

What is it?

What does it look like?

-empty, meaningless pain, random suffering, mental/physical pain, lonely, upset, out of control, unending misery

Heath Lambert: no two people have the same depression

"behind depression is "behind depression is hopelessness, guilt, shame, coping, sadness, joylessness, worthlessness

Depression...involves a complete absence: absence of affect, absence of feeling, absence of response, absence of interest. The pain you feel in the course of a major clinical depression is an attempt on nature's part...to fill up the empty space. But for all the intents and purposes, the deeply depressed are just the walking, waking dead". (Elizabeth Wurtzel, Prozac Nation.)

"I tried to sleep but couldn't. Part of it was that I was scared to wake up with a feeling of panic in the pit of my stomach. Anxiety was always present, and for no good reason it just got worse. I wanted to be out of the house, but I was scared to be alone. No matter what I did, I couldn't concentrate except on questions such as 'Am I going insane? What have I done to deserve this? What sort of punishment is this?'" (Welch, p 10-11)

(BARON KING)

DSM-V

DSM-V requires five or more of the following symptoms be present for at least 2 weeks:

depressed mood

anhedonia (loss of a desire for pleasure)

sleep disturbance

appetite disturbance

fatigue or lethargy

cognitive impairment

muscle pain or tension

thoughts of guilt or worthlessness

thoughts of suicide

Note: not caused by bereavement

STATISTICS

-1 in 7 college students will experience depression while in college

-30% of freshman report feeling overwhelmed

-17 million people each year

A lot of times it is spontaneous and is not always preceded by some horrible disaster or overly sad event

TED DEPRESSION TALK: 0-3:18

I learned later that I had become profoundly depressed. Only then did I discover a language to describe my own clinical state. That language came from William Styron's book *Darkness Visible*, which tells the story of his own descent into depression.¹ Unlike physical pain, which usually points to some concrete abnormality like a broken leg, the pain of depression reflects an abnormality that cannot be so easily observed or explained. Like a headache, it appears as a phantom pain that one might decide to ignore or overcome. But willing an end to depression is as difficult as healing a broken heart. Human strength alone is insufficient for the task.

Like Styron, I found depression completely debilitating. It took Herculean strength for me to get out of bed in the morning. I was fatigued all day long, yet at night I was sleepless. I would lie awake by the hour, feeling the torment of a darkness that no one could see but me. I had trouble concentrating. I was apathetic and desireless. I could not taste food, see beauty, or touch anything with pleasure. I exacerbated the problem by telling virtually no one about my struggle. Friends and colleagues marveled at how well I was doing. But inside I was a living dead man. I finally became desperate enough to see a counselor, and for two months I took an anti-depressant so that I could function normally without losing my mind.

61 the silent scream of pain

Clinical psychology has a vocabulary to describe depression, and it provides techniques and drugs to combat it. Still, I have found a spiritual image more helpful. The Spanish mystic, John of the Cross, wrote about something he calls "the dark night of the soul." He defines it as a depressed spiritual state into which one slips and, turning to traditional remedies—emotional fervor, spiritual discipline, rational analysis, worship, service—finds in them absolutely no help and comfort. All props are stripped away. One is left utterly alone and helpless. It is the darkness visible that Styron describes. One enters the abyss of emptiness—with the perverse twist that one is not empty of the tortured *feeling* of emptiness. If anything, this kind of emptiness fills one with dread and despair.

Causes:

-both physical and environmental

PHYSICAL

- Brain chemicals and imbalances in it
- Thyroid issues

ENVIRONMENTAL

- trauma
- life situations
- loss or death in one's life

However, most often it is some combination of the two

Depression is a combination of physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual symptoms which cause significant impairment in the individual. While depression can have a physical cause, these cases are quite rare. In almost all cases, depression is the result of a disruption in how an individual assigns meaning to how they view God, them self, and the world around them. (Baron King)

THIS LEADS US TO CONSIDER WHAT THE ROLE OF GOD AND OUR FAITH

SPIRITUAL

Since Jesus promises abundant life, Christians often assume there's a spiritual problem if they're depressed. Other well-meaning believers don't necessarily help by saying things like, 'Have you completely submitted to God?', or 'Do you have any unconfessed sin?'" (Mark Moring)

Joy doesn't mean no depression

-Ed Welch sees depression as a form of suffering

-three causes of suffering "other people, ourselves, our bodies, Satan, and God" all causes of suffering and often they intermix

"Depression is spiritual in the same way that all suffering brings us face-to face with critical spiritual realities" (p 26)

-Every problem or disorder has a spiritual component to it

-Depression confronts us with questions of "Who is God?" "Who am I?" "Why is there suffering?"

"behind depression is hopelessness, guilt, shame, coping, sadness, joylessness, worthlessness"

-these issues can be addressed through scripture

Scripture puts problems into two categories

-from a sinful nature (heath lambert)

There is no definitive answer to why someone is depressed. Each provided answer is often one part of an entire puzzle that shows an individual's unique picture and story of depression

-It is not "just being sad"

-It is not something only YOU deal with

-It is not always explainable by something

Every time depression is present, the character of God is relevant

"In almost all cases, depression is the result of a disruption in how an individual assigns meaning to how they view God, them self, and the world around them." (Baron King)

Use a map to explain how our minds have a mapping of how the world and life works

-and when something happens to disrupt that map, we feel uncomfortable and do not know what to do with this

(use a marker to draw a roadblock, or to show how maybe this map is wrong and this road turns left instead of right etc)

-as we travel through life and gather experiences, they either confirm to contradict the mental road map we have

Part of the problem of depression is the world not aligning with what we expected or anticipated from it

-we have an idea of how the world, others, and life should work

-some of these are accurate, some are unhealthy

-much like our expectations about God

-a lot of time we do not know our unhealthy ideas until they are proven to be incompatible with real life

-when we experience an event or scenario where our ideas about world/others/life do not match, we are shaken and presented with a dilemma

-we are disrupted and doubt that there is hope

EXAMPLE

-a child, Sam, grows up learning that God loves righteousness and hates sin during childhood and adolescence, good behavior brings warmth and affection from family members, while bad behavior brings shame and rejection

-a mental map (an unhealthy one) develops where Sam begins to believe that acceptance from others is dependent on performance

-as Sam becomes a teenager, events cause the map to be reinforced

-as Sam grows older and gains more opportunities, he learns that good performance is getting harder and harder

-now in college, Sam is struggling to maintain the GPA which has become expected of him significant stress builds around the cost of potentially failing academically and losing acceptance of others

-the bad grade comes....

-Sam's greatest fears are now too close to reality

-Sam withdraws into a depressed state because the world is no longer working the way he had hoped

What does God and the Bible say about it?

Bible doesn't specifically talk about depression in those terms

-but it does discuss sadness, suffering, pain

-Psalms and David's laments

-Lamentations and Jeremiah's anger

-Elijah and his apathy and lifeless sorrow

-Jonah and his bitter stubbornness

How is it treated?

THERAPY

-talk therapy

OTHER

- exercise
- eating healthier
- engaging in social activities

(BARON KING)

Practical Advice

diet

exercise

- regular, but doesn't have to be overly strenuous (walking, jogging, swimming)
- something that is continuous and rhythmic
- start slow

8 hours of sleep

social connections

pursuing the Lord simply for the sake of fellowship

proper self-care/check-up

Develop a Wellness Toolbox

A box full of little things you can do to boost your mood

- read a good book, take a bath, go to a park, play with a pet, call a friend
- the more the better, and do these when mood decreases

MEDICATION

- medication alters brain chemistry
- can be very helpful for some, but is a case by case situation, not one that is or should be used across the board
- medication is extremely helpful in what it is supposed to do (treat the symptoms) but when it is applied to treat the root cause than it is misused and can hurt people more than help
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0NOIGMW4ww>

What not to say to someone who is suffering 0:35-2:58 4:55-5:52;

What does it have to do with Christianity?

Depression

(BARON KING)

How do we expect the world to work?

How do we expect God to function?

How does our Biblical Worldview intersect with our cultural expectations

What about medication?

(BARON KING)

-While the causes of depression are almost always social/experiential in nature, very real physical disruptions may be present.

-This is why antidepressant medications frequently provide relief to sufferers of depression. Medication alone, however, is rarely enough to effectively address the causes to the depression.

-Depression is often treated with therapy, but can also be treated with a combination of therapy and medication

In therapy, counselors will work with the individual to get to the heart of how they have made sense of the world around them and assist them in developing a better, more effective, more truthful "roadmap" for moving forward in life.

What can I do to help others?