

Depression

Key Verse

"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18 (ESV)

Basic Biblical Understanding

In his namesake book, Job lies in the dust and longs for death. He feels cut off from normal life and can't see how things will ever get better. Sleep torments him with fitful nightmares or eludes him altogether. Worst of all, Job yearns for God and can't seem to find Him.

If you're familiar with these emotions, you know depression at its worst. You may forget to eat (Psalm 102:4), become physically ill (Psalm 102:5) or cry often or for no apparent reason (Psalm 42:3). You may feel lethargic and uninterested in life. You may feel as though life has knocked you down, and you are being submerged by wave upon wave, unable to breathe or get your footing (Psalm 42:7).

Depression may be triggered by traumatic events, medical issues, or not believing or misapplying the Bible. Sometimes there is no trigger. When there are medical causes to depression, medication can be prayerfully considered. We should also evaluate our lives for good habits in sleep, eating, exercise, and time management. Most importantly, allowing the Bible to shape our response to our depression keeps us focused on God and guards us from sin such as anger, self-pity, and anxiety.

Even in depression, the Bible tells us to seek God first above all else (Matthew 6:33) because we were created for relationship with Him. We seek God by studying His Word, praying, obeying, thanking and singing praises to Him, and spending time with other believers. Depression makes us not want to do these things. But as we act in faith, God will often move us from despair to hope, slowly, over time. Knowing that we can't do anything without His help (John 15:5), we must ask God to help us love Him.

We must also ask God to make His promises real to us. We feel desperate, yet Christ has given us a future (1 Corinthians 2:9). We feel overwhelmed, yet God keeps the floods from washing us away (Psalm 124:2–5). We don't feel close to God, yet He is near to the broken-hearted (Psalm 34:18). We are afraid of slipping through the cracks, yet God will never leave us nor forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:8).

Even now, God "keeps account of your tossings" and holds your "tears in a bottle" (Psalm 56:8, NASB). Depression feels hopeless, but it isn't pointless. God has a purpose, and you are always upheld by His loving arms.

Verses (ask God to show you how they apply to your life)

- "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer." 2 Samuel 22:2 (ESV)
- "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5–6 (ESV)
- "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous hand." Isaiah 41:10 (ESV)
- "Casting all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7 (ESV)

Helpful Questions and Application

1. Are you letting God's Word shape your response to your depression?
2. How are you seeking God in the midst of your depression? Is God leading you to do anything differently?
3. What promises of God can you hold on to?

Additional Resources

Scripture references: Psalm 40:1–3, Romans 8:35–39, Philippians 4:6–7

WordTruth articles: ["Trusting in God in Trials Out of Our Control"](#)
["Don't Lose Heart"](#)