**Depression**

Depression means feeling “pressed down”; an emotional heaviness that weighs down the heart. Depression usually occurs as a result of something that causes the heart to feel pain. It is normal and natural for depression to occur for a ***reasonable duration of time*** when the heart is pressed down by a situation or circumstance but it will then naturally “bounce back”. A ***state of depression*** is a psychological state that occurs when the heart doesn’t “bounce back” naturally but stays pressed down for a long period of time and is unable to experience joy. This state of depression makes one feel trapped under a dark cloud of sadness, guilt, grief, and hopelessness. These emotions can range in degrees but regardless of the degree of depression and darkness God wants us to rely on Him.

**4 Types of Depression**

1. **Situational Depression** – Reactive, natural depression based on a reaction to a painful situation. The heart will bounce back from this naturally with time.
2. **Masked Depression** – A hidden depression based on something painful that is being suppressed (or masked) that causes a state of depression. It is injuring sadness based upon unresolved buried conflict. This depression needs to be confronted, talked about, and released to God. Often times this depression has to do with pain from our past and childhood that has been denied, covered up, and suppressed. Recovery takes longer due to the failure to work through the pain. The following Proverb reminds us of the need to release the suppressed pain and sadness to the Lord and not mask or hold onto it.
   * *Proverbs 14:13 – Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.*
3. **Neurotic Depression** – Depressive disorder, clinical depression. It’s an ongoing state of depression that lasts much longer than the natural timeframe expected for emotional recovery. Can result from divorce, death of a loved one, loss of work, loss of finances, retirement, etc. It interrupts the normal living of life, not being able to live life in a healthy way. This requires ongoing supervision or therapy.
4. **Psychotic Depression** – Most severe form of depression and is based on a loss of contact with reality. This is when a person experiences a psychotic break having broken from reality. This is an “unipolar” form of depression referring to the extreme state of deep depression. This differs from “bipolar” depression in that there isn’t the other state, or manic state. Often requires medication.

**Depression – A Tool of Satan**

Depression is a tool often used by the enemy. The intention is to attack our self-esteem. The following is a list of the common tools used by the enemy against us.

* Negativity
* Depression
* Anger
* Rebellion – Against the Word of God

**5 Ways to Counteract Depression**

We are three-part beings; body, soul (mind, will, emotions), and spirit. For this reason, if you are suffering from prolonged depression, you will want to explore all three of these areas to see if you can identify the source of your depression:

**Body**

* Get a physical check-up from your doctor. See if the depression could be the cause of hormonal imbalances, side effects to medications, a developing disease, or other.
* Get plenty of sleep (only during the REM cycle does the brain produces serotonin that alleviates depression).
* Maintain an active schedule that includes work, time with family and friends, service to others, exercise, and so on.
* Reduce stress in your life (e.g., caress your pet, laugh more, volunteer, end toxic relationships, and so on)
* Eat a healthy diet and exercise (at a minimum walking for 20 minutes a day).

**Soul (Mind)**

* What we dwell on and think about affects our state of being. Practicing gratitude and thankfulness is one way to shift out of negative thinking. See the Negative Self-Talk lesson for more details on how to reframing negative self-talk.
* Guard your mind. Have control over your thoughts. Push away negative/ungodly thoughts, as this is how Satan gains a foothold on our minds. Stay away from anything that blanks out your mind such as mediation, hypnosis, and so on. Pray and strengthen your mind with the Word of God (read the Bible daily!!)
  + *Philippians 4:8 – Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

**Soul (Will)**

* Resist being overtaken by despair and discouragement. Do not let your heart be troubled but rather trust in God.
* Resist indifference, sloth, and feeling a “lack of desire” for and to do anything.
* Keep your environment clean, uncluttered, free of occult/demonic items, bright, and cheerful. Listen to uplifting music. Have fresh flowers in the home.
* Beware of falling into addictive behaviors such as watching too much TV/internet, drinking/drugs, over eating, gambling, and so on.
* Learn what the “will of God” is for your life and practice living according to that (…”not my will Lord but thy will be done.)

**Soul (Emotions)**

* Confront all the losses in your life and GRIEVE them. When we grieve we HEAL.
  + *Ecclesiastes 3:4 - There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.*
* Practice forgiveness. Extend grace and forgiveness to yourself and others daily.

**Spirit**

* Be renewed in the spirit. Grow in your identity in Christ. Walk in newness of life.
  + *2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*
* Exchange your hurt for thanksgiving. Give thanks in ALL circumstances for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Thank God for what you are going to learn through this circumstance/trial.
* Remember God’s authority over your life. He promises hope for your future. God plans to make us more than conquerors.

***Pray – “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.”***