

**Understanding the Darkness:
A Biblical Understanding of Teenage Depression.**
ULSM Parent Summit | Dan Seidelman | 11/16/19

*O LORD, God of my salvation,
I cry out day and night before you.
Let my prayer come before you;
incline your ear to my cry!*

*For my soul is full of troubles,
and my life draws near to Sheol.
I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I am a man who has no strength,
like one set loose among the dead,
like the slain that lie in the grave,
like those whom you remember no more,
for they are cut off from your hand.
You have put me in the depths of the pit,
in the regions dark and deep.
Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
and you overwhelm me with all your waves. Selah*

*You have caused my companions to shun me;
you have made me a horror to them.
I am shut in so that I cannot escape;
my eye grows dim through sorrow.
Every day I call upon you, O LORD;*

*I spread out my hands to you.
Do you work wonders for the dead?
Do the departed rise up to praise you? Selah
Is your steadfast love declared in the grave,
or your faithfulness in Abaddon?
Are your wonders known in the darkness,
or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?*

*But I, O LORD, cry to you;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
O LORD, why do you cast my soul away?
Why do you hide your face from me?
Afflicted and close to death from my youth up,
I suffer your terrors; I am helpless.
Your wrath has swept over me;
your dreadful assaults destroy me.
They surround me like a flood all day long;
they close in on me together.
You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun
me;
my companions have become darkness.*

-Psalm 88, ESV

Understanding the Darkness:

- General Definition
- Levels of Depression
- Biographical Definitions:
- Causes:

- David – Psalm 32:3–4
- Elijah - 1 Kings 19:4–10
- Jesus - Luke 22:41–44
- Paul - 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

- David Murray - False Thinking¹
 - False Extremes
 - False Generalizations
 - False Filter
 - False Transformation
 - False Mind-Reading
 - False Feelings-based Reasoning
 - False “Shoulds” or “Oughts”
 - False Responsibility

- Common Contributing Factors²
 - Biology – Hypothyroid issues, low blood sugar, Parkinson’s, diet, sleep, exercise
 - Social – Relationships, activity, business, boredom
 - Weather – Seasonal Affective Disorder
 - Medications – Chronic illness, Pain medications, Psychotropic Medications
 - General life context – Disappointment, Dissatisfaction, Loss, Heartache
 - Personal interpretations –
 - Other Emotions – Anger, anxiety, Despair.

- Conclusions:

¹ David P. Murray, *Christians Get Depressed Too: Hope and Help for Depressed People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), 36ff.

² David Dunham, “Biblical Counsel for the Depressed” (April 27, 2019), 1.

Scripture and Depression

- The Spiritual Nature of Depression
- General Encouragements from Scripture
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - 2 Peter 1:3
- What does scripture teach us about suffering?
 - We can have hope despite our circumstances - 2 Corinthians 4:16
 - In faith, we can pray to God in lament. Psalm 10:1, for example.
 - God cares for us in our suffering - Psalm 56:8-9
 - Joy and Suffering are compatible - James 1:2-4
 - You are not alone or unique in your suffering – 1 Corinthians 10:13
- Our goal in whatever circumstance - including suffering - must be to please God - 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

“The goal is not to get rid of depression or the down feelings. Dealing with the feelings of depression is like.... Giving a pain pill to a person who is sitting on a tack. In depression, that goal can, and most of the time has become, more important than pleasing God. This is worshipping “feeling better” rather than pleasing God. The goal is to please God and become more like Christ no matter how one feels... God has answers, hope, and purpose in the midst of God’s problems and bad feelings... In order to have real victory, a person must live by God’s word, not his feelings. As long as the depressed person makes getting rid of the depression essential to his progress, very little progress will be made.”³

- We have hope in these situations – there is hope in God.
 - Philippians 4:11-13
 - Romans 8:28-30

³ Robert D Smith, *The Christian Counselor’s Medical Desk Reference* (Stanley, N.C.: Timeless Texts, 2000), 212.

- God blesses and gives grace in our obedience
 - John 13:17
 - James 1:25
 - 2 Corinthians 9:8

Ministering to the Depressed:

- Love Them

- Enter into Scripture

- Give them Hope

- Help them to glorify God

- Do not overwhelm them

- Practical solutions offered
 - Spurgeon's Suggestions:⁴
 - Laughter – “Cheerfulness readily carries burdens which despondency dares not touch”
 - Quiet Hours of Calm Retreat
 - Physical things like medicines, baths, diet, sleep
 - Pastoral counseling.

 - David Murray says to think throughs
 - Routine
 - Relaxation
 - Recreation
 - Rest

 - Make wise, biblically informed decisions on anti-depressants.

⁴ Zack Eswine, *Spurgeon's Sorrows* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015), 106ff.

⁵ Murray, *Christians Get Depressed Too*, 70.

- Endure in love
- Humbly ask for help yourself
- Pray

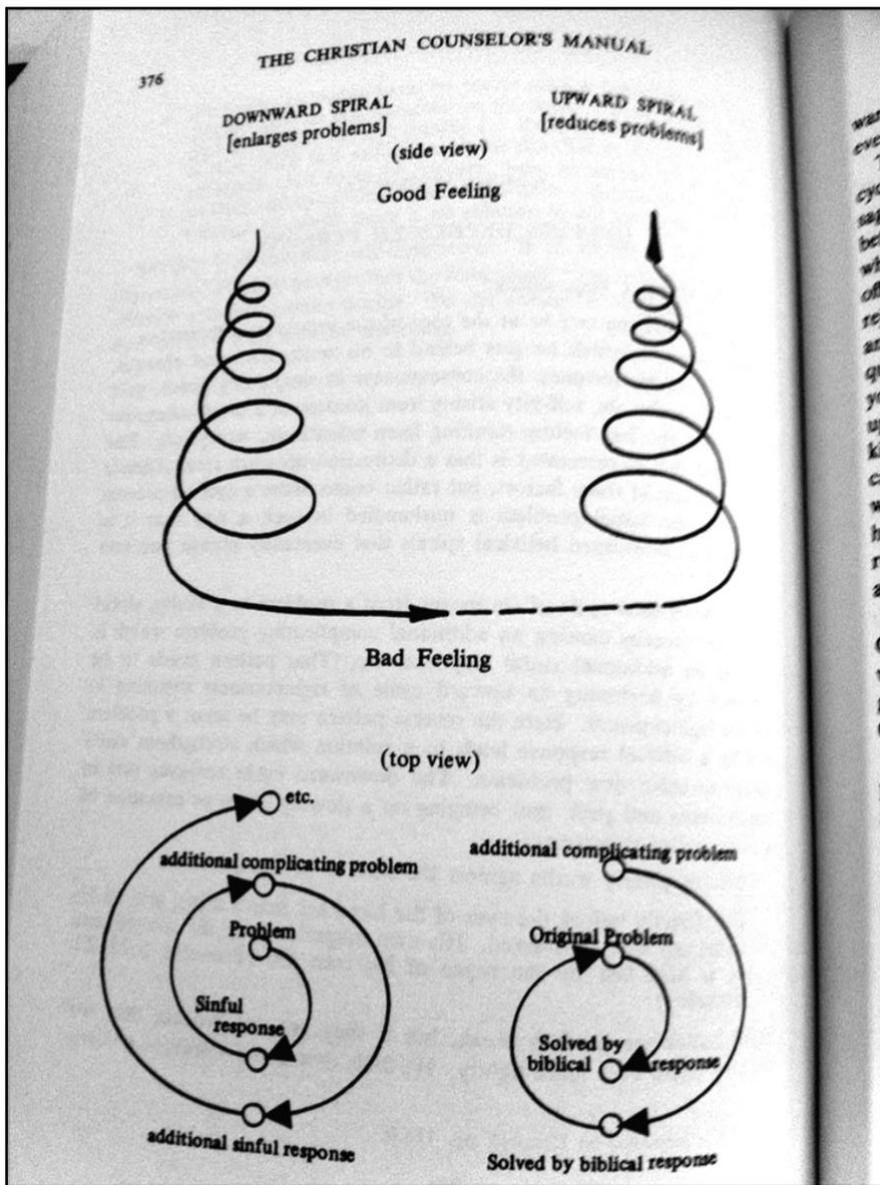


Figure 1: From Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 376.

