

A Time to Mourn – Lesson 6

Comfort in Depression

*“My flesh and my heart faileth:
but God is the strength of my heart,
and my portion for ever.”
Psalm 73:26*

The Weight of Depression

- Depression is the fourth of the documented “five stages of grief”, following denial, anger, and bargaining.
- The first three stages are reactions that attempt to ease the grief/loss and depression is the impact of the trauma settling in.
- Depression is when the full weight of loss is felt and overwhelms us.
- Depression is a state of mind that affects the mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of mankind.
 - All our faculties are hijacked by a negative or “foggy” state.
- While depression is often compared to being *sad*, it is better described as being *numb*.
 - I like to say that it is monotone and not a minor key.
- Much of the danger of depression comes from how it prevents you from getting the help you need, e.g., talking to friends or exercising.
- Symptoms of this stage include feelings of numbness or emptiness, being overwhelmed by daily life, lethargy, drawing inward and isolation, and easily triggered emotions of sadness or despair.

The Christian Response

- As a Christian, we must acknowledge that depression is very real and can be difficult to overcome.
 - We can see examples of depression in many people in the Bible – Elijah, David, Job, Jeremiah, and others.
- One of the biggest helps for overcoming the depression stage is be *prepared* for it.
 - Ease the impact of depression by working through the previous stages as we have covered: combat denial with candor/acceptance, anger with complaint/lament, and bargaining with cry/surrender.
- Kelleman identifies *comfort* as the Christian response to depression.
 - “Comfort experiences the presence of God in the presence of suffering – a presence that empowers me to survive scars and plants the seed of hope that I will yet thrive.”

- Comfort is a strength outside of ourselves that supports us in our time of weakness.
- Remember that God's comfort is supportive and sufficient, but that does not mean He simply removed our difficulties – II Corinthians 12:9-10
- Another important aid for Christians is *communion*, both with God and other people.
 - We do not have to bear your burdens alone – Psalm 55:2, Galatians 6:2
- Even if we cannot see or feel hope, there is always hope – I Corinthians 10:13, Deuteronomy 31:6, Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 39:7, Mark 9:23, Romans 15:13

Helps for Overcoming Depression

- Lean on others for support even when you feel like you are a burden.
- Take care of yourself even when you feel like you don't deserve it.
- Get outside and in nature even when you don't feel like it.
- Do not give in to self-loathing about dealing with depression. Depression feeds upon itself and it can spiral out of control.
- Know that this depression is temporary, and joy will return. – Psalm 30:5
- In its more extreme manifestations, depression may require intervention and professional aid.