

**James 5:13-16**

Everyone has season of being overwhelmed, and I hope this series has been beneficial but today I want to talk specifically about depression. This is for people who have let a season turn into a sickness.

When I started this series I said, "It is ok not to be ok, but it is not OK to stay that way."

Today I want us to be very practical and have some straight talk about depression.

Here is the pattern I have seen in my own life and in the life of many around me.

When we are overwhelmed it leads to....

Worry

Anxiety

Depression

Suicidal Thoughts

I do not say this as a point of condemnation but rather as a point of conversation. I know this pattern all too well. I have experienced it, I have lived it. I have friends who have completed this pattern.

**THIS IS NOT WHERE GOD WANTS TO BE!**

16% of Christians say they have contemplated Suicide. That means roughly 12 people in this crowd today have or will experience this in their life.

This raises a huge question. If someone commits suicide do they go to hell? The answer is NO!

You don't go to hell because you commit suicide. You go to hell because you don't know Jesus, period. This is a misconception that if we don't have all our sins confessed we will go to hell. That is not what the Bible says.

Please do not feel relieved and think now it is safe to do what you want to do... This is NOT what God wants for you!

So how do we deal with depression the right way

Today one of the key scriptures I want us to look at is **James 5:14-15**

***14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over***

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*them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.*

In the Bible times oil was used as a form of medicine, (See Luke 10:34 - i.e. The Good Samaritan)

*34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.*

James takes a very holistic approach to the issue. It is important for us to recognize that it is not unspiritual to take medicine when we are sick. There are some that would say that it is a spiritual issue but spiritual issues can have physical repercussions that medicine can deal with. Notice James does not start with medicine He starts with prayer but he does not negate the need for medicine.

Medicine deals with the fruit not the root, but there are times that you need to apply medicine to be healed.

Vs15 *Prayer will make them well*

This is not an instantaneous process. There is not progress until we embrace the process God wants to do in us.

*If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.*

Sometimes our sickness is a result of our sin.

If you are dealing with situations that cause you to worry, be careful! Worry if not dealt with leads to anxiety - depression - suicidal thoughts.

**Jesus does not want to change your circumstances, instead he want to change you through your circumstances.**

Depression has many sources. Relational strain, Physical Disease, Loss and grief, Poor decisions, the Enemy, fear, and even sin. It may be sin you have committed or even sin committed against you. If the root is sin committed against you if you do not deal with it leads to bitterness and un-forgiveness, which then becomes your own sin. Those things are toxic to your soul and will kill you spiritually.

**James 5:16** *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

Confess to each other. Why because there is strength in numbers. **Isolation is the number one tool the enemy uses to keep us in bondage.** Isolation kills. The other part of this is when you partner with someone in the midst of depression they can help

you to follow the right steps in your life to get through the depression.

This is called accountability. You see accountability is a dirty word in our minds. I don't want to be accountable to anyone because who are they to judge me. But we see that God says accountability is a good thing. It is not condemning it is reinforcing and supporting.

Let me tell you the story of two people. They were both very good friends of mine in NH. One was Cory and the other is Christy.

Cory and I were friends and we played on the same softball team at our church. Cory was a great guy, loved the Lord and had a beautiful family. One day Cory got frustrated with somethings at the church and decided to leave. While I still tried to stay in touch with him there was a natural distance that developed and he became isolated. A few years down the road I attended Cory's funeral. You see Cory committed suicide. He fell into a deep depression and could not see a way out. So one evening, as his wife stood outside a locked car door pleading with him. He took a pistol, held it to his head and took his own life. Leaving a wife and two small children without a father. It broke my heart. He isolated himself and lost all the support he needed.

Christy on the other hand is still a very good friend of mine. Christy had been invited to come to our church at a critical period of her life. You see she had been saved many years earlier but she had made some decision in her life that led her away from her walk with the Lord. She married an unbeliever and had a very hard growing as a believer with her husbands antagonist attitude. She came to the church and 2 weeks later her Husband asked her for a divorce and said he did not love her anymore. She spiraled down into a major bout with depression. After a bit of nagging she joined our life group. She tells the story of one night deciding she would end it all, but God had put her on my heart to call and ask if she was coming to group that night. She agreed to come thinking she could fulfill her plan after group that night. She never followed through with her plans. That night as we met God spoke to her and she developed some accountability that night. As we continued to meet and pray together she was healed. You see she has chronic major clinical depression. But through community and prayer she has found her calling and now leads and ministers to others in small groups. She has even helped develop others and bring them through their own depression.

**Isolation kills but community protects.** We have to be willing to say I am not ok and I don't want to be that way anymore. It is only when we are willing to open up and share what is going on in our lives do we find healing.

I personally know this all too well. You see I was abused as a child and it really messed me up in a lot of ways. I never really dealt with it until after I was married. You see because of the nature of abuse I went through it began to affect my marriage. I could not deal with it and I increasingly became more and more depressed and stressed out. Finally one evening I met with a friend of mine in college. As I was spiraling down further and further into a pit of despair and depression, my friend noticed and called me on it. He would not let up. I tried to play it cool and say nothing was wrong but he and I both knew better. It took me several hours before I could articulate what was going on. He finally asked me a crucial question. Would I want my kids to ever go through what I went through. I was mortified. I screamed at him NO! Then, he very calmly asked me then why can you not call it abuse. It took me several minutes to recover but then we prayed together and made a plan. I needed to go home and confess everything that was going on in my heart and life to my wife. It was not easy. I had never told anyone about it before except my friend that night. When I went home I did just that. When I sat down and talked with my wife. In that moment God began to heal my heart and my marriage.

**James 5:16** *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

If you are living with worry, Jesus speaks to that. Trust Him with that. If you are dealing with anxiety, understand your body can last only so long with that in your system. It is not healthy! You cannot sprint for 40 miles. You will give out eventually, and it will lead to depression. If you are dealing with depression or even suicidal thoughts....

It's OK not to be OK! But it is not ok to stay that way.

If you are here and you are not struggling, if you are OK here is what I want for you. First, please don't tell people who are going through depression, Just get over it! Just pray and read your Bible more. Instead come along side of them, Pray with them! Help them find someone to give them professional help and then follow up with them. I know it is uncomfortable, and at times it seems like it is so draining dealing with someone who is depressed. But they need you!

**Galatians 6:2** says *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

And for you here who are struggling, please don't minimize this or blow it off and act like you are fine when you are not. God does not want you to struggle with this any longer. He has brought you here today for one reason. He wants you to be healed! It's OK not to be OK! But it is not ok to stay that way.

I preach about this because there are people here who need help. I don't want anyone to leave here today without getting the help that you need. That help starts with accepting Jesus into your life. If you have never done that today. I want to invite you to do that right now.

***Invitation:***

Christian: You might be here today and you are forgiven but you are not healed. It is a safe place to do that today. So here is what we are going to do. If you are struggling I do not want you to leave without coming and praying with someone. So right after the service if you need to pray with someone we are going to have several people who are willing to sit and pray with you about what you need healing for. But before we do that...

Today we are going to take **communion**. (Call the elders up.)

This is a highly significant thing for each of us today.

**Isaiah 53:5** *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

If you are struggling today I want you to take communion as declaration and reminder that He came to heal. Even drop depression. Confess if you have sin in your life and know that He wants you healed.

**Luke 22:19-20**

**19** *And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

**20** *In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."*