

4 Spirit-Filled Steps for Overcoming Your Season of Depression

What happened to my joy?

The question tugged at the corners of my soul as I trudged through each day. A dark cloud hovered over every waking moment. And sleep? That was a struggle, too, as insomnia moved in and took up residence. I had one bed-wetter and another child with night terrors, so the sleep I *did* get was often fragmented and restless.

How I hated mornings. I dreaded facing a new day.

How am I supposed to be a good mom when I feel so sad, so weary, so... depressed?

Numbness presided over my heart. Things that used to bring joy now seemed empty and hollow. Routine tasks now overwhelmed me with paralyzing force. I didn't want to go out, didn't want to do fun stuff with my kids and especially didn't want to talk about how I was really feeling.

Depression carries such a stigma. If I admitted my daily struggle, I feared people would see me as weak or unspiritual. They might lecture or give unhelpful help. They might *judge* me.

Oh, what a prison depression can be. It's like walking through a deep, dark valley with insurmountable cliffs towering high above, blocking out any ray of light or hope for escape.

I've spent time there and come out the other side. Moms or dads, are you walking through this deep valley? May I share with you what I learned?

1. **Get real with God.** He calls Himself “the God of hope” and invites us to pour out our hearts to Him (Rom. 15:13, Ps. 62:8). He can handle our pain and is not disappointed when we struggle. He is still a miracle-worker and healer of hearts. I find it helpful to write out my prayers in a journal.
2. **Let others in.** It’s really hard to own this struggle, but admitting our need and asking for help is a huge step in the healing process. Maybe it’s a trusted friend who could take the kids for a few hours a week. Maybe it’s a prayer group who will lift you up to God when you’re too down to pray for yourself. Maybe it’s a doctor who can evaluate your struggle from a medical perspective.
3. **Do something for yourself.** This may sound selfish, but sometimes it’s the healthiest, most *unselfish* thing you can do. You can’t pour into the lives of your children if your tank is on empty. Go to coffee with a friend. Get a pedicure. Find a cozy spot and read a book. Go for a jog. Take up a hobby. Find *something* that gives you rest, even enjoyment, and make room for that in your life. It will make you a better person when you get back “on duty” and give you something to look forward to in the future.
4. **Progress, not perfection.** The day may seem daunting, the job overwhelming. But instead of striving for perfection, aim for progress and rejoice in each step. Many a day I’ve walked through my house looking for one tidy room where I can sit and just breathe for a minute, only to find that messes are everywhere. I’m learning to delight in each room tidied, instead of being disappointed that I didn’t get the whole house cleaned.

Depression is a cruel companion, but it does not define us. We are not helpless victims, but treasured children of God. He is always close at hand and has made us more than conquerors through His unconditional love. {eoa}

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