

1. Depression and the Christian

In the Bible we meet people just like us. At times, some of them are feeling so bad we can describe them as being depressed.

The Psalms give us a powerful description of how we might feel when we are depressed: speaking of 'mourning', 'groaning', 'pain', and 'sorrows in my heart' (Psalm 38:6, 8, 17; 13:2). David says his strength is being 'dried up' (Psalm 32:3-4). In Psalms 42 & 43 he asks himself a question and in doing so he describes exactly how he is feeling: "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?" (Psalm 42:5; see also v. 11 and 43:5). When he looks at the things that

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are happening in his life, everything seems to be inside out, back to front and upside down – and it disturbs him deeply! As we read the Bible we discover other people who felt like this at times, and it also helps us to understand some of the reasons we may be feeling like this.

Jesus was tempted by Satan and often spoke about him. Because of this we must believe that Satan exists

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and that he is behind the sin (Luke 22:31), sickness (Acts 10:38) and sorrow that is in the world. Jesus defeated him on the cross (1 John 3:8); and although he is still active in the world, he cannot harm believers (Luke

22:3-32; 1 John 5:18). But we must resist him when he tries to tempt us (James 4:7). When we are feeling depressed he may tempt us to believe that God does not love us or that we may not even be Christians at all! Here are some things that will help us when this happens to us:

- ▷ We are to remind ourselves that even though our joy may be gone God's grace is still there.
- ▷ We may *feel* that we have lost contact with God but in *fact* we haven't.
- ▷ We must see our current condition in the eternal perspective.
- ▷ It is normal for our feelings to fluctuate. Sometimes, we feel very close to God, sometimes, we don't.
- ▷ God will bring this condition to an end. It will not last forever.

A verse to remember

“Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.”

(Psalm 42:5)