

WHAT ABOUT DEPRESSION? PART 3

In Part 1 of this series on depression, I spoke about the possible causes and reasons individuals struggle with depression. Part 2 dealt with the Biblical perspective on helping individuals find Hope in God through the depths of their despair. In this third and final part, I would like to share with you a simplified cognitive counseling model which has proved to be very successful in helping individuals find the Truth which leads to healing. This Truth is based upon the belief that faulty thinking is at the core of emotional disturbance and that by replacing faulty beliefs with beliefs based in reality (the Word of God) is the key element in overcoming any type of emotional problem. (This is not particularly effective with individuals who are depressed due to biological malfunctions; however most depressions are linked to emotional problems).

T.R.U.T.H.

This model can be used to help individuals better understand how lies cause emotional and spiritual problems and the importance of Truth in fighting back.

The first **T** represents Triggering events. A triggering event can range in severity from being a minute or two late to a meeting to getting a job promotion, having a baby, or even the death of a loved one. All triggering events bring on thoughts and beliefs about the incident. The **R** in the model refers to **wRong** thinking (I know, wrong starts with **w** but who would take a **Twuth** model seriously?) Chris Thurman wrote a book called, The Lies We Believe in which he addresses what he believes to be 30 of the most destructive and deceptive lies we buy into and what the Bible has to say about each of them. Faulty beliefs, attitudes, and expectations play like tapes over and over in our minds. They are primarily responsible for our emotional and spiritual problems. Based upon these faulty thoughts, which sets off the irrational and destructive belief systems, people respond with **Unhealthy** or **Unholy** (the **U** in the model) behaviors. These can

come in the form of anger, violence, anxiety, and yes even depression. Depression of the type we are discussing is actually a very poor coping mechanism for emotional conflict, which is ultimately rooted in **wRong** thinking. The second **T** in the model stands for **Truth**. Here I am to identify and "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (II Cor. 10:5) and ask the Holy Spirit to help me think about the situation through the eyes of Truth. Whatever I run through my mind, it needs to reflect Biblical Truth and involve an effort to think as Christ would have thought in the same situation. Some specific Biblical Truths that you will want to memorize and meditate on in the fight against depression are Psalms 42:5, Romans 8:16-18, Romans 8:28, Romans 8:31, and II Cor. 4:8-9. The final part of the model is **H**, the **Healthy** or **Holy** response. Here, my emotions are more peaceful, contented. I may feel some irritation, even righteous anger, but I do not feel bitterness, resentment, or rage, which all usually lead to depression. My reaction will reflect Christ living in me. It should be noted that this TRUTH model is a learning process which takes a lot of practice and discipline. It works well for all types of distress. Try it.

IS MEDICATION CHRISTIAN?

I believe with all my heart that all healing comes from God. On occasion God does intervene directly to heal depression, but He also uses Christian counseling, medication, and the passage of time to heal, even as He comforts the depressed in their suffering. Why would God not use medications for the benefit of His suffering children? "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people?" wrote Jeremiah (8:22).

I have observed individuals, who have suffered the most extreme cases of clinical depression imaginable, finding miraculous healing through the use of an antidepressant medication. Major depression destroys lives. The reluctance of some Christians to take antidepressants is unnecessary. Though I would not recommend medication for all those suffering from depression, in the severe cases, there are now many non-addictive modern medi-