

Here's the Biblical Way to Overcome Anxiety and Depression

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America reports that depression affects 40 million adults in the United States, and that most people who struggle with anxiety also struggle with depression or vice versa. Why is this occurring?

Obviously, we live in a society with an increasing stressful lifestyle. We see the breakdown of families, weight of financial burdens, and unsettling turmoil in the world. The forms of entertainment steeped in violence, witchcraft and sexual perversion have great negative impact. (It is important to guard our entertainment choices.)

Sadly the more we take God, His love and His kingdom values out of culture, the more anxious, hopeless, depressed and full of worry people will become. He is the only true source of joy, peace and comfort. No human ingenuity or creativeness can fill the empty void that comes in God's absence.

Our English word *worry* comes from an Anglo-Saxon word that means "to strangle." The Bible term, *merimnao*, "to be anxious," also means "to be torn apart." Worry comes when the mind thinks about problems, and the resulting negative feelings in the heart pull us in a different direction creating a vicious cycle that tears us apart and strangles our emotions. If we want to enjoy peace this cycle must be broken.

Isaiah 61:3 says that those who mourn in Zion are appointed to exchange a spirit of heaviness for a garment of praise. God has not designed us to walk in a state of anxiety, depression, or hopelessness but in joy, praise, and victory!

So, what do we do when these strongholds take hold? As I

studied Psalms, I realized that David found victory. David had been anointed to become king. As a valiant teenage warrior he slew Goliath and delivered the children of Israel. He received incredible favor from King Saul, was made his armor-bearer, and was welcomed into the royal family. But Saul's favor turned to jealousy and double-mindedness.

David became Saul's enemy and spent years running from him. When the opportunity presented itself twice, David refused to harm Saul, while Saul continued to pursue David in order to kill him. I think we would agree these circumstances would cause many to fall into anxiety and depression. David's restraint not to kill Saul had to come from a deep place of trust in God.

In Psalm 42:5 we see David pressing beyond his circumstances and taking authority over his thoughts, and the resulting depression. "Why are you down in the dumps, dear soul? Why are you crying the blues? Fix my eyes on God—soon I'll be praising again. He puts a smile on my face. He's my God" (MSG).

David was in the kind of mental and emotional battle many of us face. Maybe we are not running for our lives, but we all face the battle of having to rise above what our negative emotions and thoughts attempt to dictate to us.

The beauty of our walk with God is that He has breathed His breath of life and His Father's heart of love into our spirit, filling us with His love, goodness, and authority. Realizing this, David spoke to his soul and directed it to hope in God. Then he chose to praise Him, which is key in overcoming warfare and obtaining victory.

Give Praise and Thanks

Setting your praise, gratitude and thanksgiving on Him will help immeasurably. Choose to audibly declare, praise and thank Him for the things He has done, and praise Him in advance for the things for which you are still awaiting a spiritual

breakthrough. Quickly you will experience His peace and presence.

When we praise Him for His goodness, one of the results is God affirming and instilling within us what I call “kingdom identities.” These are beliefs, attitudes and expectations that agree with what God says in His Word about our identity in Him.

How do we personally think on and walk in our kingdom identities? Make a list of the Scripture promises He highlights that focus on your identity as His beloved child; regularly practice declaring these aloud. The following Scriptures will aid the process:

- I can do everything through Him who gives me strength (Phil. 4:13).
- God is able to make all grace abound to me (2 Cor. 9:8).
- I am accepted by Christ (Rom. 15:7).
- I hunger and thirst after righteousness; I will be filled (Matt. 5:6).
- The anointing from God remains in me (1 John 2:27).
- I am a child of the heavenly Father (Gal. 4:5–7).
- I am an heir of God and a co-heir with Christ (Gal. 3:29; Rom. 8:17).
- I am attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13).
- I belong to God (1 Pet. 2:9).
- I have been called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9).
- I am blessed with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3).
- Christ is my life (Col. 3:4).
- I am free (Rom. 8:2).
- I am a friend of God (John 15:14–15).
- I am precious in God’s sight (Isa. 43:4).
- I lack no wisdom (James 1:5).
- I have power, love, and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7).
- I am not condemned (Rom. 8:1).

- I have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).
- I am favored (Ps. 5:12).
- I am God's handiwork (Eph. 2:10).
- God will never forsake me (Heb. 13:5).
- I have victory through Jesus (1 Cor. 15:57).

Becca Greenwood *is the co-founder and president of Christian Harvest International and Strategic Prayer Action Network (SPAN).*