions connect with hope.

- Endurance (stick-to-it-ivity) = In steadfast faithfulness, you act in obedience to God even though it makes no sense.
- Proven character = You prove that you have faith in God, based on God's immutable character and promises.
- Hope = You experience God's love. Christian hope stems from a relationship with a loving Heavenly Father who is working out His purposes even in incredible trials.

In what current affliction must you endure patiently, so that God can grow your character into greater Christ-likeness, more able to love? _____

3. FUTURE: Hope looks forward to God's plans, purposes, and the glory ahead. Hope is the perspective that sees current trials in the light of eternity. This forward looking perspective is not natural, for hope is rooted in what is not yet experienced.

In this hope we were saved, waiting patiently in hope for what we do not have. Romans 8:24

Is the future aspect of hope something we currently have? _____

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. 1 Peter 1:3-4

Where is the future aspect of hope kept for us? _____

To what extent is our hope to be set in the grace to be brought at Christ's return? _____

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:13:

To what extent is our hope to be set in the grace to be brought at Christ's return? _____

Rethink Guilt

Please read Genesis 3:6-9; it's the first human experience of guilt, shame and anxiety. Those verses set the trajectory for humanity -- since then every man and woman has struggled to resolve personal guilt, whether legitimate or falsely perceived.

How would you define legitimate guilt? _____

Your answer should have included culpability before God. Feelings of guilt are not trustworthy when they are brought about by events outside the person's control (i.e. soldiers returning from war, children experiencing the divorce of parents, rape).

*And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?
Matthew 18:33*

When Christians understand the miracle of mercy and forgiveness offered to every person through Jesus, according to the verse below, what are they able to extend? _____

*They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.
Romans 2:15*

In Romans 2:15, what kind of thoughts are true of those who know God's moral law but deny it's reality? _____

*For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
Romans 1:21*

The Bible provides what we need for transformed thinking regarding guilt (and all aspects of depression). Romans 1:21 describes the thoughts and heart of those who don't pay attention to God's Word.

Our thoughts become futile and our hearts are darkened when we do "not _____ him as God, or give _____ to him." At all times, God is in control, and at all times God is ready to forgive. This means that whether we have sinned against God and man, or whether man has sinned against us, we can honor God and give him thanks. Honoring God involves glory, and giving thanks involves gratitude. Glory and gratitude are part of God's grace toward us -- true balm for depression.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 1 Peter 2:24

Whether we are culpable or innocent, Christ offers healing for all guilt.

Chapter Four

Responding to Sorrow

Sorrow calls for deep emotional responses. Jesus modeled weeping as a godly response to sorrow (John 11). We are taught to weep together, as well as rejoice together (Romans 12:15).

In this chapter, we're going to consider the typical response to sorrow—mania.

Mania is simply the false belief that people can pick themselves up by their own bootstraps by exerting great effort, experiencing extravagant pleasure, pursuing knowledge, and denying their reality. (Rethinking Depression, p 87)

Mania is a normal response to sorrow. Consider ways you personally:

- Escape into ideas and projects
- Spout grandiose ideas
- Become irritable when those ideas are crossed
- Spend more than you should to pursue pleasure - whether money or time
- Act inappropriately
- Seek uncritical self-confidence
- Hold a too lofty opinion of yourself

Sarah, a young mother of two toddlers and an infant, nearing the end of a housebound winter, began refusing entirely to leave her house. Her husband shopped and made house imprisonment possible for her, until he had to travel for a week. That week she slept not one wink. Her husband arrived home to find all their belongings in one bedroom, the children locked in the other, and Sarah spinning in a frenzy, wielding her sledgehammer. Wires and pipes hung about, the walls lay smashed into bits of drywall and broken slabs of wood.

Sarah was hospitalized and prescribed a course of lifetime anti-psychotic medications, while her husband hired a repairman to fix what she had broken. Sarah is not the only one who has pursued an idea to her destruction. We all trust our own understanding, pursue pleasure, and think more highly of ourselves than we ought.

If the writers of DSM-5 would check Scripture, they would recognize that their observations are not something new.

Ecclesiastes 2	DSM-5 - Bipolar I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I became great (v 9) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflated self-esteem or grandiosity (p. 124)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I made great works - houses, vineyards, gardens, parks, pools to water a forest, bought slaves (v 4-8) Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them (v 10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in goal-directed activity (p. 124) May engage in multiple overlapping new projects... nothing seems out of reach (p. 128)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I got many concubines (v 8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased sexual drive, fantasies, behavior (p. 128) Infidelity or indiscriminate sexual encounters with strangers (p. 129)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine (v 3a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tendency to overuse substances during an episode (p. 131)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My heart guiding me with wisdom and how to lay hold on folly (v 3b) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gambling and antisocial behaviors may accompany the manic episode (p. 129) Speech ... continuous and without regard for others' wishes (p. 128)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great possessions of herds and flocks... silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces (v 7-8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bipolar disorder is more common in high-income than low-income countries (p. 130)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I turned about and gave my heart to despair (v 20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extreme mood changes (p. 123-127)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me (v 17) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suicide risk at least 15 times that of the general population (p. 131)

In Ecclesiastes 1:16-2:26, Solomon describes three categories of human effort to escape sorrow and make oneself the agent of hope. Read the passage and summarize each category in one word. The first is done for you.

Ecclesiastes 2:13	Ecclesiastes 2:1-2	Ecclesiastes 2:4-11
<i>Human wisdom</i>		

Sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt represent the normal post-fall heart. The solutions for those who look elsewhere than Christ—human wisdom, mania, and folly—result in various levels of functionality; for some it seems to work well, for others it impairs. But always, human wisdom, mania, and folly return the soul to a broken state.

Our efforts to escape the realities of sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt, apart from Christ always fail, as noted by the wise Solomon:

So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun... Ecclesiastes 2:20

Such mood changes are not abnormalities, rather they are expected responses. Constant cycling from sorrow to attempting to escape sorrow (whether through wisdom, folly and/or mania) is normal to humanity.

Phil Keaggy (*Call the Doctor*) gets it right as he sings: “This whole world is a troubled soul... we need the great Physician for the human condition.”

Scripture, both descriptively and warningly, prescribes true solution:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5-6

What is the exhortation in Proverbs 3:5? _____

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think... Romans 12:3a

What does Romans 12:3 warn against? _____

...but to think with sober judgment... Romans 12:3b

What must we replace grandiose thinking with? _____

... each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Romans 12:3b-5

Right thinking is in accordance with faith. And there's even more in this passage, there is motivation and purpose. Right thinking is not about self, it's about building others up, about functioning well with others. What is the context in which we are able to function well with others? _____

The church body plays an important role in guarding against and resolving mania.

All human effort to escape sorrow in this life –no matter how it is labeled or categorized –apart from God's grace is prideful, destructive, and does not bring about happiness or remedy guilt. (Rethinking Depression, p ????)

Human responses that evidence refusal to accept our need for Jesus Christ include:

- Looking within yourself to resolve sorrow or guilt as captain of your own soul evidences refusal to accept that we need Jesus Christ.

We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf... Hebrews 6:19-20a

- The effort of false religions — focused on fulfilling a law and not breaking it, finding transcendence, earning or discovering salvation—evidence refusal to accept Jesus Christ. Trusting in religion/legalism is a form of mania, an inevitably hopeless pathway to death.

...And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. John 17:3

Trusting in Christ is turning to his completed work on the cross to remedy each person's fallen and condemned nature and to fulfill the law. (Rethinking Depression, p 115)

Rethink

God allows sorrow

Please turn to and read Lamentations 3:14-18. As the writer expresses his bitterness of soul and utter humility, does he think that his own efforts and abilities could bring hope? No. Describe the feeling of his soul: _____

Please read Lamentations 3:19-25. What does the writer call to mind for hope? _____

Please read Lamentations 3:26-33. Who causes the writer's sorrow? _____

Though God takes no pleasure in grieving us, it is necessary that people understand their true condition in order to abandon hope in self and turn to hope in Him alone... Responding to sorrow by mentally turning to God's goodness and discovering genuine hope in Him is of utmost importance.

(Rethinking Depression, p 120)

God withholds sorrow

Please turn to and read Philippians 2:27. What did God do in sparing Epaphroditus from death? _____

At the same time, we remember (Luke 22:41-43) that Christ cried out to be spared, but God allowed him to suffer.

God sovereignly and mercifully withholds some sorrow while allowing others tragic experiences to occur. One can be assured, when life's circumstances force people to realize their true sorrowful state, it is the loving and faithful God who has allowed it for their good. (Rethinking Depression, p 121)

Please read Acts 17:24-27. What is God's purpose in the things that happen? _____

What sorrows in your life have driven you to turn to God? _____

God uses sorrow

God purposes sorrow and hopelessness to deliver degenerates from their fallen state and to point them to the only one who provides true joy, genuine hope, and an efficacious payment to remedy guilt. (Rethinking Depression, p 121-122)

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18

It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. Ecclesiastes 7:2-4

Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. James 4:9-10

Sorrow is foundational to salvation. The sorrows that God allows in this life lead to eternal joy for those who receive His good news in faith.

What difference would it make in your life if you changed your perspective on sorrow? What new responses would you choose? _____

For Further Rethinking...

Read Job 2:13, 6:2-4, 7:3, 6-7, 13-16 and note all the ways Job's sorrow is described. In the final chapters of the book of Job, we learn that Job's story does not end in tragedy, but from Job 1-2, we learn that God initiated His sorrow and suffering.

Chapter Five

Discerning False Perspectives

Folks view depression via one of three perspectives. Once you understand what is behind the perspective you hold to, you can more honestly and sincerely stand by your choice.

- The biological perspective
- The biblical perspective
- The integrational perspective

The Biological Perspective

The biological perspective views depression as a material issue; the metaphysical mind is only a product of the brain. Depression results from “brain dysfunction,” “genetic variance,” and/or “biochemically defective mechanisms” (popularly coined “chemical imbalances”). Many have come to place faith in this philosophical lens, despite research that provides counter-evidence, which Dr. Berger cites in ***Rethinking Depression*** (page 142).

While it appears science driven, it is, in truth, a belief system of circular reasoning; it is an attempt to dismiss necessary faith in God and place faith in man’s wisdom to explain and remedy human nature... [the perspective is driven by] reductionistic and humanistic preachers who dogmatically cling to their faith, passionately evangelize, and make dependent disciples.

(Rethinking Depression, p 138)

Why is the biological perspective an unrealistic failure? Because, the core of depression is rooted in sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt, which are metaphysical. Neuroscience can only study what is observable and measurable. Sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt cannot be assessed biologically. Biological changes that happen in connection with sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt are not able to reveal cause. That's as foolish as saying, "I received chemotherapy and I'm still alive so I must have had cancer."

For secularists to deny materialism is to open the possibility that God exists, that He created us precisely as He claims in His Word (with dual natures), that He is precisely who He says he is, that He will do exactly what He declares, and the he alone can deliver our souls and restore us to spiritual health. (Rethinking Depression, p 138-139)

Soul care from the biological perspective can never genuinely heal the soul.

The Biblical Perspective

Does the Bible teach us to disregard biology? No, the Bible teaches that man is composed of both the metaphysical and the physical.

In the verses below, circle the words referencing the metaphysical aspect of man, and underline the words that refer to the physical aspect:

Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. Genesis 2:7

And the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Ecclesiastes 12:7

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

Scripture points to the duality of mankind — the metaphysical (soul, spirit, mind, heart) and the physical (body, brain, aortas). The core symptoms of depression (sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt) are metaphysical or spiritual but can alter the physical body negatively.

In the verses below, circle references to the metaphysical (spirit, hopelessness) and underline references to physical sickness and the physical body.

A man's spirit will endure sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear? Proverbs 18:14

A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. Proverbs 17:22

With spiritual joy and hopefulness, positive physical changes happen.

The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the bones. Proverbs 15:30

What happens to the physical body when the heart rejoices at good news? _____

Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body. Proverbs 16:24

What happens to the body when gracious words are heard? _____

Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. Proverbs 3:7-8

What happens to your flesh and bones when you fear the Lord? _____

The Bible is clear that the body is affected by the soul's relationship with God – physical death being prime evidence. Depression is simply the normal impairing and destructive state of being apart from god's wisdom. The good news – the hope of the gospel – is the metaphysical medicine that heals.

(Rethinking Depression, p 150)

The Integrational Perspectives

In ***Rethinking Depression***, Dr. Berger addresses two prominent integrational perspectives:

1) the idea that depression is caused by disease, and 2) the idea that sorrow is a sin.

The integrationist must overlook biblical teaching that deep sorrow, hopelessness, guilt, and negative somatic changes and decline are all caused by the original sin of Adam. (Rethinking Depression, p 153)

Integrational perspective that depression is caused by disease

This popular idea among many well-meaning Christians frames depression as having either been caused by physical disease or by a spiritual struggle. Essentially it rules out the world's claim of depression as disease, but clings to the world's materialistic teaching that the body can cause depression.

Actually, it's the other way round. Sorrow, hopelessness and guilt can and do bring about biological effects, such as stress on the heart or nervous system. But ultimately sorrow, hopelessness and guilt are not a disease nor the cause of a disease, they are the normal human response to life since Adam's fall.

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Proverbs 4:23

Integrational perspective that sorrow is a sin

This unbiblical point of view assigns sin to the sorrows and traumas so many experience on this sorry earth. As we've seen, sorrow, hopelessness and guilt are features of the normal human nature since Adam's fall.

Read Psalm 16:4, 32:10, Proverbs 23:29-30. What word is used to show that sorrow, guilt and hopelessness increase with sinful, idolatrous choices? _____

This word confirms that all humanity experiences sorrows. Sinful choices increase (multiply) sorrows. However, the Bible also teaches that sorrows can increase from non-sinful causes, such as grief over death (John 11, John 20:11), or prodigals (Proverbs 17:21, 17:25, 10:1).

Not all sorrow is connected with sin. Consider Jesus:

Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." Matthew 26:38

Also, consider King David. Attempts have been made to diagnose David with depression, based on Psalm 38. However, read the following verse, looking for David's confession:

Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away. Psalm 31:9-10

To what does David attribute the fact that his sorrows had multiplied? _____

Such an honest mindset can lead to confession of sin and repentance, and indeed that's what we see in David's life (Psalm 51:1-7).

Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice... Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Psalm 51:8, 12

What is David looking for in repentance? _____

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. ... Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart! Psalm 32:1, 2, 11

As David describes the experience of repentance, what words describe his emotions upon repenting: _____

The early church understood the benefit of sorrow for sin. In 2 Corinthians 7-8, how does Paul describe himself when his letter causes them to become “sorrowful as God intended”? _____

The Bible teaches that rather than sinful, sorrows are beneficial. Also, we are instructed to share in sorrow (Romans 12:15), and we would not be instructed to share in sinful behavior!

For Further Rethinking...

Fantastic work so far! To think the biblical perspective through further, read Psalm 32. Draw two columns on the page. In the first column, list all the ways David describes the negative effects of his unconfessed sin. In the second column, list what happened when he confessed his sin.

A great number of God's best servants have trodden the deeps of the valley of the shadow; and this ought to comfort some of you. The footsteps of the holy are in the valley of weeping...No sin is necessarily connected with sorrow of heart, for Jesus Christ our Lord once said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death." There was no sin in him, and consequently none in his deep depression... In grief itself there is no necessary cause of sin. [Charles H. Spurgeon "The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons Preached and Revised" Vol. XXVAA (Longdon: Passmore & Alabaster and Sons, 1882) 234.]

Chapter Six

Reconsidering Emotions

Typically, folks adopt one of two opposing views regarding emotions. We'll be looking at a number of Scriptures, then seek to decide which, if either, of the following, is correct:

- Emotions are our fate, our destiny, a biological force which controls us against our will. Genetics, and/or biological determinism, are to thank for difficult emotions.
- Emotions are our duty. We must and can choose which emotions are ours on any and every given day.

Defining Emotions Biblically

We run into a little snafu, because the word “emotion” isn’t found in Scripture. So we realize that the word “emotion” is relatively modern. You can read Dr. Berger’s full development of the history of “emotion” in *Rethinking Depression*, from page 168 on.

For this study, we’ll pull out this definition: Emotions exist in the realm of the metaphysical or spiritual, rather than the physical. They are rooted in the heart (soul), and provide empirical evidence of the soul’s existence and its executive control over the body.

In Scripture, when it references the way we feel about things, or what’s going on in our hearts, here what it talks about:

- Treasures (Luke 6:45, 12:34)
- Affections (Colossians 3:2 KJV)
- Pursuits (1 Timothy 6:11)

- Desires (James 1:14-15, 2 Peter 1:4)
- Lusts (1 John 2:16 KJV)
- Love (John 15:10)
- Eye (Matthew 18:19, Luke 6:41-42)

Jesus noted that feeling the wrong way about things affects the body. He said, “When your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.” (Matthew 6:22-23) The way you feel about things will become evident in your body.

Emotions are a person’s treasures becoming expressed in an observable way. Emotions reveal and are rooted in what we treasure.

Please read James 4:6-10 in your Bible. What changes in emotion does this passage describe when a person begins to value God over self? _____

Please read Philippians 2:5. Whose mind is to be ours? _____

Read Philippians 2:6-8. How would you describe Christ’s emotions from this passage? _____

Now let’s go back and read the instructions to us that preceded the description of Jesus.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:1-4

Take a look at the words used in the instructions above. Think about the atmosphere being described:

- You feel encouraged
- You feel comforted
- You feel loved = same love, fully loved
- There is affection
- There is sympathy
- Joy is complete
- There is unity
- People are not selfish
- People laying aside personal ambition

Psychiatrist Peter Breggin, in the **Anti-Depressant Fact Book** (page 193), astutely observes that depressed feelings are indicators that can lead to solution.

“Depressed feelings are signals of underlying frustration and despair, and can provide a window in [sic] the sources of the problem.” (Rethinking Depression, 168)

Emotions can lead us to the window where we can begin to think well about what’s going on inside our hearts/minds.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? Jeremiah 17:9

Are we able to understand our own hearts? _____

“I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.” Jeremiah 17:10

Who is able to understand our hearts and test our minds? _____

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

What is God’s powerful and living Word able to discern? _____

When we filter our emotions through God’s Word, we are able to understand what is going on in our hearts/minds.

Emotions are an honest reflection of a person’s heart – a picture of what he or she truly treasures/worships. (Rethinking Depression, p 192)

Do you accept the connection between your heart/mind/emotion and God’s Word? Do you agree that God’s Word can show you your heart? If so, you’ve moved toward understanding God’s wisdom, and appropriating God’s joy and peace. The more we treasure humanistic values (i.e. self-fulfillment, self-focus), the more we can expect despair, guilt, and general hopelessness to increase.

In the end, it’s not our emotions that make us feel empty, hopeless, and guilty. Our emotions are a gauge or a window into what’s going on in our hearts and that can help us analyze and

understand why we are depressed.

Let's be sure we understand the wisdom of God regarding our emotions. Please turn in your Bible to Romans 1:18-32. From verse 18, what does unrighteousness do with truth? _____

In the verse below, circle the word that describes our thinking when we do not choose to honor God or thank Him. Now circle the word that describes our hearts when we do not choose to honor God or thank Him.

*For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
Romans 1:21*

Unrighteousness suppresses truth. When we suppress the truth about God, when we don't honor God with grateful hearts, what happens to our thoughts and our hearts? _

For Further Rethinking...

Read Titus 2:11-12. By the grace of God, saved people can train in very specific things. What two things can they renounce? _____

What three things characterize their lives? _____

Read Titus 2:13. What is the hope for which Christians are waiting? _____

Read Titus 2:14. What are the people of God zealous for? _____

Emotions do not control one's character and behavior or make anyone feel hopeless and guilty. Those who do not treasure Christ cannot be expected to have emotions that please God, self-control that the Spirit gifts (Galatians 5:22-23), or genuine hope. (Rethinking Depression, p 190)

Chapter Seven

Discovering God's Remedy

At first glance, we might think that discovering remedy motivates the fields of psychiatry and psychology. Except remedy has already been provided by our Creator. Any other attempt at finding remedy begins with rebellion against God, not desire to help.

In *Rethinking Depression*, Dr. Berger exposes what leading scientists have revealed, that the one power “anti-depressants” hold is that when they are prescribed, hope grows in the patient. Whether the “anti-depressants” are actual drugs or a sugar placebo, that benefit remains. If the prescription is for an actual drug, the benefit is removed due to tragic side effects and the toxic impact of the drugs on the brain. We can all agree that the hope held by “anti-depressant” medications is a false hope.

But anti-depressants aren't the only false hope that folks chase after. Consider the following list of false hopes which are commonly used to relieve depression:

- Believing in your own inner energy
- Focusing on setting goals, finding pathways to attain those goals, and overcoming barriers to achieve them
- Psychotherapy or therapeutic relationships
- Vitamins, special diets
- Exercise
- Essential oils
- Hypnoses or electric shock treatment

- A wonderful marriage
- Children
- Body tapping or massage
- Exposure to sunlight or blue light
- Psychoactive or psychotropic drugs
- Psychedelic drugs

Hope, even false hope, assuages depression, since within its metaphysical fabric is the promise of salvation from one's condition of hopelessness, guilt, and sorrow... But false temporal hope, while it may help for a time, will inevitably fail and cause greater damage and destruction. (Rethinking Depression, p 200)

True Hope is Biblical Hope

The Bible not only reveals that sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt are normal for humans, it also provides the remedy.

The Bible does not just describe the fallen state with clarity, but also establishes the only genuine and reliable hope able to deliver people's souls. (Rethinking Depression, p 214)

Jesus Christ: The reliability of genuine hope

Scripture is serious about instilling hope.

And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end... Hebrews 6:11

Notice how hope is described in the above verse (you can also check out 1 Peter 1:13). Is the assurance of hope partial or complete? _____

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:4

From Romans 15:4, how is hope provided? _____

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:2

Access into the grace of joyful hope is by _____

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. Hebrews 12:3

Hope is based on and grows through faith in Christ. When you trust Christ as the source of genuine hope, considering Him rather than your circumstances, what will not characterize you (according to Hebrews 12:3)?

Jesus Christ: The core of genuine hope

Last chapter taught us that emotions can help us identify what we treasure. Unless we treasure Jesus above everything else, we will ultimately end in despair, hopelessness, and guilt. Depression can be a good friend when it turns us toward a treasure shift.

The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; Lamentations 3:24 (NIV)

We must treasure and pursue Jesus Christ above all the false hopes that so easily lure our hearts. Flip back to the list of false hopes. Write down those that have lured you in the past? _

Better health, exercise, a wonderful marriage, caring relationships are not bad things, but they fail when it comes to providing genuine hope.

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:13

According to 1 Peter 1:13, if we want genuine hope, is there any room for double-mindedness? _____

Your hope must be set fully on Christ. Corrupt treasures result in corrupt feelings/moods, corrupt feelings of hopelessness and condemnation even when that is not the truth.

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 1 Thessalonians 4:13

When Christ is preeminent in Christians' hearts and God is their only hope, they will still sorrow, but not according to the flesh. (Rethinking Depression, p 219)

Though we still know sorrow on this earth, it is not without hope. We can bear our sorrows, even rejoice in them, as they grow character in us.

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Romans 5:3-5

What does suffering produce? _____

What does endurance produce? _____

What does character produce? _____

One of the dangers of numbing painful feelings with drugs is that we deny God the opportunity to produce hope-giving endurance and character in us. Can you see how rather than bringing the healing of hope, anti-depressant drugs rather stop the process of hopefulness from being able to happen?

Christ endured the worst suffering imaginable. During His crucifixion He even turned away a concoction that might have eased his discomfort. What motivated Him? Read Hebrews 12:1-2, and note what is set before Christ helped Him endure the worst suffering imaginable. _____

That same joy is set before Christians (Philippians 1:21 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18). The core of genuine hope is the reality that we will spend eternity with Christ. That is the Christian's highest joy. Take a moment to pray and tell the Lord that you would like Him, and being with Him in heaven, to be your highest joy. If it is not your highest joy, ask Him to grow you and make it so. Write down your prayer here: _____

Please note, you are not the first to struggle with setting Christ and heaven as your highest joy. Read Psalm 137:1-6 and notice that all they wanted to do was hang up their instruments and weep, but they, as do we, needed to set Jerusalem as their highest joy.

Hebrews 12:22-24 motivates us toward hope, citing Jerusalem as the highest joy. Circle every reference to the hope of heaven:

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. Hebrews 12:22-24

Jesus Christ: The substance of genuine hope

Hope is not a physical substance that we can see. How does Hebrews 11:1 describe hope? _____

Please open your Bible to Romans 8:1-39, where we can learn five aspects of the substance of genuine hope.

1. Genuine hope not only assuages guilt fully, but it also defeats sin and fulfills God's moral law perfectly. (Rethinking Depression, p 224)

Read Romans 8:1-4 and describe in your own words the solution for guilt: _____

2. Genuine hope supernaturally enables degenerates' (the natural man) minds to be set on God. (Rethinking Depression, p 224)

Read Romans 8:5-17a and write in your own words how we can be changed from a mindset of death and enslavement to sin: _____

3. Genuine hope does not remove sorrows, suffering, and current struggles in this world, but in the one to come... Genuine hope is a promise received by faith, which allows the believer to rejoice in the midst of sorrows and trials. (Rethinking Depression, p 224)

Read Romans 8:17b-24 and describe in your own words how to overcome suffering:___

4. Genuine hope is dependence upon the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit and not something people create individually within themselves or corporately among themselves. (Rethinking Depression, p 225)

Read Romans 8:26-27 and describe how we can have the power we need: _____

How does Romans 15:13 echo this reality? Rewrite the verse in your own words: _____

5. Genuine hope guarantees eternal security, forgiveness, regeneration (new birth), and glorification. (Rethinking Depression, p 227)

Read Romans 8:28-39 and write down the words that indicate the security of our hope: _____

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

There is an answer for depression — hope. Real, genuine, lasting hope. Not false hope.

This hope—as with every hope—is obtained by faith, but this genuine hope comes from hearing the Word of God... The only hope able to eliminate guilt and condemnation, conquer death, and make sense of the sorrow of this world is faith in Jesus Christ. (Rethinking Depression, p 233)

Hope begins with God. In this world where God’s authority is spurned, His salvation is refused, and His character is denied, it stands to reason that depression abounds. Genuine hope can flow where we:

- Welcome God’s authority. He is the Potter, we are clay.
- Receive His salvation. Only the blood of Christ covers the real guilt we all stand in before God’s throne.
- Accept God’s character as He has revealed Himself in Scripture. Stop trying to define God by experience, emotion, or reason.

The first thing we have to do is read the Bible, because that is how God has revealed Himself. We study God’s Word, not for the purpose of changing our feelings, but for the purpose of seeking God and seeing God as He has revealed Himself to us.

We've seen that the Bible reveals our hearts (Hebrews 4:12). That's true and necessary and good because it can lead us where we need to go, to the cross of Christ and the repentance God grants. But first we must see the God of the Bible.

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: Lamentations 3:21

Does hope begin with our emotions (hearts) or minds? _____

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." Lamentations 3:22-24

What shall we call to mind about God's love? _____

What shall we call to mind about God's mercies? _____

What shall we call to mind about God's faithfulness? _____

What shall we say to ourselves in order to have hope in God? _____

Hope begins with the daily practice of calling to mind, or meditating, on who God is, as He has revealed in His Word.

Setting and staying our minds on the Lord

For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. Romans 8:6

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Isaiah 26:3

When our minds are focused on God, what is the result? _____

Setting our minds to seek the Lord

Now set your mind and heart to seek the LORD your God... 1 Chronicles 22:19

What does it mean to set your mind and heart to seek the Lord? Seeking the Lord begins with prayerfully studying His Word, then obeying what He says.

Regarding BIBLE STUDY: What is your plan to read the Bible daily? Have you read it through faithfully and repeatedly? _____

Find another Christian whom you can do this with, and hold one another accountable. Share what God is showing you about Himself and your sinfulness. Share how you are growing. Ask for prayer where you are struggling. A daily moment on the phone, or a daily text can be helpful for this.

Regarding CHURCH: In 1 Chronicles 22 it meant Solomon was to obediently build the temple. In Hebrews 10:22-25, we learn that faithfully gathering with other believers is equally as important as faith and hope. Just as for Solomon, seeking the Lord is never apart from our responsibility toward the church.

What is your plan to be faithful in your church? In the Scriptures below, circle the words that teach what it means to be faithful in your church.

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. Galatians 5:13

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Hebrews 13:17

Did you find the following? Stir up one another, meet faithfully, encourage one another, serve one another, and obey our leaders.

Being transformed by the renewal of our minds

Transformed. What a concept! Not, “I’m doing better.” Not, “I’m in recovery.” Rather, “I’m being transformed.”

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

As we are not the original beings, there’s always some kind of conforming going on. But rather than being conformed to this world, our transformation is about what is good, acceptable, and perfect.

In Romans 8:29, below, underline the words that describe what we are being conformed to:

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son... Romans 8:28-29a

We are being transformed by being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ where do you think this transformation begins? In our minds or in our hearts? _____

Transformation begins with our minds, not our feelings.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus... Philippians 2:5

Please turn in your Bible to Philippians 4, and read Philippians 4:4-8. Notice in v. 4 that joy is a choice. Whom is joy rooted in? _____

The reality that joy is a choice is echoed in James 1:2.

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds... James 1:2

What does Philippians 4:5-6 teach us to do with anxious thoughts? _____

What is the promised result? _____

Philippians 4:8 lists specifics that we must choose for our thought life. List those specifics here: _____

If you were to focus depressed thoughts on what Philippians 4:4-8 teaches, in what ways would your thought life be different? _____

Rethink Depression

You've done well in working so hard to rethink depression. In Christ, your sorrow can be transformed to include joy and hope. We pray that becomes reality for you (Philippians 4:4, Hebrews 12:2-3).

Guilt, because of Christ's healing cross, is washed clean by His forgiveness. Have you brought all your guilt to the cross and received Christ's forgiveness? May all your sorrow, hopelessness, and guilt resolve in blessed joy, confident hope, and eternal glory with Jesus Christ.