

DEPRESSION

SATAN'S WAR ON THE MIND: PART 4—PASTOR BRIAN BRODERSEN



Depression is perhaps the most devastating of the devil's attacks upon our minds. It takes many forms—discouragement, despair, hopelessness. Often, we may feel alone and isolated in our suffering. But in reality, many of God's people have battled depression, and thank God, they wrote about it.

The psalmist gives us a description of depression that may sound familiar: ***"In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing; my soul refused to be comforted ... my spirit was overwhelmed ... I am so troubled that I cannot speak"*** (Psalm 77:2–4). Paul declared that he and his co-laborers ***"were burdened beyond measure, above strength ... [they] despaired even of life"*** (2 Corinthians 1:8b). Do you hear the desperation in the words of these godly men?

Many years ago, I went through a severe season of depression due to chronic fatigue. Psalm 77 came like a ray of hope and comfort to me, knowing that somebody else who loved God had experienced this kind of anguish. As believers, we tend to think, *I'm a Christian, a child of God. I love God, and He loves me. I should never go through anything like this. So since I am depressed, I must be out of favor with God.* But this is not the case. Depression has always been part of Satan's arsenal; we see it biblically and throughout history.

We saw in previous articles that Charles Spurgeon—the "prince of preachers," struggled with doubt, unbelief, and evil thoughts, but he also battled depression: "I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to" (*The Complete Works of C. H. Spurgeon*, Volume 12). Here is one of the greatest preachers in the history of the church, yet he lived with this depression that was, to some extent, the result of Satan's attack upon him.

I don't believe that all depression is satanically inspired. Sometimes, there may be a physical root: blood sugar issues, illness, fatigue, or environmental factors. But even if

spiritual warfare isn't the cause, Satan is like a thug—he will take a shot at you anytime he can. Ever notice when you're sick that you become spiritually vulnerable? Unlike God, the devil kicks us when we are down. He takes advantage of our weaknesses.

We need to know how we can overcome depression. First, through prayer. But sometimes people are so deeply depressed that they can't even pray for themselves. That's when we come to their aid in the spiritual battle. William Cowper, a famous hymn writer in the late 1700s, not only battled depression,

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but he tried to take his own life on several occasions. His pastor, John Newton, gathered his congregation together for prayer numerous times to defeat this cycle in Cowper's life. And although he struggled with depression his entire life, those suicidal tendencies were eventually broken.

Cowper's story highlights our need to fight for each other in prayer because we are in a spiritual war. The Christian is not a one-man army fighting the devil alone; we're all part of God's army, and we need to stand in for others.

Second, we have to get a firm foundation in the Scriptures because when the enemy comes in like a flood, it's going to be the

Word that will push him back. Third, we need to praise and worship our God. In the Old Testament, how did God often instruct His people to wage war? They were to worship. The worship leaders were to be at the head of the people, and they were to go forth proclaiming His mercy. That was part of the battle strategy.

The same goes for us. We're not just singing songs because we like to sing; we are waging war! So when you find yourself in the thick of attack, praise the Lord. Sing to Him. Worship Him. That alone may begin to drive the enemy back.

Finally, we overcome depression by faith. We have to trust the Lord through these trials. Satan may go about as a roaring lion, but we are to ***"resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world"*** (1 Peter 5:9). We must resist, and we must remember:

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 1 JOHN 5:4

There were times when I was in such a desperate state, all I could say to God was "Lord, I just believe. I believe John 3:16. I believe that You so loved the world that You gave Your only begotten Son. I don't know anything else right now; but God, I'm falling back on Your love and Your truth, and I'm trusting that You're catching me."

And guess what? He will catch you. He will keep you, guard you, and carry you through. You can have confidence because although our enemy ***"comes in like a flood,"*** there is this great promise, ***"the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him"*** (Isaiah 59:19b). We thank You, Lord, that it doesn't matter what the devil throws at us because You have already defeated him. Strengthen and encourage Your people and enable us to fight the good fight of faith. ✨