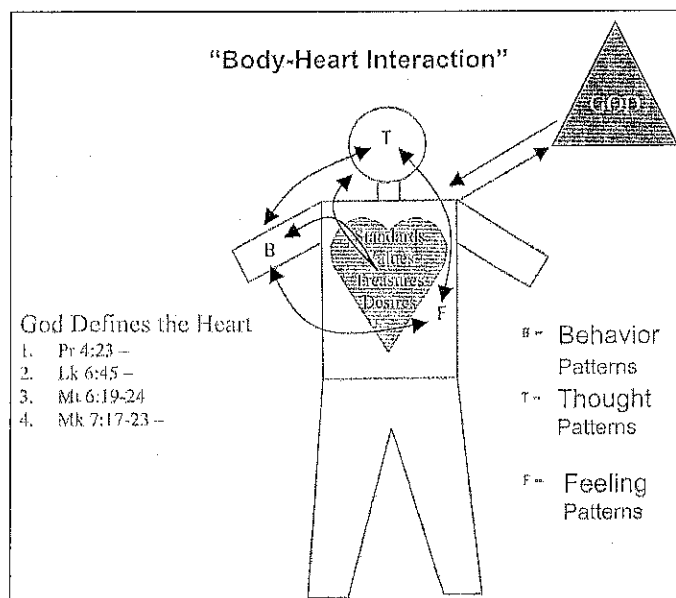


COUNSELING MYSELF WHEN I'M STRUGGLING WITH DEPRESSION

I. Understanding depression in biblical categories

A. Depression must be understood in the light of creation.

1. The *heart* is the initiator of lifestyle choices (Pr 4:23). The *body* is the instrument it uses to achieve expression in the world (Ro 6:11-13; Mt 12:34).



2. Both body and heart can be involved in depression (Ps 32; 38).

a. The *physical* expressions of depression include:

Changes in appetite patterns, changes in sleeping patterns, reduced concentration, fatigue, reduced sexual desire, etc.

b. The *spiritual* expressions of depression include:

Feeling overwhelmed, irritability, self-pity, hopelessness, grief, sense of failure, ingratitude, guilt, etc.

B. Depression must be understood in the light of the Fall and redemption.

1. The Fall introduced *decay* into the creation (Ro 8:20-21). Therefore, our bodies are subject to various kinds of “weaknesses.”
2. Redemption introduces *spiritual growth* in our life, therefore, even though our bodies are subject to decay, our hearts can be changed by the Holy Spirit (Eze 36:26,27; 2Co 3:18; 4:16).

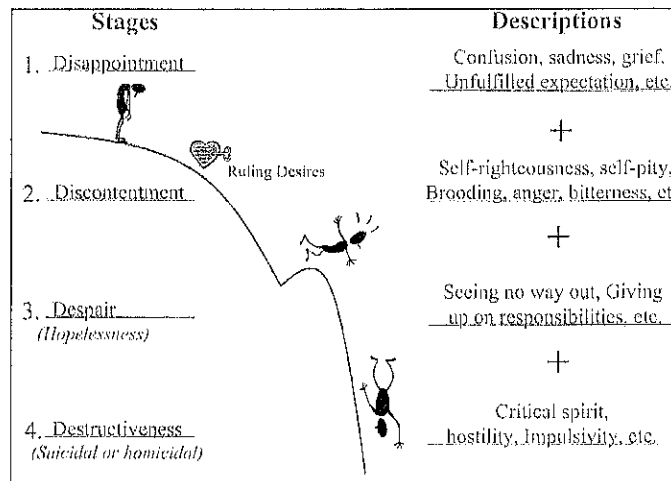
*** Experiencing the physical expressions of depression does not necessarily mean experiencing the spiritual expressions as well.*

II. Counseling myself biblically

A. Is my struggle rooted in a bodily “weakness?”

1. Is there any medical evidence of a *neurological* problem, such as Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, or multiple sclerosis?
2. Is there any medical evidence of a *hormonal* problem, such as PMS, hypothyroidism, or pancreatic cancer?
3. Is there any suspicion of a reaction to (or interaction between) *illicit drug(s)*, such as amphetamines or cocaine?
4. Is there any suspicion of a reaction to (or interactions between) *prescription drug(s)*, such as cardiac, blood pressure, or antibiotic medicines?

B. Is my struggle rooted in spiritual “weakness” (in my heart)?



1. Address *disappointment* by rehearsing the biblical perspective that leads to acceptance of God's providence. Some passages to consider:

a. Job 1-2

"Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

b. Habakkuk 1-3

"Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines...yet I will rejoice"

c. Ro 8:12-39

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

c. 1Thessalonians 4:13-18

"Brothers we do not want you to...grieve like the rest of men who have no hope."

2. Address *ruling desires* by evaluating them and submitting to the will of God as revealed in Scripture. This stops the downward progression on the "slippery slope." Some passages to consider:

a. Jas 1:13-15

"...each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed."

b. Gal 5:16-22

"...live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

c. 1Pe 4:1-6

"...he does not live the rest of his life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God."

3. Address *discontentment* by inviting conviction that prompts repentance.
Some passages to consider:

a. Ps 73

"...though I was senseless and ignorant."

b. 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

"And do not grumble, as some of them did..."

4. Address *despair* by embracing perseverance prompted by hope.
Some passages to consider:

a. Jas 1:12

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial."

b. Ro 5:1-5

"...but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance...and character, hope."

c. 1Pe 1:3-9

"In his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope...though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials."

5. Address *destructiveness* by calling for help.

C. Have a strategy for coaching yourself toward the appropriate goals. For example:

1. Structured journaling can uncover patterns of thought and behavior associated with disappointment, ruling desires, discontentment, or despair.

2. Bible study can uncover God's perspective, leading to acceptance of God's providence, repentance, hope, and personal responsibility.

3. Ungodly thoughts/attitudes (from the journal) should be replaced with biblical alternatives (from the Bible study).

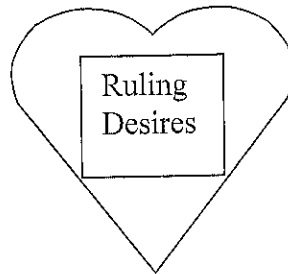
4. Irresponsibility should be replaced with a workable plan to resume daily tasks.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF
SPIRITUALLY-ROOTED DEPRESSION**

Dr. Jeff Forrey, Dean of Counseling/Trinity Seminary, IN

DISAPPOINTMENT

(Hurt; Regret; Dissatisfaction; Disillusionment; Frustration)



**Whatever rules our heart shows up as
our first reaction to a hurt or disappointment.
Here is when we learn what we truly worship.**

DISCONTENTMENT

(Anger; Annoyance; Irritation; Disapproval; Unhappiness)

DESPAIR

(Hopelessness; Gloom; Dejection {sadness}; Depression; Despondency)

DESTRUCTION

(Damage; Ruin; Devastation)

**THE DEFEAT OF
SPIRITUALLY-ROOTED DEPRESSION**

Jim Phillips/Pastor of Community Care/North Hills Community Church/Taylors, SC

DISAPPOINTMENT

(Hurt; Regret; Dissatisfaction; Disillusionment; Frustration)

Proverbs 3:5-6; Romans 12:12; James 5:7-11; 1 Peter 4:8;



**Whatever rules our heart shows up as
our first reaction to a hurt or disappointment.
Here is when we learn what we truly worship.**

CONTENTMENT

(Satisfaction; Fulfillment; Completion)

Philippians 4:4-13; Hebrews 13:5

HOPE

(Trust; Conviction; Confidence; Expect; Anticipate)

Job 13:15; Psalm 39:7; 42:5; 119:81; **Romans 8:12-30**; 1 Timothy 4:7-10; Hebrews 10:19-25;
11:1; 1 Peter 3:8-17; 2 Peter 3:8-9; 1 John 3:2-3

CONSTRUCTION

(Build; Edify; Encourage; Create; Raise Up)

Acts 20:31-32; Ephesians 4:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Peter 2:1-5