

Dgroup Discussion Guide for April 22, 2018

Disarming the Minefield of Depression

Scripture: 1 Kings 16:30 – 1 Kings 19: 15

The minefield of depression is a critical condition because it is fast becoming a common global disorder. Depression is the leading cause of disability nationwide affecting how people function at home, workplace, school, and community. Worst yet, it can lead to suicide which is now the leading cause of death between the ages 15 to 29. Depression literally means “being pressed down” to a lower position. In Psychology, depression is a mood disorder, a psychological state that exists when the heart is pressed down and unable to experience joy. Depressed people feel trapped underneath a dark, heavy blanket of sadness, grief and hopelessness.

Depression affects people in all walks of life, no one is immune to it. In fact, even godly people in the Bible such as Moses, Job, Jeremiah, Elijah and others have all gone through depression. Just like these men of God, believers can also become depressed. If we notice signs of emotional or spiritual depression in our lives, whether it be circumstantial or clinical in nature, it is important for us to remember that God does not want us to remain downcast. He wants us to rise again. Depression is a mental disorder. Therefore it is overcome by putting our minds in order – to renew our minds.

Because the devil can use depression to infuse doubt and distrust in our mind, God has commanded us and He has given us the power of choosing to rejoice whatever the circumstances. Philippians 4:4 says ***Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice!***

The Story of Elijah (1 Kings)

Elijah was a godly man of faith but he also went through a downward spiral of despair. He was the prophet during the reign of King Ahab and his wife Jezebel. Elijah had told King Ahab that there would be drought as punishment for the wickedness of the people and this made Ahab furious. Elijah ran away then when into exile. But during his time of exile, God provided for him. Ravens were sent to bring him food, and there was a brook where he could get water to drink. In this time of exile and despair, God continued to provide for Elijah.

In our spiritual life, we also experience some drought. It is during these times that we should imitate Elijah and run – not away from God but towards God. Once our sight becomes blurry because of our circumstances, let us not lose sight of God and intentionally pursue God during the times of depression.

After a period of three years, God told Elijah to return to the king. Elijah then asked that the Israelites assembled and then they built 2 altars. He then challenged Ahab and his prophets to pray to their gods to send down fire to burn the offering. Ahab and his 800 prophets prayed and prayed but nothing happened. Then Elijah said pour water over the bull and then he called out to God. God heard him and sent down fire from heaven. It was because of this that Jezebel became furious and threatened to have Elijah killed. And so Elijah ran for his life.

Elijah went into despair, and for 40 days he meditated. In his desperation, he sought God. This teaches us that during the time of desperation, instead of running away and focusing on our emotions we should seek out God, meditate on His Word, hang on to His promises and sing with joy. 1 Kings 19:5 says ***As he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat"***. When we are depressed, or when we are anxious, we not only need to feed our physical bodies but we should also feed our spirits. During times of challenges, of trials. . . we should feed and nourish our spiritual lives.

In 1 Kings 19:10 we see Elijah crying out to God. ***I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left and they seek to take my life.*** It was at this point that Elijah felt alone. He began to catastrophize his situation with scenarios that are unfounded and unreal. And he continued to withdraw in isolation. ***Then God said to him, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.***

Often time when we are straining to hear God, we look around us and focus on strong wind, the earthquake or the fire. . . forgetting that in the deepest recesses of our hearts God is whispering to us about His love, His grace, His promise of protection, His promise of provision. When we focus on the things that we should not, we miss the opportunity to hear God's whispered answer of love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Are you going through a dry spell, a drought in your spiritual life? What is God telling you?
2. Is there something that you are running away from? Where are you running to? Who is waiting for you at your destination?
3. Make yourself hungry for the Word of God. What do you commit yourself to in order to nourish your spiritual life?

PRAYERS:

Lift all the things that you learned back to God. Share your thoughts to Him. If He is impressing a sin in your life, confess it to Him. He is always ready to forgive.