

Climbing Out of Depression's Dark Depths

If you didn't read my introduction to this series, I recommend you start there [PART 1]. That post was written to set the pace and show you my heart in this series.

****I am not a doctor, or a psychiatrist, or certified therapist. But I am a friend that knows the pain. And sometimes we need someone to come alongside and talk with us, more than someone looking at us and talking to us. *I want to talk with you, not at you.*****

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me
because the Lord has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor;
He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn,
to preserve those who mourn in Zion,
to give to them beauty
for ashes,
the oil of joy
for mourning,
the garment of praise
for the spirit of heaviness,
that they might be called trees of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord,
that He might be glorified" (Isa. 61:1-3).

This verse has been revelatory in my studies with depression through the Bible. This Bible verse is a prophetic word from Isaiah regarding Jesus the Messiah that Jesus is coming to set

the captives free and to heal the brokenhearted. In verse 3, we see that Jesus is coming to give the oil of joy for mourning, and a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Jesus came to bring what is dead and make it alive, to take what is held captive and set it free and to reclaim joy for those who are depressed.

That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. This is a promise of restoration and healing.

The term “depression” is often used. I don’t dismiss anyone that uses it, but I usually wonder what type of depression they are implying.

This post is my attempt to articulate and bring clarity to a challenging conversation: depression.

I’m sure there are many in-depth articles on depression that are way more thorough than this post. But I’m trying to simplify something that is easily misconstrued and confusing. I am writing the three different types of depression that I have seen manifested in the lives of those that I have mentored to bring clarity for the rest of the series. There has to be a point where we acknowledge what we are dealing with for progress and healing to be made.

Different Types of Depression

1. A Personality Disposition

Some personalities have a more natural drift towards sadness and depression.

Creative types and introverts have been highly associated with depression. In 2002, a study was done in the *Journal of Psychiatric Research* that found that 74 percent of those who claimed to be depressed were introverts. As well, the perfectionist personality type can be more prone to anxiety and depression.

In seasons where we find ourselves drifting in that way, we have to acknowledge what's going on in our minds. Sometimes we neglect to guard our minds, and it produces fruit from our flesh and not from the Spirit of God.

2. Circumstantial Sadness.

This would be a hope deferred, severe disappointment, grief, hormonal imbalances (postpartum depression). When sadness isn't adequately processed, it grows, it takes root. If sadness isn't acknowledged and processed through the different seasons of life, depression has an opportunity to dig its claws into your soul.

When I was 17 years old, my brother was killed in a motorcycle accident. It was a very traumatic season in my life. Understandably, my mother was a mess after her son died. Now that I have children, I can empathize more deeply with her grief. As a young woman, whose father wasn't around, I took on the position of "mother" when my mother was grieving. So, I told myself that I had to be tough and stop crying over my brother's death because I needed to be emotionally stable for my younger sister; this ended up hurting me. I wasn't letting myself properly grieve and process the death of my brother, and so my heart grew indifferent and depressed. For nearly a year, I lived in that state: indifferent and unresponsive to God and His people. It wasn't until a year later that I let myself mourn and process my sadness that the depression went away.

Deep sadness from trauma can easily feel and look like depression. But it's in the way we acknowledge and process it where it's capable of growing into a root of heaviness in our lives.

You see, mourning takes *time*. But when you're thrown into life's next tragedy and heartache, grieving is near impossible. So, if grief goes unacknowledged or unprocessed no

matter the reason, it will fester and grow.

One girl I mentored who had experienced a trauma of abuse in her childhood would withdraw and become despondent nearly every summer season. I finally noticed the cycle, so I asked her if it was in those summer months that the abuse began. It was. As a little girl, she was unable to process the trauma, so it took a root of depression, and every summer, she would experience sadness until she forgave and allowed God to come and heal her.

Do you have a similar experience?

3. A Demonic Spirit of Heaviness.

“to comfort all who mourn,
to preserve those who mourn in Zion,
to give to them beauty
for ashes,
the oil of joy
for mourning,
the garment of praise
for the spirit of heaviness,
that they might be called trees of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord,
that He might be glorified” (Isa. 61:2b-3).

This type of depression has laid heaviest on my heart. Do I dare make the connection that depression could be demonic? But I just can't escape what I have seen time and time again. As I said in point No. 2, unacknowledged trauma can take root. That root can manifest itself into a spirit of heaviness.

My personal experience with depression has been circumstantial. I dealt with postpartum depression after the birth of both of my children, and in that season of darkness, my eyes were opened to the struggle that so many people experience on a daily basis. Since then, I've had a very tender spot in my heart towards those that battle with

it.

In my conversations with those who struggle, I've noticed extreme differences in their descriptions of depression.

Now, of course, everyone's descriptions are slightly different, and I'm not claiming to be a certified counseling or psychiatrist, but that's why I can't just place everyone under the same umbrella of "depression." The circumstantial struggler will have their highs and lows, but they don't last nearly as long as the one with the root of heaviness.

And I can legitimately feel the difference when I am around someone who has a spirit of heaviness in their life.

Have you ever noticed your attitude change around someone who is a constant complainer? I have. After spending a couple of hours with those seemingly "negative Nancy" type of people, I too complain and find myself more negative.

This is the same with someone who is the "Debby Downer": You feel sad when you leave them. Why is that? It's a spirit. It's an attitude.

I'm not saying every person that struggles with depression is demonically oppressed. What I am saying, however, is that the enemy's schemes with our struggles through depression shouldn't be ignored.

And in Isaiah 61:3, we read clearly that Jesus came to bring a garment of praise for the "spirit of heaviness." In that verse, there are two descriptions for sadness: Those who mourn and those who have a spirit of heaviness. So, if it's in the Bible and Jesus came to bring freedom from it, we must take the word and use it as a mirror to reflect on our own lives.

What do we do? Ask the One who came to heal and set us free.

We do not serve a God who brings confusion; we serve a God who brings order and clarity. Our God redeems, restores and

reclaims. I can't promise to have all the answers, but I serve an omniscient God who knows all things, and in His fullness. He will lead us from grace to grace (John 1:16).

God has a mighty plan for the depression you experience. He does not plan to leave you trying to map out your life in the darkness. He will walk by your side (if you let Him) on this pilgrimage of life through all the peaks and the valleys. Acknowledging where you are and your deep need for Him is just the beginning of His beautiful plan. {eoa}

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