

# Depression

## Walking from Darkness into the Dawn

### A. What Is Depression?

If you place a heavy iron on a heart-shaped pillow filled with foam rubber, the buoyant pillow will become pressed down—"de-pressed." But the next day, if you remove the iron, the pillow will pop back up to its original form. However, if you wait six months to remove the iron, the pillow will not return to its original shape. Instead, the pillow will remain flat and *depressed*. A pillow, which can sustain temporary pressure, is not designed to hold its shape for a long time under heavy pressure.

The same is true for the human heart. When "pressed down" due to normal pressure from normal situations (*situational depression*), your heart is designed by God to rebound once the pressure is removed. However, if you live under the weight of heavy pressure for long periods of time, your heart can enter into a "state" of [depression](#). Realize, Jesus cares about your heart and knows that you are especially vulnerable when you are heavy-hearted. That is why He gives this word of caution . . .

[Luke 21:34](#)

- **Depression** literally means a condition of being "pressed down" to a lower position (as in a footprint).<sup>3</sup>
- **Depression** can refer to a state of decline and reduced activity (as in an "economic depression").<sup>4</sup>
- **Depression** can describe an emotional heaviness that weighs down the heart. The apostle Paul used the Greek word *bareo*, which means "pressed or weighed down," to describe the immense emotional pressure and severe hardships that he and Timothy suffered at the hands of those who opposed Christ.<sup>5</sup>

[2 Cor 1:8-9](#)

## B. What Is Depression in the World of Psychology?

In ancient writings, the earliest reference to what is meant by our word depression was the word *melancholia* (literally "black bile"). The assumption was that the melancholy person had an excess of black bile, which resulted in depression. In the second century AD, the physician Aretaeus referred to his melancholy patients as "sad, dismayed, sleepless . . . . They become thin by their agitation and loss of refreshing sleep . . . . At a more advanced state, they complain of a thousand futilities and desire death."<sup>6</sup>

Even today *melancholia* is defined as "a mental condition characterized by extreme depression, bodily complaints, and often hallucinations and delusions."<sup>7</sup>

For those [suffering](#) during this dark night of the soul, it could be said . . .

[Job 24:17](#)

- **Depression** is the psychological term pertaining to the mental, emotional, and behavioral characteristics of a depressed person. (Psychology is the study of the mind as it relates to thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, focusing on why people think, feel, and act as they do.)<sup>8</sup> For example, those engulfed in the dark waves of [depression](#) feel desperately alone and often blame God for their plight.

[Ps 88:18](#)

- **Depression** is a psychological state in which the heart is pressed down and unable to experience joy. Those [suffering](#) with [depression](#) feel trapped underneath a dark, pervasive canopy of sadness, [grief](#), [guilt](#), and [hopelessness](#).

[Job 5:14](#)

- **Depression** is a psychological condition that impacts the whole person: body (the physical), soul (the mind, will, and emotions), and spirit (the source of our deepest inner needs). Many who are depressed feel as though this verse describes them . . .

[Eccl 5:17](#)

- **Depression** is an umbrella term that covers feelings ranging from discouragement to despair.<sup>9</sup> No matter the degree of darkness,

the Lord wants to us to rely on Him to provide light.

[Ps 18:28](#)

## C.What Are Four Different Degrees of Depression?

Although independent of one another, these four categories show an escalating intensity of [depression](#). In general, we could divide [depression](#) into two categories: *situational* and *chemical*. ***Situational Depression*** exists when a painful situation presses the heart down for a period of time. ***Chemical Depression*** can occur when your body chemistry does not function properly. A person can have both types of [depression](#) at the same time. During these heavy-hearted times when [hope](#) seems elusive, emotions feel flat and the heart feels sick. Solomon, the wise author of the Book of Proverbs, explains that . . .

[Prov 13:12](#)

(The four types described below are not listed in this order in a diagnostic manual. They are intended to show the increasing negative impact of [depression](#).)

### **#1 Normal Depression . . .**

- Is sometimes called *Situational Depression* or *Reactive Depression*
- Is an *involuntary* sadness based on a reaction to painful life situations

—**Normal problems** of life press down the heart for a short period of time (for example, rejection, [failure](#), illness).

—**Transitional stages** of life often press down the heart (for example, [adolescence](#), empty nest, midlife crises, major moves, menopause, retirement).<sup>10</sup>

When severe troubles fell upon God's servant Job (the [death](#) of all his children, the destruction of all his possessions), one of his friends observed Job's understandable [depression](#).

[Job 4:5](#)

## #2 Masked Depression . . .

- Is hidden [depression](#) (for example, repressed memories of physical, sexual, verbal, or [emotional abuse](#))
- Is a state of enduring sadness based on unresolved, **buried** [conflict](#)

—Painful feelings are denied or covered up; therefore, recovery takes longer because of [failure](#) to [work](#) through the pain.

—Relief from emotional pain is unconsciously found in excessive busyness, activities, addictions, or other alternatives.

The Bible describes how hidden hurts still result in heartache. . . .

[Prov 14:13](#)

## #3 Neurotic Depression . . .

- Is a minor mental and emotional *Depressive Disorder* classified as *Adjustment Disorder with Depressed Mood*,<sup>11</sup> meaning that the

depression results from failure to adjust to a distressing situation

—A person with neurosis has a disorder, meaning that normal activities of daily living are impaired.

—A person with any *Depressive Disorder* has "clinical depression"—the need for diagnosis and treatment based on direct, ongoing observation.

- Is a *prolonged* state of sadness lasting longer than the normal time frame expected for emotional recovery—based on "stressors" (for example, loss of an endeared relationship, a financial or work crisis, retirement)

—Symptoms interfere with normal work and social functioning.

—The cause can usually be traced to an identifiable, precipitating event.

The Psalms reflect the pain of prolonged sorrow. . . .

[Ps 13:2](#)

#### **#4 *Psychotic Depression* . . .**

- Is the most severe type of depression under the classification *Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)*
- Is based on dissociation or a loss of contact with reality

—A psychosis is an extreme state of depression.

—A psychosis is usually accompanied by hallucinations and/or delusions, making those who are psychotic a potential danger to themselves and/or others.

Those afflicted with a psychotic [depression](#) can identify with the terror, despair, and skewed perspective described in this Psalm.<sup>12</sup> . . .

[Ps 102:3-4,7,9,11](#)

## D. What Are the Three Divisions of Mood Disorders?

Every year, new maladies, as well as new medicines, come on the scene. So, how "new" is [depression](#)? As far back as the fourth century BC, the famous physician Hippocrates gave the first clinical description of "melancholia," including the erratic mood swings of what is called *Bipolar Disorder* today. Yet over 500 years earlier, the psalmist King David gave this vivid description of his emotions during one of the most severe storms in his life . . .

[Ps 55:2,4-8](#)

### **#1 Depressive Disorders**, also called *Unipolar Depression*

- *Unipolar* is primarily characterized by one extreme, emotionally-low state of [depression](#).
- *Unipolar* (**uni** = one, **polar** = pole) refers to "one extreme end."
- *Unipolar Depression* is the most common type of *Mood Disorder*.
- *Unipolar* in the psychological community is subdivided into three types:<sup>13</sup> *Major Depression Disorder (MDD)*, *Dysthymic*

*Disorder, and Depressive Disorder Not Otherwise Specified.*

When there is continual depression, those with distressed hearts could understandably pray . . .

[Ps 31:9](#)

## **#2 Bipolar Disorders**, formerly called *Manic-Depression*

- *Bipolar Disorders* are characterized by alternating patterns of extreme emotional highs and lows—mania and [depression](#).
- *Bipolar* (**bi** = two, **polar** = pole) refers to "two opposite ends."
- *Bipolar* episodes of *mania* (an excessively elevated mood) can appear positive and productive to outsiders; however, true mania is negative because it usually leads to destructive decision-making, such as buying sprees, impulsive decisions, reckless driving, foolish investments, and immoral behavior.
- *Bipolar* is subdivided into four types:<sup>14</sup> *Bipolar I Disorder, Bipolar II Disorder, Cyclothymia, and Bipolar Disorder Not Otherwise Specified.*

When the heart is distressed because of a bipolar [disorder](#), it can be natural to cry out to God for help as the psalmist did . . . .

[Ps 77:1-4](#)

## **#3 Mood Disorders** Based on Etiology<sup>15</sup>

- The word *etiology* means "cause" or "origin."<sup>16</sup>
- The first type of etiological [depression](#) is:

**—Mood Disorder Due to a General Medical Condition**

This means that the **unhealthy** changes in the body due to illness *cause psychological depression*. For example, 20-40 percent of those with a neurological condition (Parkinson's, Huntington's and Alzheimer's diseases, Multiple Sclerosis, and/or stroke) develop a marked [depression](#) during illness.<sup>17</sup>

- The second type of etiological [depression](#) is:

**—Substance-Induced Mood Disorder**

This means that something entering the body causes [depression](#). The substance could be medication, drugs, or exposure to a toxin (for example, alcohol, sedatives, birth control pills, medications to treat various diseases such as Parkinson's).

No matter the cause, the depressed person feels . . .

[Ps 38:8](#)

## E. Is Depression the Result of Sin?

This question cannot be answered with a simple *yes* or *no*. Although some people believe the answer is always *yes*, the accurate answer is sometimes *yes* and sometimes *no*.

- **Depression is not a result of sin when . . .**
  - Your heart grieves over normal losses. The Bible says,

### Eccl 3:4

- Your body experiences natural deterioration due to the passing of years. Your body chemistry can change and become compromised. The Bible says,

### 2 Cor 4:16

- **Depression can be a result of sin when . . .**

- You are depressed over the consequences of your sinful actions, and you don't attempt to change.
- You don't take the necessary steps for healing (seeking biblical counseling, memorizing Scriptures, reading [Christian](#) materials, getting medical help when appropriate).
- You hold on to self-pity, [anger](#), and bitterness when you have been wronged, instead of choosing to forgive.

### James 4:17

- You use your [depression](#) to manipulate others.
- You continually choose to blame God and others for your unhappiness.
- You are depressed because you choose to let others control you instead of choosing to obey Christ and allow Him to be in control of you.

—When we take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner ([1 Cor 11:30](#)).

## Depiction of Jonah's Depression

### Book of Jonah

Jonah's bout with [depression](#) is an example of *situational depression* that occurs as a direct result of [sin](#). Jonah is a man called by God. Yet he ends up angry, pouting, and in the depths of [depression](#). How does Jonah become so deeply depressed?

- **Chapter 1: *Disobedience***

Jonah is called by the Lord to preach God's truth to the godless people of Nineveh. But Jonah rebels and boards a ship going in a different direction. When Jonah's disobedience brings repercussions on the ship's crew, he is rejected and literally thrown overboard.

- **Chapter 2: *Dread***

Recognizing that the judgment of God is upon him to the point of losing his life (inside the belly of a great fish), Jonah cries out for mercy ([Jonah 2:2](#)). The Lord extends mercy and spares his life.

- **Chapter 3: *Declaration***

Jonah resigns himself to obey God's call. He declares God's truth, and all the godless people of Nineveh repent.

- **Chapter 4: *Depression***

Jonah becomes angry with God for extending mercy to those whom Jonah doesn't deem worthy of mercy. Ultimately, he plunges into a severe [depression](#) in

which he is consumed with bitterness and despair to the extent of wanting to die ([Jonah 4:3](#)).

Then, filled with seething [anger](#) and self-pity, he makes this brief, poignant statement:

[Jonah 4:9](#)

## CHARACTERISTICS OF DEPRESSION

Were there any *clues* to the seriousness of Andrea Yates' mental [depression](#)? After she drowned her five little children, the media quickly learned that this rigidly religious family had been dealing with Andrea's severe [depression](#) for several years. Twice in 1999 she had attempted [suicide](#). And because of her severe *postpartum depression* following the birth of their fourth son, the couple was also advised to have no more children . . . yet a fifth child was born.

The Yates' tragedy is certainly not the norm, and although many people become seriously despondent, the majority of those who experience major [depression](#) will never commit acts that result in [death](#). Yet Andrea continued to spiral down to even lower depths with frequent thoughts of self-destruction. At this point in her paralyzing [depression](#), she could not accept the truth that . . .

[Eccl 9:4](#)

### A. What Is the Dialogue of the Depressed?

Those who struggle in the darkness of [depression](#) have difficulty seeing good in their lives . . . especially in themselves. They often look at life through a "black

filter." The photographer who uses a black lens takes a picture during the daytime, but the final photograph appears to be a night scene. When the depressed see life through their black filter, they feel helpless about their situations, hatred toward themselves, and hopeless over their future. If you are walking in the darkness of [depression](#), you need to focus on the light of the Lord and know that He intimately cares. In this Psalm, you can see how David chose to change his focus . . . .

[Ps 142:4-5](#)

## B. What Are Depressive and Manic Symptoms?

- **Depressed persons** display sad, discouraged, joyless dispositions. **Major Depressive Episodes** involve five or more of the following classic symptoms nearly every day for at least two weeks:<sup>18</sup>
  - Pervasive depressed mood
  - Diminished pleasure in usual activities
  - Significant change in appetite or weight
  - Fatigue or loss of energy
  - Diminished ability to think clearly, evaluate, or concentrate
  - Slower or more agitated movements
  - Too little or too much sleep

- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive [guilt](#)
- suicidal thoughts/attempts
- **Manic persons** display unfounded, euphoric dispositions coupled with various acts of abnormally poor judgment. **Manic Episodes** occur when three or more of the following classic symptoms, not normal for the person, last for at least one week:
  - Inflated ego
  - Racing thoughts
  - Easily distracted
  - Excessive talk
  - Sudden distraction
  - Decreased need for sleep
  - Increased [obsession](#) on a goal
  - Excessive involvement in pleasures that risk negative consequences<sup>19</sup>
- **Bipolar persons** display occurrences of both **Manic and Depressive Episodes**.

### Characteristics of King Saul

The extreme emotional and behavioral swings of King Saul are similar to many symptoms of those with a *Bipolar Disorder*. At times, Saul appeared to have alternating episodes of mania and [depression](#).<sup>20</sup>

His is a tragic tale of a man with immense power and potential, but without [wisdom](#) and [self-control](#). At his best, Saul was confident, commanding, and charismatic. At his worst, Saul was vain, vile, and vindictive. He

earned the respect of the entire nation of Israel for his triumph over three enemy nations. But he also earned the rejection of God as His appointed king because of his [failure](#) to obey the Lord. The prophet Samuel spoke this sobering truth to Saul,

[1 Sam 15:22-23](#)

## **Characteristics of Mania**

- **Irritability**

- **Saul disobeyed God because of impatience**

Being irritated that the prophet Samuel had not arrived to offer the designated sacrifice before battle, Saul became impatient and offered the sacrifice himself. After Samuel arrived, Saul voiced his excuse ([1 Sam 13:11-12](#)). Saul's decision disobeyed the clear command of God.

- **Poor judgment**

- **Saul forbade his army to eat in battle**

Saul's army was in distress because Saul had bound his troops to an oath, making his men weak ([1 Sam 14:24](#)).

- **Excessive pleasures**

- **Saul kept excessive battle spoils**

God told Saul to completely destroy the enemy as well as their possessions; however, Saul kept the forbidden battle spoils ([1 Sam 15:7-11](#)).

- **Inflated [self-esteem](#)**

- **Saul erected a statue of himself**

Although he went early to meet with Saul, Samuel was told of Saul's clear act of grandiosity ([1 Sam 15:12](#)).

- **Easily distracted**

— **Saul became distracted by Israeli women's song**

When his men were returning from battle, rather than focusing on the victory, Saul was easily distracted by what the women were singing. Although the refrain was meant to honor the troops, it brought frequent irritability upon Saul ([1 Sam 18:8-9](#)).

- **Excessive focus on a goal**

— **Saul became obsessed with the goal to kill David**

Initially, Saul liked David very much. However, as he noticed David's growing favor with the Lord and with the people, his [attitude](#) changed. Saul's son Jonathan tried in vain to protect his [friend](#) David, but Saul continued to enact plans against David's life ([1 Sam 16:21; 18:28-29; 19:4,6,11](#)).

- **Racing thoughts**

— **Saul entertained thoughts to kill the son he loved**

To determine whether his father was planning to kill David, Jonathan excused David from the king's presence, which made Saul furious. In his [anger](#), Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan to kill the one he loved ([1 Sam 20:31-33](#)).

- **Unfounded, euphoric mood**

— **Saul presumed he had the Lord's favor**

In the midst of Saul's elevated mood, Saul presumed God to have handed David over to him. But Saul's presumption was dead wrong ([1 Sam 23:7-8](#)).

**Characteristics of Depression**

- **Discouragement, dismay, [hopelessness](#)**

— **Saul lost [hope](#) in the face of [fear](#)**

Although God had delivered Saul in many battles, he was terrified when his army was challenged by the Philistine giant Goliath. Clearly God had anointed Saul as king, yet he continued to battle debilitating [fear](#) and [hopelessness](#). Later, when Saul was again challenged by the Philistines [fear](#) filled his heart ([1 Sam 17:11; 28:5](#)).

- **Diminished pleasure in usual activities**

— **Saul no longer enjoyed David's harp**

Often David soothed Saul's troubled spirit by playing the harp. However, this joy didn't last as Saul later tried to kill David as he was playing ([1 Sam 16:23; 19:9-10](#))!

- **Increased irritability**

— **Saul flew into angry outbursts**

Saul tried to pin David to the wall with his spear without any provocation whatsoever ([1 Sam 18:10-11](#)).

- **Unrealistic negative evaluations**

— **Saul accused his men of treason**

In his attempt to find and kill David, Saul made unjust accusations toward his son and innocent countrymen, ([1 Sam 22:7-8](#)).

- **Exaggerated Frustration**

— **Saul put his confronter to [death](#)**

When Saul falsely accused a priest who innocently helped David, the priest sought to reason with Saul. But in denial, Saul instead condemned both the priest and his whole family to [death](#) ([1 Sam 22:14,16](#)).

- **Sad, discouraged, pessimistic**

— **Saul bemoaned his fate and feared David**

Saul learned that David had spared his life. With periodic, overwhelming sadness, Saul expressed his dread of the future ([1 Sam 24:20-21](#)).

- **Loss of appetite**
  - **Saul refused to eat**

Saul was in such a depressed state that he refused to eat ([1 Sam 28:23](#)).

- **Suicidal thoughts or attempts**
  - **Saul took his own life**

Upon receiving a critical wound in battle and being unable to persuade his armor-bearer to kill him, Saul fell on his own sword ([1 Sam 31:4](#)).

**Q "Does taking medicine for depression show a lack of faith in God?"**

No. Various physical conditions can contribute to [depression](#). For example, in bipolar and postpartum [depression](#), a biochemical imbalance exists that can basically be treated successfully with medication. Unfortunately, many Christians [fear](#) being labeled unspiritual if they seek medical help for their [depression](#), yet by doing nothing, they can suffer needlessly.

Sometimes medication is needed for a period of time to "level out" mountainous swings so that those in the throes of [depression](#) can see truth and walk on level ground. [Ezek 47:12](#) explains that God made "*leaves for healing*." Therefore, medicine is biblical. However, medicine should be used, not to numb the pain or to escape it, but to help a person process the pain. Additionally, medication should be the last avenue—

tried only after all other steps have been taken—and always in conjunction with counseling.

## A. What Are *Physical* Contributors to Depression?

Andrea Yates had been suicidal, hospitalized, and recently taken off the very medications that had been helpful to her. Because of the wide hormonal changes in her body after delivery, that deficit contributed to her plunging head first into *postpartum psychosis* (a break with reality).<sup>25</sup>

Tragically, many mothers with postpartum psychosis are consumed with thoughts of [death](#) to their babies and destruction of themselves. They could have written these words . . .

[Ps 18:4-5](#)

### **Six Physical Contributors to Depression<sup>26</sup>**

#### **#1 Hormonal imbalance**

"Can [depression](#) be caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain?" This frequently asked question is answered with an unquestionable yes! For example, *hormonal changes* during [puberty](#), postpartum (after childbirth), and peri-menopause (around menopause) can lead to [depression](#).

#### **#2 Medications and drugs**

Certain legal and illegal drugs can cause [depression](#), such as analgesics, antidepressants, steroids, contraceptives, and cardiac medications.

### **#3 Chronic illnesses**

Medical problems such as a *thyroid deficiency* and even a bout with the flu can cause chemical imbalances in the brain, which, in turn, can cause [depression](#).

### **#4 Melancholy temperament**

Orderly, gifted, and creative, the person with a melancholy temperament can, at the same time, be moody, overly sensitive, and self-deprecating. Because those with this temperament are analytical, critical, and hard to please, they can take everything too seriously or too personally, quickly becoming depressed over circumstances or the slightest imperfection in themselves or others.

### **#5 Improper food, rest, exercise**

A deficiency in the physical basics of life can contribute to a chronic sense of fatigue, lack of energy, and social withdrawal.

### **#6 Genetic vulnerability**

Based on statistical data, those with depressed family members are two times more vulnerable to [depression](#) than those with no family history of [depression](#).<sup>27</sup>

Likewise, "50% of those with bipolar have at least one [parent](#) with the [disorder](#)."<sup>28</sup>

If you are concerned about [depression](#), then learn what you can about your family history and your treatment options. Learning as much as possible about your health issues is essential.

[Prov 14:15](#)

## Q "Why do twice as many women have depression as men?"<sup>29</sup>

Women produce only one-half the amount of serotonin as men; however, *estrogen in women multiplies the amount of serotonin to equal the level in men*. The challenge occurs at three specific times—prior to a woman's menstrual cycle, after childbirth, and around menopause—when estrogen levels drop, sometimes severely. If a woman's estrogen level is not sufficient to multiply serotonin, she experiences a depletion of serotonin, which can cause [depression](#). This is one reason why many women receive Estrogen Replacement Therapy (ERT) and why other women consult their physicians in order to feel "whole" again. Jesus said,

[Matt 9:12](#)

## B. What Are Emotional Contributors of Depression?

Some people say, "Depression is [anger](#) turned *inward*." That statement is not always true, but it is true when [anger](#) is *repressed*. *Repression* occurs when unacceptable desires and emotions are blocked from a person's awareness and left to operate in the unconscious mind.<sup>33</sup> This *stuffed* [anger](#) or *swallowed* [anger](#) causes *masked depression* and keeps underlying bitterness from being exposed. Bitterness is a major cause of [depression](#) because we feel totally alone in our bitterness.

Prov 14:10

- **Do you have repressed anger over . . . ?**
  - **Loss** of a loved one
  - **Loss** of expectations
  - **Loss** of self-esteem
  - **Loss** of respect for others
  - **Loss** of control
  - **Loss** of health or abilities
  - **Loss** of possessions
  - **Loss** of personal goals

If so, the Bible says,

Eph 4:31

- **Do you have suppressed fear of . . . ?**
  - Losing a job
  - Abandonment
  - Dying
  - Growing old
  - Empty nest
  - Being alone
  - Failure
  - Rejection

If so, the Bible says,

Isa 41:10

- **Do you have internalized stress over . . . ?**
  - Work difficulties

- Financial obligations
- Relocation
- Family responsibilities
- Marital problems
- Troubled child
- Workload
- Alcoholic spouse

If so, the Bible says,

[1 Peter 5:7](#)

Even our deep disappointments must be resolved or else our bitterness will cause trouble, and unresolved [anger](#) and bitterness will hurt those close to us.

[Heb 12:15](#)

## D. What Are Spiritual Sources of Depression?

Just as there are physical, emotional, and mental reasons for [depression](#), there are also spiritual reasons for a despairing heart. Disobedience and [guilt](#) provide enough fertile seed to turn any white cloud into a dark storm. You can't harbor the [guilt](#) of displeasing God and still experience the full joy of His [salvation](#), nor can you withstand the schemes and attacks of the enemy against your mind without knowing and appropriating the Word of Life into your life. Disobedience and [guilt](#) are inseparable. And unless you apply the remedy of confession and [repentance](#) (a change of mind and a

change of direction), you may find [depression](#) sweeping over your soul and spirit, and, like the disobedient Israelites . . .

[Deut 28:65](#)

## **What If You've *Never* Confessed and Repented?**

When you ask God to forgive your sins through the power of Jesus' [death](#) and [resurrection](#), He becomes your forever Savior. You can't lose your [relationship](#) with Him, no matter what you do, think, or feel. God secures your [salvation](#), and no one (not even you) can destroy what He protects. At times, you will still be disobedient, and you will need to [confess](#) and repent. This is not a renewing of your [salvation](#), but a maintaining of your [relationship](#) with the Lord. On the other hand, if you've *never* confessed your sins and asked Jesus to become your Savior, you can't know that you will spend eternity in [heaven](#). . . and you can't know true joy in this life.

True joy, joy from God, is greater than a life without struggle. It's a peace that remains when life falls apart. It's an assurance deep within you, enabling you to find satisfaction in Him, to [trust](#) in His sovereignty through the most harrowing storm. This is possible because God, and no one and nothing else, becomes your greatest delight. And right now, He wants to share this joy with you.

## **How to Have Joy That Lasts Forever**

A [relationship](#) with Jesus is the first step on the long path to overcoming [depression](#). When you [trust](#) in Him,

He gives you His strength to endure whatever comes your way. With Him, you will never again face a dark day alone. Today, you can [confess](#) your heart to God . . . and experience your first taste of true, unending joy.

### **#1 God's Purpose for You . . . is *Salvation*.**

- What was God's motive in sending Christ to earth? To condemn you? No . . . to express His [love](#) for you by saving you!

[John 3:16-17](#)

- What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? To make everything perfect and to remove all [sin](#)? No . . . to forgive your sins, empower you to have victory over [sin](#), and enable you to live a fulfilled life!

[John 10:10](#)

### **#2 Your Problem . . . is *Sin*.**

- What exactly is [sin](#)? [Sin](#) is living independently of God's standard—knowing what is right, but choosing wrong.

[James 4:17](#)

- What is the major consequence of [sin](#)? Spiritual [death](#), spiritual separation from God.

[Rom 6:23](#)

### **#3 God's Provision for You . . . is the *Savior*.**

- Can anything remove the penalty for [sin](#)?  
Yes. Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins.

### Rom 5:8

- What is the solution to being separated from God? Belief in Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father.

### John 14:6

#### **#4 Your Part . . . is Surrender.**

- Place your [faith](#) in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your "good works" as a means of gaining God's approval.

### Eph 2:8-9

- Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him.

### Matt 16:24-26

The moment you choose to believe in Him—entrusting your life to Christ—He gives you His Spirit to live inside you. Then the Spirit of Christ gives you His power to live the fulfilled life God has planned for you. If you want to be fully forgiven by God and become the person God created you to be, you can tell Him in a simple, heartfelt [prayer](#) like this:

#### **Prayer of Salvation**

*"God, I want a real relationship with You. I admit that many times I've chosen to go my own way*

*instead of Your way. Please forgive me for my sins. Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins. Come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior. Through Your power, begin healing my heart. Teach me to find my joy in You alone. Make me the person You created me to be. In Your holy name I pray. Amen."*

### **What Can You Expect Now?**

If you sincerely prayed this [prayer](#), you can know this truth that David wrote in the Psalms!

[Ps 94:18-19](#)