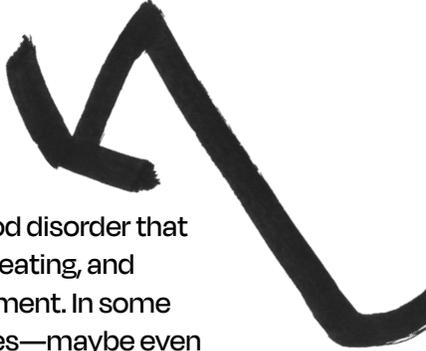




DEALING WITH DEPRESSION





PREVIEW

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), depression is a mood disorder that affects how a person feels, thinks, and handles daily activities such as sleeping, eating, and working. Depression is more a mental and emotional ailment than a physical ailment. In some cases, it can be serious. Mild depression is more common and affects many lives—maybe even some of us sitting in this room today. But we serve a God who can dispel feelings of despondency and dejection and bring peace and joy into our lives. Let's talk about how we can deal with depression.

PRAISE

Have any of you seen the animated movie *Inside Out*? Basically, the movie presents a creative way to explain five core emotions: sadness (the key emotion), anger, fear, disgust, and joy. It is a huge surprise to everyone in the movie to realize that sometimes we need to be sad. Why would anyone need to be sad? Because sadness helps us process changes in our lives. If we didn't know sadness, how could we know joy? Distinguishing between our God-given emotions and feelings helps us maintain a good balance in both our physical and mental health, and in society.

PRESENT

In 2015, an estimated 3 million adolescents in the United States ages twelve to seventeen had at least one major depressive episode that year. This number represents 12.5 percent of the US population in that age group (NIMH). But let me ask you this: How many of you have not felt "down" or sad during the past year? If we are honest, not one of us could say we haven't ever had a down moment. Do you know what that means? We are human! The word "depression" might not be in the Bible, but it does contain words like cast down, brokenhearted, troubled, miserable, in despair, and mournful, among others. I think those words could serve as descriptions of depression, whether severe or mild.

PRACTICE

Emotions are not bad. God has strong emotions (e.g., John 3:16; Psalm 5:5; Exodus 20:5; Zephaniah 3:17; Isaiah 53:3; Luke 10:21.) We are created in God's image so we have strong emotions too.

The Bible reveals the emotional struggles of some amazing men and women of God. Even Jesus expressed how deeply He hurt for others. He felt betrayed. He felt sad. He felt disappointed. He felt lonely. I hope this helps you to see is that God is going to be the last person to judge you for feeling down, because He created us to feel deeply, and He understands because He experienced similar emotions while living among us on this earth.

Can you believe it? David—you know, the kid-wonder who killed a giant and became the richest, the most sensitive, yet the most warlike and victorious Israelite king, the one who was called “a man after God's own heart”—sometimes felt down.

Have everyone read Psalm 40 to themselves.

David' songs and prayers express a wide range of emotions. Some of his poetry is full of joy; some of it exhibits raw emotion. It is interesting that in this psalm David seems to go back and forth between feeling very down to reminding himself that God is with him. The important concept to glean from this is it's okay to feel sad. There might be days when you feel like nobody cares or hears or understands. But when you leave this place today, I want you to know one thing for sure: God cares deeply about you and your emotions.

Remind yourself of David's words when you feel sad, alone, and despondent. Because we all will visit that place at some point in our lives. But know this: God is with you and He cares.

PRAY

Thank You, Jesus, for reminding us today that the emotions we feel were created by You. Thank You for the reminder that You felt what we feel. You experienced moments of sadness, joy, stress, and even heartbreak. Yet You suffered through it all so we would be able to overcome anything we face. You went to the Cross and shed Your blood so we would have joy, freedom, peace, and salvation. Thank You for knowing our feelings and being closer than family. Your Word says You will never leave us or forsake us. Let us remember Your great love for us and that we belong to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

PLUS

- Regarding the movie Inside Out, which emotion do you struggle with the most: sadness, anger, fear, or disgust?
- Why do you think that sometimes you need to be sad?
- How does it make you feel to know that Jesus felt the same emotions you feel?
- Share a line from Psalm 40 that you want to remember that brings you comfort.
- Which line in Psalm 40 surprised you that David felt that way?