

Depression: An Overwhelming Giant

Lack of motivation, isolation, sleeping too much or sleeping too little, fatigue, sadness, helplessness, emptiness, feelings of worthlessness and even thoughts of death are characteristics of depression. Depression can be a debilitating condition when the brain and body are experiencing it. When a person is facing depression, it feels like a heavy weight or a crippling burden and at times it feels as if there is no way to escape this giant. As depression worsens, the giant grows bigger and a fear arises in the brain exclaiming, "Will there ever be a way out?!". This self-talk begins to increase, and the sole purpose of the self-talk is to keep you down. You see, our brain is wired to protect us or to reward us and thereby we learn how to navigate the world. Depression is a sort of virus in the brain that affects the entire body. When our depressed brain begins to narrate stories to make sense of the world it begins to falsely believe the only way to be safe is to be alone, but this grows into a giant which seeks to destroy us when depression can progress to thoughts of death. So, now what? What does a person do when they are experiencing some level of depression?

Lots of little changes in processes and chemicals in the brain build the giant of depression and therefore lots of little changes in processes and chemicals need to be changed to start combating this giant. Persistence and repetition build new processes and help the brain produce different chemicals to help counter the giant of depression. Once these

processes become stronger through coping skills and our chemicals change through nutrition, exercise and often medication we can keep the giant in the shadow of wellbeing.



But we need to be persistent to keep our wellbeing secure and often we cannot do it alone and need to ask for help. This help comes from others and if it may be given, from that only Comforter in heaven, but we must be busy in prayer for this help. So, now we ask, "what are some tools we can use to begin to build new processes?"



If we think about all the things happening in our brain, the stories, and the thoughts, then we need to challenge them, but first we need to get them out of our head and in front of our eyeballs. We do this through

writing or typing them. Once we have the stories written down, we need to go through it and check for the facts. Sticking to the facts and what we know for sure helps us to cut out all the pieces of the story which are not true. If we are writing down our negative self-talk then we need to challenge them by writing down the opposite. We can also give our brain a human name and think about how our brain needs to be our friend. How do we want our friend to talk to us? How do we want our friend to treat us? Once we learn to have a friendly relationship with our brain, we then naturally will change our negative self-talk. If we catastrophize or have a brain which only predicts the worst-case outcomes then again, we write down the worst-case scenario, then think about and write down the best-case scenario and finally the most-likely scenario. Finally, nutrition and exercise are two more powerful tools which help our depressed brains tremendously. What we eat is connected directly to our brains, which is to say our gut health equals our brain health. Exercise helps us release positive chemicals in our brains and I am not talking about rigorous training, but simply getting your heart rate up for 30 minutes. A simple walk can accomplish this!

Above all, may we put our trust in the Lord just as David did when facing the giant, Goliath. David then was given faith through the mercy of the Lord and was given the strength to approach this giant with five little stones and a slingshot whereby he was victorious. May we then strive to turn unto the Lord and remember ***Psalm 9:9, "The LORD will also be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble."***

