

Pastor Nearly Died by Suicide Until God Intervened

If there's one thing that author and speaker Ben Courson wants struggling Christians to know it's that they're in good company.

"If you're a Christian and going through a depression, you are in a great succession," he recently told "The Pure Flix Podcast" while discussing his new book, *Optimisfits: Igniting a Fierce Rebellion Against Hopelessness*. "Depression is no stranger to people walking with the Lord."

And Courson should know. He said he suffered from chronic depression for 10 years—and attempted to take his own life on at least one occasion.

He hopes his book and ministry, Hope Generation, will help others on their journey to find peace and joy in Jesus Christ and the Lord.

Listen to him share his own journey with suicide:

"We've got to destigmatize depression. You don't have to live with depression; we are supposed to defeat depression," he said during his recent interview. "Why would we settle with depression? We have to go on a journey of hope."

His book comes at a very important time in our society as suicide and depression rates are at an all-time high. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, there are an average of 129 suicides a day, making suicide the 10th leading cause of death in America.

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"You are a more a danger to yourself, statistically.

Depression is a national epidemic. I spent ten years in depression and took a knife to try and kill myself," said Courson. "One of the main things that God used to get me out of depression was Psalm 37:4. You will have your nightmares and you will have your dreams. You will overcome your nightmares because of your dreams. And when you realize that your nightmares are preparatory for your dreams, then suddenly you can overcome anything."

Psalm 37:4 (NIV) reads, "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

Courson also talked about the destructive tendencies of social media and how it "can turn up the volume and destroy the interaction it was designed to enhance."

"We start to compare ourselves and that leads us to a place of public isolation," he said.

Courson said that his own depression was fueled by his attempt to live up to the expectations of others. But once he realized that he only had to follow his God-given dreams, he found peace and joy.

"I stopped trying to be this super somber, serious, sober saint that had all this gravitas," he said. "When I finally stopped apologizing for not being what other people expected and I brazenly chose to be who God made me to be, that's when the joy came out."

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His final message to Christians suffering from depression or suicidal thoughts is that "you are in a good succession," and he encouraged listeners to turn to the Bible and the Lord to seek out stories of other Christians who have suffered low self-worth but have persevered and found their meaning in God.

“Depression is no stranger to those walking with the Lord. We are the No. 1 most depressed generation on record in history. Antidepressants are the best-selling pharmaceuticals,” he said. “But our greatest strength is hope. Our generation is finally waking up to the fact that we are depressed, and we see so many hope leaders rising up to fight these statistics.”

For more uplifting content, tune into the Pure Flix Podcast airing once a week right here. {eoa}

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