

Depression and Anxiety: From Despair to Hope

Shepherds' Wives Conference 2026 - Martha Peace

I. Introduction

- a. Helping someone struggling with Depression and Anxiety:
 - i. Gathering data
 - ii. Giving hope
 - iii. Teaching basic biblical principles. 2 Peter 1:3
 - iv. Practical application using the Scriptures as the basis
- b. Depressed Debbie

II. Symptoms of depression

- a. The symptoms of depression

III. Gathering Data [four contributing causes]

- a. Circumstances
- b. Physical
- c. Bitterness
- d. Sin

IV. Giving Hope

- a. The Psalmist struggled with sad/painful emotions and ultimately right thinking about God which helped him overcome his despair. Psalm 42
- b. The Prophet Jeremiah was depressed. Lamentations 3:1-42
- c. The Apostle Paul could easily have become deeply depressed. 2 Cor. 4:8-18. Note how his right thinking kept him glorifying God instead of wallowing in self-pity and despair under very trying circumstances.
- d. Verses that give hope: 1 Cor. 10:13; Rom. 8:28-29; Lam.3:21-25; Psalm 42, 2 Cor. 4:8-18
- e. The greatest hope that you could ever give anyone is, of course, the Gospel. It is her only hope and is, as Paul said, "The power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." (Rom. 1:16) [free downloads: Martha Peace's salvation work sheets from marthapeacetew@blogspot.com Stuart Scott's gospel presentation from www.oneeightycounseling.com]

V. Counseling/Helping someone who is Depressed

- a. Question them for suicidal thoughts, desires, or plans.
- b. May need daily accountability at first. Ideally someone in their family or church family can help them.
- c. Biblical Instructions
 - i. Fulfill responsibilities regardless of how you feel.
 - ii. Be very specific about responsibilities – write out menu list, go to grocery store, cook supper for your family, get up no later than 7 A.M. Call me as soon as you are up.
 - iii. Write out a thankfulness list
 - iv. Learn to think biblically (put-off and put-on). Eph.4:22-24
 - v. Self-Talk log: Examples of wrong and right thoughts: "I can't take it anymore!"// "This is a difficult time for me but God will give me the grace to go through it." 1 Cor. 10:13
 - vi. Find someone to start giving to (thus taking the focus off themselves and putting it on showing love to others.)
 - vii. Go to doctor if suspect an organic problem. They should have a complete physical. Try to find a doctor who believes in the sufficiency of Scripture and the power of God.
 - viii. Homework:
 - *Christ and Your Problems* by Jay Adams
 - *Out of the Blues* by Wayne Mack
 - Schedule daily activities. Do them regardless of how you feel.

- DBR especially in the book of Psalms. If have trouble concentrating, *read aloud*.
- Pray and ask God to help you see your sin and responsibility and to help you repent.
- Self-Talk Log
- Scripture Memory
- *Trusting God* by Jerry Bridges (if appropriate)
- *Attitudes of a Transformed Heart* by Martha Peace

VI. Dealing with Anxiety, a Major Contributor to Depression

- Anxiety can range from a slight uneasy feeling to a full blown panic attack.
- The biblical antidote to fear is trusting God. “What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee.”
- Biblical Principles regarding fear
 - Fear keeps us from fulfilling our God-given responsibilities. Matt. 25:24-26
 - Fear may contribute to a person sinning. Gen. 26:7 (Isaac told King Abimelech that Rebekah was his sister).
 - Fear can cause us to deny our Lord and His Word. Matt. 26:69-70
- Biblical solution to fear
 - Don’t sin and cause yourself to be a hypocrite. Gal. 2:1-13
 - Remind yourself of God’s Word. Gen. 32:7,9
 - Be wise and make responsible decisions. Pro. 3:21-26
 - Realize the power of God working in you. 2 Tim. 1:7
 - Fear the Lord and delight in His commands. Ps. 112:1
 - Realize that God is with you no matter what. Ps. 23:4
 - Trust God to keep His Word. Ps. 56:3-4
 - Seek after the Lord. Ps./ 34:4
 - Overcome fear with love by focusing outwardly to others instead of being selfishly, inwardly focused. 1 Cor. 13:5
 - Do what is right whether you feel like it or not.
- Anxiety Journal Example: “I cannot bear to be alone. What if my husband dies?”
 - Biblical Prayer:** Phil. 4:6-7. “My request is,” “Thank You for,” “In Jesus Name, Amen”
 - Biblical Thought.** Phil. 4:8 “My husband is alive and still with me, but if he does die, God will *at that time* give me grace to bear up under it.”
 - Biblical actions.** Phil. 4:9

VII. What happened to Depressed Debbie?

Debbie became a Christian soon after the counseling began and the Scriptures began to give her hope. It was very difficult for her to begin to fulfill her responsibilities, but her Mother continued to come over for a few days to be with her and lovingly encourage her to do her work.

Within a fairly short period of time, Debbie began to have a glimmer of hope and within about 6 weeks, she was well on her way to becoming stable. Debbie began going to church soon after the counseling began and now is a member of her church and an active participant. After eight weeks of meeting with her biblical counselor, they both agreed that she need only come every other week for about six weeks.

Does Debbie ever get depressed now? Of course, her natural sinful bent is to feel sorry for herself and to worry. However, when she does that, she now has the biblical understanding and the supernatural grace to God to recover before she spirals down into the pit of despair.

Debbie would tell you that now instead of her “tears being her food day and night”, she is now “hoping in God and praising Him, her salvation and her God.” (adapted from Psalm 42)