

6 Keys to Unlock the Chains of Depression

To look at me today, you would never guess I once struggled with severe depression. I am full of the joy of the Lord and minister several times a month at churches and conferences where I help people get free from all types of bondage.

But nearly 30 years ago, I was almost debilitated by this malady. When I was in its grip, all I wanted to do was go to bed and sleep—hardly an option for a wife and mother of two young children. It got so bad I didn't care to be around people at all.

I know now that the depression had a spiritual root, but it was almost certainly exacerbated by a physical condition I was experiencing at the time—a hormonal imbalance caused by female surgery I had at age 32.

The result of the imbalance was that I began to have drastic mood swings. I could be extremely happy, functioning normally with my family and co-workers, and some small thing would go wrong. I would burst into tears, explode and become depressed. I began to avoid social situations because I was afraid of having an emotional outburst.

When I first began to experience this difficulty, I had been a Christian only a short while. I didn't know God's Word, so I wasn't able to appropriate His promises for my life. I was looking for a natural, rather than a supernatural, solution.

For this reason I gladly accepted my doctor's recommendation to take Valium for the mood swings. I didn't like the idea of being on drugs, but I was grateful that I would be able to cope—at least whenever the Valium was in effect.

For six months I lived in a trancelike state of mind. As long

as the medication was in my system, I was calm, but if I had to miss a dose, I lost control.

Once when my family and I were on vacation in North Carolina, my husband took us out to eat. While we were still at the restaurant, the time came for me to take a dose of Valium.

I reached in my purse for the bottle of pills but couldn't find it. I literally fell apart. I was so upset and unnerved I couldn't eat.

My husband told the kids he would take me to the motel and put me to bed and then come back to take care of them. He couldn't find the Valium in our motel room, so he gave me some pain killer I was taking that helped me go to sleep at night. My nerves were absolutely raw.

After this incident, I went into the deepest depression I had ever experienced.

What Is Depression?

Webster's Dictionary defines *depression* as "dejection, as of mind; gloominess, pressed down; downcast, discouraged and disheartened." Common symptoms of depression include feelings of sadness, hopelessness, helplessness and worthlessness.

People with depression experience difficulty sleeping and changes in appetite. Sufferers no longer derive pleasure from activities that were once enjoyable and may have difficulty concentrating and making decisions.

Some people have vague medical complaints such as generalized aches and pains that won't go away, backaches, headaches and stomach ailments. Depression also may be characterized by thoughts of death and suicide.

Depression not only affects your emotions but also causes physical diseases. Chronically depressed people are at greater risk of developing cancer. Heart attack survivors who also

have depression have an increased risk of dying within six months.

Blood tests can be done to determine the degree of depression a person suffers from. They are able to reveal a person's condition because "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11).

When you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior you receive His cleansing blood, which contains His DNA. This DNA is "the blueprint of your potential." The blood of Jesus enables you to fulfill the destiny and purpose God has for your life.

However, in your natural blood line you have family iniquities, or "bends in your nature," that come from repeated sin patterns or learned behavior patterns in your own, or a relative's, life. These bends can be toward good health or poor health, sound mind or depression.

Suppose you have an uncle who is always depressed around the holidays. If his pattern of behavior is not broken, it can become a family trait. Instead of rising above this family iniquity, you may develop a helpless attitude that leads to hopelessness and discouragement. You may begin to think you can never shake the "weakness" in your family.

Remember: The devil's job is to steal, kill and destroy. What better way to destroy someone than to assign an army of demons who are familiar with your blood line iniquities? This army of evil spirits is an assignment from Satan to destroy the plan and purpose God has for you.

The good news is that Jesus has a plan for your life, and His plan is that you might have life and have it more abundantly. He wants you filled with joy, walking in peace, and living a victorious life free from depression.

Personal Victory

The experience I had at the restaurant in North Carolina was my wake-up call. I knew I was hooked on a prescription drug, and I wanted to be free.

The next day I bought a book entitled *Healing Through the Name of Jesus*. I began to read it and to study and meditate on the Word of God. I continued to take Valium but gradually cut down on the dose. I came to believe Jesus was my answer.

One Scripture passage in particular that I regularly meditated on is Psalm 103:1-6: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed."

This passage gave me great encouragement because I realized that, though I was oppressed by the devil, the Lord was going to "execute justice" (v. 6) against my enemy. As I persisted in studying the Word, I developed an increased desire to be free from both the iniquity of depression and my dependency on drugs, and I began to trust God to heal me.

One revelation that helped me along the road to recovery was that my soul, or my flesh, which consisted of my mind, will and emotions, was at enmity with God (Rom. 8:7). In order for me to be completely whole, my soul had to come in line with God's will for me. Otherwise, I was fighting a losing battle: My mind was telling me I needed the Valium, my emotions were trying to convince me that without drugs I couldn't function and my will was at the mercy of my mind and emotions.

The only way to stop this vicious cycle was to:

- **Renew my mind through the Word.** As I did this, the mood swings became less frequent, and when they did come they

were not as intense or long-lasting. Also, my faith for healing increased.

- **Make Jesus Lord over my emotions.** I began to encourage myself by quoting God's Word so that what I felt became subject to what I knew to be true. God's Word said that God would redeem my life from destruction, and I believed it.
- **Set my will to come in line with God's will.** God did not want me to be oppressed or to be dependent on drugs; He wanted me to be free from iniquity, healed of all disease and renewed like the eagle! I realized that if He was big enough to save me from sin, He was powerful enough to deliver me from iniquity, and I determined to receive all He had for me.

Deliverance in my case was a process of growing spiritually, but one day I knew I was free. I flushed all my tranquilizers down the toilet. Since that day 27 years ago, I have not taken a single dose of any mood-altering drug.

Getting Free

What are some of the steps to overcoming depression? Here are the ones that helped me:

1. Recognize and acknowledge that you have a problem, and desire to be set free.
2. Realize that, if you are a Christian, you have a new blood line. The life of God flows through your veins, and the iniquities in your natural blood line have no hold over you. Renounce and break the bondage of these iniquities.
3. Renew your mind by meditating on the Word of God, especially on healing Scriptures (see Eph. 4:23). In addition, bring the other aspects of your soul—your emotions and your will—into line with the Word.

As you renew your mind, you will find that your thought

patterns change. You will begin to think as God thinks, not as the world thinks. And your attitudes and actions will follow suit. Here's why:

When you study the Word, you put godly, conditioned thoughts into your mind on purpose. These lead to repeated thoughts, which are the thoughts that go through your mind again and again. These in turn lead to thought habits, which are formed from the continual processing of repeated thoughts and which determine the way you tend to think in any situation. The thought habits affect your attitude, which dictates whether you see things in a positive or a negative light. Your attitude in turn dictates your actions, or outward behavior.

In other words, if you repeatedly put godly thoughts in, what comes out—as displayed in your attitude and actions—will be godly, also.

4. Forgive everyone who has ever hurt or disappointed you. Otherwise, you will develop bitter roots that not only fill you with wrong thoughts but also affect your physical well-being. The Bible tells us that bitterness dries the bones—and this is where the blood is produced. Bitter roots bear bitter fruits.

Before I was healed, I had bitter root judgments against people. I was particularly angry with my ex-husband, and the court hearing we had over child support and custody made me even more dependent on the drug I was taking. But the Word of God changed my thinking. I stopped judging others and let God deal with my heart.

5. Ask God to deliver you, and trust Him to answer your prayer.

6. Thank Him for your freedom, even before it is manifest.

Now begin to live the abundant life Christ has for you!

Read a companion devotional.

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