

What is a root cause of depression? According to Scripture one of the main causes is found when we lose HOPE.

Proverbs 13:12

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.

Job 7:6, 11

"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope...

"Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul."

Proverbs 18:14

The human spirit can endure a sick body, but who can bear it if the spirit is crushed?

You see there is a constant battle for your mind. This is the essence of spiritual warfare. When your mind is turned against you it is one of the most difficult things to deal with it.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*

Today we will look at one of the most classic cases of depression in all of scripture. Turn to **1 Kings 19**

Elijah had a close relationship with God and was used powerfully by Him. Many people witnessed the greatness of God through the prophet.

Elijah encouraged many people. He helped a widow and her son who were down-and-out and had only enough food for one more meal. Elijah told the widow that God would provide, and He did. Later, when her son died, Elijah asked God to bring him back to life, and God did. This widow's hope was restored through Elijah.

Elijah did many other amazing works by the power of God, but the Bible shows that even great men of God can get tripped up by the trials and challenges of living God's way in a world under the sway of Satan. The story of Elijah's descent into depression is a classic.

19:1 *Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.*

Depression comes often right after great victory

Depression comes when we work hard with no break to accomplish something and when we see victory we are exhausted and spent.

When you get tired enough nothing feels good anymore.

Depression can be chemical, but it also can be from emotional tiredness

2 So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

Jezebel threatened Elijah, nothing physical.

She didn't touch him, hurt him, smack him, she just threatened Him

Sick and stones.... Threats can do more harm than any physical thing could.

Threats are a tool the enemy uses to draw us into depression.

Threats + Exhaustion - God = FEAR

Are you living under a threat?

Remember...

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

3 Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there,

Isolation. As we talked about last week we see the pattern again. When we become depressed one of the first things that happens is we isolate ourselves from the people who are there to help us.

When we run in fear depression takes over.

This is no short trip he was on from Mt Carmel to Beersheba was 100 miles. This equated to 4 days of running. That would be like traveling from here to Philadelphia on foot.

4 while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. (24 miles) He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had

enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.”

Not only was Elijah hated and threatened with death by the evil Queen Jezebel, he also felt his work had been in vain and that no one else was supporting God. He felt totally alone, vulnerable and hopeless. Being human like you and me, all this started to get to him.

There was another account involving a broom tree. The first one was the story of Hagar and Ishmael in Genesis 21:8-20. Like Elijah, Hagar crawled under a broom tree and longed to die.

In Biblical Israel, the white broom tree was used for kindling in cooking stoves and coals were made from its roots, trunks, and branches (Job 30:4). Broom embers retain their heat for long periods after they appear to be dead ashes. An ancient Israelite reading that on awakening Elijah saw bread baked on embers would have assumed the embers retained fire from an earlier traveler and were blown into heat to bake the bread. Desert travelers have reported forming a layer of broom embers to suit their size. They covered the embers with a 2-4 inch layer of sand or fine soil. The sand-cover embers provided a warm mattress during the cold desert night. Perhaps Elijah had such a mattress as he slept under the broom tree.

The symbolism of the broom tree is renewal and restoration. When Elijah arrived at the broom tree, he was exhausted, depressed, and ready to die. What was to be a victory for God and Elijah over Baal and his prophets turned into Elijah fleeing for his life from Jezebel and her henchmen. If anyone needed to be renewed, it was Elijah. The broom tree provided this renewal for Elijah. If the shrub was blooming, Elijah would have seen thousands of tiny white blooms and smelled their soothing scent. Sinking below the tree’s canopy, Elijah fell asleep on a soft bed of broom leaves. Warm embers under the sand may have helped maintain his warmth in the cool desert night. The broom tree’s embers were used to bake a cake of bread for Elijah; and God provided Elijah water in the desert.

Just as God renewed Elijah using attributes of the broom tree, God’s renews us. We are made new when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior; however, God knew that after our new birth, we would need to be refreshed and restored to vigor from time-to-time. For just these times, God had Isaiah write, “those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. (Isaiah 40:31). When we hope in the Lord, we have confidence in him. Having confidence in God can renew us so we can walk, run, and soar without collapsing from the weight of the world’s challenges.

5 Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him

and said, “Get up and eat.” 6 He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

7 The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

- **God meets with us right where we are.**
- **Nutrition is Important. Get up and eat. Not junk food either. How many of you are stress eaters?**
- **Sleep is also important**

Get up and eat because I have someplace I want to take you. Often in our lives we want God to just fix the problem, But often God needs to take us further to reveal what He truly has for us.

The distance from Beersheba to Horeb is about 200 miles. Elijah would not have required forty days to travel there, if the intention of God had been nothing more than to cause him to reach the mountain, or to help him on his way. But in the strength of the food provided by the angel Elijah was not only to perform the journey to Horeb, but to wander in the desert for forty days and forty nights, (i.e., forty whole days, as Moses had formerly wandered with all Israel for forty years; that he might know that the Lord was still the same God who had nourished and sustained His whole nation in the desert with manna from heaven for forty years. And just as the forty years' sojourn in the desert had been to Moses a time for the trial of faith and for exercise in humility and meekness (Num 12:3), so was the strength of Elijah's faith to be tried by the forty days' wandering in the same desert.

Mt Horeb - God confirms His covenant with man. Burning bush, Ten Commandments, intimacy with God. God speaking with you.

9 There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

I love this question. God does not scold him and He know why Elijah is there. In essence God is asking Elijah to get it off his chest. God desires for us to tell Him what is going on. Don't mince words or candy coat it just tell Him like it is.

10 He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death

with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

Here we see Elijah reveal how he feels. But what we begin to realize is that how we feel is not the truth. You see feelings can be fickle. They can lead us to make decisions that lead us down paths that we do not want to go.

Here we see Elijah reveal the fact that he thought it was his own zeal and work for the Lord. Depression for the believer often comes when we are striving to do something in our own power instead of relying on the One who lives in us.

11 The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire.

God does not rebuke Elijah. He does not correct him. Here God shows his power and strength to Elijah. He wants to remind Elijah of the fact that he is more powerful than anything Elijah is facing.

First God shows him a wind. Have you ever been in a strong wind? It becomes hard to breath.

Next God shows him an earthquake. The foundations of everything begin to shake. Finally God showed him a fire. A fire that consume everything.

Elijah had a perception problem. He triumphed over the prophets of Baal in a very dramatic way in I Kings 18. He thought he had turned the people back to God, but then he realized that nothing really changed. Jezebel was still wanting to kill him and the people were still following after idols. Elijah despaired that he was the only follower of God left in the world.

And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

God asks him the same question again!

14 He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

Even when he has been confronted with the power, might and glory of God, Elijah still thinks he is alone. It is often the same with us. Often we cannot see the forest for the trees.

15 The Lord said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16 Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. 17 Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. 18 Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him."

Here we see God make a promise to Elijah. First He tells Elijah to go and anoint kings and Elisha, to continue to the work God has to do. He also promises him that those who seek to kill him will finally receive God's justice. Finally God assures him that he is not alone. That God has many to stand beside him.

1 John 4:4

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome... because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Blessing

Psalm 27:13-14

I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!