

Battles Christians Face: Depression

Introduction

Setting the scene – what we will be talking about

How common is depression? Statistics from www.MentalHealth.org.uk

In 2014, 19.7% of people in the UK aged 16 and over showed symptoms of anxiety or depression – a 1.5% increase from 2013. This percentage was higher among females (22.5%) than males (16.8%).

In 2013, there were 8.2 million cases of anxiety in the UK

What is depression? Definition from www.MentalHealth.org.uk

Depression is a common mental disorder that causes people to experience depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy, and poor concentration.

A personal experience

Beyond the definition – the effects of depression

- My life with depression (The impact of the illness)

I'm trapped here alone all night and all day

Here I am just stuck in my shell, surrounded by people but no one to tell.

Helpful comments are made like get it together, come visit my mind and then be so clever.

Carry on thinking that you know it all, that it's all in my head... you don't know me at all.

You've not been to the places I'm taken, when I'm too scared to sleep as I may never awaken

Demons are swirling, screaming and banging my bed, a cacophony of noise I'm convinced soon I'll be dead.

Lying there sweating heart pounding fast please make it stop I can't cope I won't last. Then out of the melee a single voice screams out clear, end your life, be gone stop this crippling fear.

Why are you here wasting good air, your family won't miss you for them you can't care.

You're useless at work and worse still in life, a meaningless pitiful bane on your wife. And as for your daughter don't make me laugh, you're a good for nothing dad blocking her path.

Deep breath compose, please come on breath, let the sheer panic and terror no longer be left.

But once it has passed you know it is true that its, coming back coming back to haunt you.

Although it is calm now your still under a cloud, a shadow is on you just hanging around.

The shadows always there crushing your heart and your mind, paralysing you eating up your insides.

So whilst on the outside it may look to be clear, inside it's a battle and you're crippled with fear.

A fear that this may never be over, that the voice inside wins and.....

Lost all feelings of self-worth – Impact

- Sabotaged Relationships with
family / friends / God
Leading to isolation
- Convinced useless, worthless and didn't deserve to be
Husband / Father / In Job
- Lack of interest in
Hobbies / Sports / Music / family / work
- Physically led to
Panic Attacks / insomnia / exhaustion
- Mentally led to
Suicidal thoughts / guilt / self-loathing / Weak

Practical things that have helped me

- Opening up to others
- Physical Exercise

- Diet (caffeine / alcohol)
- Sleep
- Keeping busy

Pressure I put on myself as a Christian

- I'm a Christian, shouldn't I be full of joy?
- If I really say how I'm feeling am I really a Christian
- Guilt / doubt and fear of judgement
- If I open up, I will need to talk

The Big Questions...

- 1) Does God understand the situation?**
- 2) Is there any hope?**
- 3) Does God understand the situation?**

Yes – Psalm 42 & 43

The journey of the psalmist:

- i) Physical pain
- ii) Isolation
- iii) Spiritual state
- iv) Accusing words / thoughts
- v) Tears / sorrow

Is there any hope?

- i) In this life?
Possibly not
- ii) In eternity?

Yes! Wonderfully so

Encouragement in the Psalm

Other scriptures that have and do encourage me

Romans 8

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, ^[h] for those who are called according to his purpose.

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be ^[i] against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Isaiah 25:5-8

You subdue the noise of the foreigners; as heat by the shade of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is put down.

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

⁸ He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken

Revelation 21:3-5

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place^[a] of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,^[b] and God himself will be with them as their God.^[c] ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

How these verses have helped me

Other spiritual things that have helped me

- Prayer
- Purpose
- Being in church

Small Group Discussion

- How can we as a church family help those who suffer with depression?

Open discussion / Q&A

Prayer

Breakaway into small groups for prayer