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You Can Conquer Depression

by Dr. Lester Sumrall

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Preface

Once when traveling, I began to think about the airport bookstores that have a variety of books you can browse through while waiting for a plane. There are more "howto" books on the shelves than any other kind: how to cook, how to sew, how to be a mechanic. We do need certain kinds of howto books, I thought. We need books telling us how to have personal victories in our lives and be happy.

This inspired me to produce a how-to series on conquering life's problems. This series instructs you in living a glorious, happy, and fruitful life. It is based on the example of Jesus, the Master of knowing how to have victory over pain, hatred, and rejection. In this series, I want to communicate Jesus' understanding of how to conquer.

I receive thousands of telephone calls and letters each month from people in every part of the United States. Many of them are depressed, but they don't have to be.

If you are one of the multiplied millions of sad people living on the earth, this book will help you. It will show you that depression is something you can control from within by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

—Lester Sumrall

You Can Conquer Depression

Do you go to bed sad and wake up sad? Have you been sad for so long that you feel like a cloud is hanging over you? If this description fits you, you need help.

What Is Depression?

Depression is a sickness, an emotional problem. It comes from your soulish area, one part of your total being. You are a triune person, composed of three distinct and separate entities: spirit, soul, and body.

The spirit is the part of man that died when Adam sinned. God had told Adam that the day he sins, he dies (Gen. 2:17). When Adam sinned, his relationship with God

died. He cut himself off from the life flow of God. His spirit became nonexistent, non-functional.

Man's spirit had to be born again. When Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7), He was speaking of the spirit. The born-again nature enters you at the time you are saved.

Your soul (Greek: *psuche*) is your mind, emotions, and will. It is your Adamic nature, the real you. Because depression has to do with your feelings, it occurs in the emotional part of your being, your soul.

A person's emotional response depends primarily on his reaction to surrounding conditions. Two people can have the same experience and react differently. One becomes sad while the other becomes glad.

A friend whose house had burned down two weeks before, talked to me about what had happened since then. "I've never had so many good things happen," he told me. "So many friends have done things to help me. In fact, I'm actually better off than I was before!"

After experiencing a catastrophe like that, some people would "go sour on the world." Your emotional response is not determined by what happens to you, but by how you react to what happens to you.

By reacting positively no matter how dreadful the circumstance, you will still have a positive experience.

Symptoms of Depression

All people, adults and youth alike, suffer periods of depression. Anyone can come under this cloud. Today the greatest cause of death among American teenagers is suicide. Suicide results from becoming exceedingly depressed in spirit. Several symptoms accompany depression. Watch yourself. If you notice any of these symptoms appearing in your life, you need help. Face it, because depression is dangerous.

Reclusiveness

One symptom of depression is reclusiveness—withdrawing from reality.

God made people to live together. He said, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18). He made a woman so that the man and wife would be together. God said, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing" (Prov. 18:22).

Reclusiveness is dangerous. You can become antisocial—a hermit, a Rip Van Winkle. Some people enjoy dogs and cats more than they do human beings. This should not be so.

No creature upon the face of this earth can share so much with you as a fellow human.

Only he can share of his intellect with you; only he can share the highest experiences of love and joy with you.

Don't permit reclusiveness to overwhelm you.

A Passive Mind

With a passive mind, the matters of life are unimportant to you. Instead of thinking progressively and aggressively, instead of desiring to learn and do more, you don't care enough about anything to reach out. You are exhibiting a passive mind, a second symptom of depression.

Controlling the human mind is like controlling a spirited horse: You need to know how to put reins on it and discipline it. To have a good and happy mind, you must tell your mind what to think. You say, "Mind, think on these things . . ."

What things? The Bible says, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Until you learn how to control your mind, it will control you the wrong way.

Magnifying Difficulties

A third symptom of depression is seen in the person who magnifies a difficulty or turns a condition into a problem. If it is a molehill, he will make it a mountain.

For example, a husband doesn't turn to his wife and smile to suit her, so she says to him, "You're mad at me; I can tell." His mere glance at her may evoke a response of, "You don't like my dress!"

Don't react that way. Be like the man who said, "I worried because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet." There is always somebody who needs help more than you do.

If you visit certain countries, you will learn what need is—the type of need you never dreamed could exist. Stray dogs in America get along better than many people throughout the world.

If somebody fails to shake your hand, and you think, "He doesn't like me!" you are in trouble. But you don't need to be; God doesn't want you to be.

You should be so happy that if someone insults you, you won't even know what he's doing. Even if you do realize what he's doing, you should be so glad in the Lord that you keep rejoicing anyway.

You should learn to minimize difficulties and find it impossible to be insulted.

Lack of Concentration

A fourth symptom of depression is a lack of concentration.

When your mind starts wandering from subject to subject, like a bird hopping from branch to branch, watch out. When you can't stay with your job or sit down in the house and talk with your family, the devil is taking advantage of you.

You should be capable of thinking about anything as long as you want. That's a precious, God-given joy in living. You need to learn how to resist the devil to be set free.

Effects of Depression

Many times depression will steal your ambition. It will prevent you from participating in the activities you should be enjoying. Depression is an enemy of your happiness and success.

Physical Illness

Medical doctors agree that depression will eventually bring on physical illness. Being depressed over an extended period of time will cause your organs to function improperly. Depression is a fearful thing.

Guilt

Many people whom I have counseled experience guilt as a result of depression. This is sinister.

"I wasn't good enough to my children," one mother told me.

"How old are your children?" I asked.

"My son is 51 and my daughter is 54."

"They are grandparents. What does it matter now how well you treated them as children?"

The devil was pushing her around.

One day a nicely dressed, retired school-teacher in her seventies came into my office.

"Oh, I feel so terrible," the woman said. "Why?" I asked.

"When I was a teenager in college, I committed adultery. It's followed me all these years."

"Have you become a Christian since then?"

"Oh, yes."

This beautiful, respectable lady had been a church member and helper in great conventions all over the state.

"God forgave you years ago," I told her.

"But I don't always feel as though I'm forgiven."

"Don't let the devil drag out that experience," I said, "You've been forgiven." Then I read Romans 8:1 to her: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"

These two women had suffered guilt unnecessarily for years. Don't let this happen to you. When we have come to the blood of Jesus and our sins have been washed away, we must not allow depression to cause us to be guilt-ridden.

The thief crucified on the cross next to Jesus was forgiven. Saul, the persecutor of Christians, became the Apostle Paul because he was forgiven. As these men were forgiven, so are you by the generous love of Jesus Christ.

Even if you murdered somebody or stole a million dollars, it doesn't matter. When God forgives you, He forgives you.

We are not condemned!

Jealousy and Hostility

A depressed person can bring spirits of jealousy and hostility into the home. Oftentimes, a person with a depressed spirit will look at the happy members of a household and say, "You're just too happy; you must not be doing right by me."

This reaction causes him to become jealous of everyone in the family who is not sad. Then he becomes angry.

Causes of Depression

Most depressed people have experienced some kind of trauma which has brought sorrow into their lives. Sorrow can cause depression.

Disappointment

A disappointment (in business, domestic life, church, etc.) or a rejection can cause sorrow. A death can bring sadness.

You should not permit a death to keep you down. If the person who died was saved, you should be glad because he is in heaven. Luke 10:20 says, ". . . rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." If the person was unsaved, you must realize

that there is nothing you can do for him. Just determine to be right yourself.

Tradition

People who attend churches bound by dead traditions may say they are just conservative, but those people leave church so sad they don't know what to do.

Who said religion should be depressive? Houses of worship should be joyous. God's Word indicates that God wants us to be happy!

Notice how the people described in the Bible worshiped God. On the day the Church was born, the happy, rejoicing saints were so hilarious, they were accused by the sinners of being drunk.

After a death, some people will follow the tradition of wearing black for a whole year to show how sad they are. God knows they are sad, and He doesn't want them to go through a year like that.

God does not want anyone to suffer depression. It is the devil who wants people to be sad. Don't permit tradition to bind you and bring depression!

Illness

In particular, illness is something that can bring depression. People become sad and self-centered from thinking about nothing else but being sick. Many people who have been sick for a long time need to be relieved of depression before they can get healed. They need a new spirit inside them.

Before you can receive the fullness of God's blessing, you must be relieved of depression. Don't let depression destroy your life!

Getting Rid of Depression

God's power can rid you of depression. Examine the following passage.

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered (Psalm 40:1-5).

Face the Issue

The first thing you must do to get rid of depression is to face the issue; then, you must take action to break the depression.

Instead of hiding from or fearing depression, confront it. Don't be ashamed to admit that it is a problem. You have to be willing to say, "I'm unhappy and depressed, but I'm ready to be set free by the power of God." Until you are ready to say that, you will not be able to get depression off you.

Tell Depression to Leave

Christians who are depressed are going the way of the world. The world is depressed because of its sin. You may not realize that you as a Christian should not be that way.

God has given you dominion. He has placed within you His strength, power, and force. You are capable of doing anything!

When you recognize the strength God has given to you, you can say to depression, "I command you to go."

Let Your Spirit Speak

Evangelist Smith Wigglesworth was one of the greatest men I have ever met. One time I said to him, "In the several years I've known you, I've never seen you depressed."

He answered, "When I get up in the morning, I never ask Smith Wigglesworth how he feels." Smith Wigglesworth's spirit was talking to his soul!

If you wake up in the morning and say, "I don't feel well; I'm depressed," you are letting your mind (your soul) decide for you. You are depressed because your spirit doesn't get to say anything.

Let your spirit come alive and say, "Today is a good day, a day of rejoicing, a day for God's power to work. Today I will win a soul to the Lord. Today I will love Jesus more than ever before." Be positive.

Starting your day like this makes you feel good. Instead of being a victim of feelings or circumstances, you are charting your life, taking authority over it.

We are immortal beings, not driftwood. With our great powers of concentration, we are capable of great spiritual development.

Don't Be Controlled by Your Will and Emotions

You don't have to be depressed. You can be beautifully, wonderfully free by the power of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. You can move with God in a tremendous way—if you want to!

You must protect your will by allowing it to be brought under divine control. Your will (your soul) must determine that each day will be a good day, that you are going to love everybody you encounter, and that you are aggressively going to bless somebody else.

Do you habitually make statements like these? "I feel bad." "Things aren't going like they should." "The problems in my city are bad, and they aren't getting any better."

If you make remarks like these, you are being ruled by your emotions. Don't permit your emotions to control you. If you do, reading the morning newspaper will depress you every day of your life.

Assert Divine Dominion

How can you protect your will and control your emotions? Do what Jesus did. He asserted a spirit of divine dominion in His life.

Jesus understood the divine relationship that He had with His Father. They could communicate. We can see one instance of this in Jesus' example of prayer: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:9, 10).

Jesus knew that within Him lay a secret of strength: the Spiritual Force greater than negativism, fear, or any other demonic thing. Jesus knew also that with the Father He had total victory in His life.

Jesus never permitted Himself to be depressed, and you need never be either. You can assert the same spirit of divine dominion that Jesus did because you have the same relationship with the Father that Jesus had!

We can understand our divine relationship with the Father as Jesus did because God's Word says, "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

Jesus said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16:23). It is a divine promise that the Father will give to you what you genuinely ask. That's mighty good!

You can be anything. The whole world is open to you. God's treasures are yours. If you want to, and will to, you can receive God's unfathomable glories. Feed your faith and starve your doubts to death.

Prayer to be Free from Depression

I want you to be free from depression. Let me pray for you:

Lord, bless my neighbor. May he not suffer depression. He doesn't have to be sad; depression is not of You. I tell depression, "Go from him in Jesus' name!" The Bible says there are rivers of living water that can flow out of him; he can have a peace of God that passes all understanding (John 7:38, Phil. 4:7). I thank You for these, Lord, and command them to come to my friend right now, in Jesus' name! Amen.

David said, "Rejoice in the Lord" (Ps. 33:1). The wonderful God of the universe lives inside of you! You have His strength to throw off and triumph over the immense problems of life. Every day you can walk in such great joy that the things which happen to you will be immaterial. You must decide to say, "I will rejoice in God."

<u>Victory over depression is for you.</u> Be completely free! Be refreshed in the freedom that the Lord Jesus Christ has given to you. Walk in victorious joy!

Prayer of Salvation

If Jesus should come today, would you be ready? If you say the following prayer from the depths of your heart and surrender to Him as the Lord of your life, He will instantly forgive you of all your sins. As you trust Him, you will be filled with the hope and peace that only Jesus can offer.

If you are ready to make this commitment, please pray the following out loud:

Dear Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. I believe that you died and rose from the dead to save me from my sins. Please forgive me of all the sins I have committed. I here and now open my heart to You and ask You to come into my heart. Be Lord of my life and my personal Savior. Baptize me in your Spirit. Amen.

Now that you have given your life to Christ, it is important to pray and read the Bible on a daily basis. It also is important to attend a Bible-believing church regularly. Doing these things will help you to walk in continual fellowship with the Lord.

LeSEA 24-hour Prayerline: 1-800-365-3732 www.lesea.com



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