

How Can I Cope With Depression?

1 Peter 1:5-6: *5 Who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.*



Depression can be overwhelming. Even though many people do suffer from it, and even though there are treatments and medications that can help it, depression can still be an insurmountable life obstacle for any individual who faces it. There is no easy answer and no miracle cure, so those of us who experience it are left with the sobering reality of its potential lurking influence in our daily lives. So, what do we do? As Christians, we are taught to have faith and rely on God's peace. While this is sound and powerful advice, we need to find ways to deeply rely on our faith and to transform

God's peace into a tool of growth and healing. One way to work on this is to observe the struggles of a biblical hero of faith and step-by-step identify with their struggles and journey towards a more God-driven life.

Depression is a serious issue and a leading cause or risk factor for suicide. This highlights the importance of proper diagnosis and treatment. Depression is very treatable, and the majority of patients find relief through medication, therapy or life changes.



We are NOT medical professionals, and we have not been professionally trained to handle anxiety or depression disorders. Often, Christians may need professional help, including medication, to handle these kinds of challenges. We fully advocate for such treatment where and when it is appropriate.

If you suffer from depression, we are thankful that you are connecting to this episode. You are not alone!

Why would God call one who is challenged with depression to follow Jesus when we know that this tends to downplay the outward transformation so many Christians look for?

In many circles, Christianity is emotional—everyone is feeling good; they are saved—but a depressed person is just not there. Why would God call such a one:

1 Corinthians 1:26-30: (NLT) *26 Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. 27 Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And He chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. 28 God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. 29 As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God. 30 God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.*

We note for these verses, the King James and other versions can be a little confusing to read. However, here the New Living Translation makes it easy for us to memorize these verses to say when we are struggling with self-worth: *God has united me with Christ Jesus. Christ has made me right with God.*

It's not about us having to be so great, strong or smart. It's about being under the covering of Jesus, which makes us acceptable. We directly benefit from his relationship with the Father.

God only calls certain individuals to be true footstep followers of Jesus. Therefore, the greatest privilege God's plan offers is not usually given to those who have the greatest intellect, courage or experience. On the contrary, it is given to those who struggle, who have deficiencies and who are afraid. Those who struggle aren't disqualified; rather, God's strength can shine through them.

The call goes out to those who struggle so that God's grace can be in them—because *God has united you with Christ Jesus, and Christ made us right with God.*

For those of us who experience chronic or even occasional depression, let us consider that the weight of this experience can be a powerful tool of God as He teaches us step by small step to rely upon His grace, His strength, His spirit and His providence. We want to understand and recognize how God uses our difficulties as tools in His hand.

We will walk through some of the experiences of God's mighty prophet Elijah to illustrate God's care and compassion for those He chooses to do His work.



Under the reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, Israel was deeply entrenched in idolatry:

1 Kings 16:32-33: *32 So he erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he built in Samaria. 33 Ahab also made the Asherah. Thus Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him.*

Elijah was sent to the king to proclaim God's consequences for their idolatry in the form of a drought:

1 Kings 17:1: *Now Elijah... said to Ahab, As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.*

Elijah then hid from the king. About three-and-a-half years later, God instructs Elijah to go back to the king:

1 Kings 18:1: *Now it happened after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.*

That first meeting between Ahab and Elijah was confrontational to say the least!

1 Kings 18:17-19: *17 When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, Is this you, you troubler of Israel? 18 He said, I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and you have followed the Baals. 19 Now then send and gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, together with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.*

This event at Mount Carmel was a most dramatic demonstration of God's power, found in **1 Kings 18:20-39**. One man, Elijah, stood against 850 idolatrous priests and prevailed, as God sent fire down from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifice.

Just as God had promised, rain followed once the foundations of Baal worship had been destroyed.

What a strong and mighty prophet God called to do His will! We can draw upon Elijah's experience to gain confidence, as we are called to follow Christ and do the Father's will.

We just summed up this magnificent effort on the part of Elijah to dethrone the worship of Baal in Israel. He did a remarkable job! How could such a faithful man be depressed?

You would think such a decisive victory and the ending of the drought would have brought a good result for Elijah, but it did not:

1 Kings 19:1-2: *1 Now Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.*

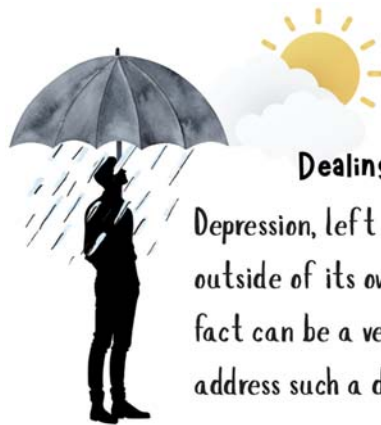
Essentially she was saying, "Elijah, you will be assassinated within 24 hours!"

What a gap between expectation and reality! Elijah expected Israel to turn back to God and away from idolatry after the showdown on Mount Carmel, but instead he faced rejection—leading to deep despair.



We need to be on guard when things don't turn out the way we hoped or expected.

As we will see, Elijah would run away, literally afraid for his life. This part of his mighty experience would reveal the deep, inward turmoil of Elijah's fragile life. Elijah did not seem very fragile in the events leading up to this. But next we will see the emotionally fragile core of this amazing prophet and the difficulty and challenges he would face from the inside out.



Dealing with Depression's Challenges:

Depression, left to its own devices, seemingly has no master outside of its own agenda. Understanding and embracing this fact can be a very important foundation for learning how to address such a difficult and recurring challenge in our lives.

Depression became a major part of the next part of Elijah's life. It will be a great learning experience for us as well.

Even though Elijah did the right things over time, the negative impact of his positive actions would cause him fear. Sounds like the rest of us!

**Even though Elijah was so powerfully used by God, he was still human.
How would he manage his own depression and still serve God?**

This is an important question for us. By focusing on what Elijah did and did not do, it will show us the reality of the struggle. As we will see, Elijah did not just remarkably recover from his depressed state. On the other hand, he struggled with it even though he was given clear and godly direction on each step of his journey.

As we look at the depression part of Elijah's experience, we want to understand depression from the perspective of what happened to Elijah.

We will consider three phases of depression shown to us through his experience:
INTERNALIZATION, ISOLATION and INSULATION:



OUR FIRST DEPRESSION OBSERVATION IS INTERNALIZATION:

This happens when a person focuses on what is happening by interpreting things using the solitary perspective of inside-out thinking: MY thoughts, MY feelings, MY conclusions.

Elijah had overcome insurmountable odds as he stood for God and, as a result of his heroic efforts, was faced with being hunted and executed:

1 Kings 19:3-5: *3 And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba...and left his servant there. 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers. 5 He lay down and slept under a juniper tree...*

Elijah is completely overwhelmed and giving up. He poured his whole heart into destroying idolatry, and now he is alone. *I couldn't fix it. I couldn't do the work you had me to do. I'm a failure.*

He sits down under the juniper tree, utters his prayer and then lays down. We can see his feelings of defeat increasing. His only prayer is for his suffering to end as he sought to numb his discouragement with sleep.

Was this the reward for successfully and courageously standing for and serving the living God? Is this all we get? This is how he is feeling at this moment, and we can't blame him! It was such a massive victory, yet he feels alone and believes he has failed.

As we review the challenges of depression seen in this account, we want to interject hopeful scriptures.



Philippians 1:6: *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

This is a New Testament promise for us as Christians. If we are suffering and dealing with depression, think about the words: *He who began a good work in you will perfect it.* Look at Elijah—God had begun a good work in him, and God was not done with him yet. He would need to learn that over time.

In his despair, Elijah had stopped to rest and give up. Instead, he was strengthened to go on:

1 Kings 19:5-6: *5 ...there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, Arise, eat. 6 Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again.*

Even in Elijah's weakness, God's direct providence strengthened and directed him. The angel touched him, gently getting his attention. Elijah's purpose had not ended; he just didn't know it yet. God was paying attention even amid Elijah's despair: *Just take my life because it is worthless. I've failed utterly; there is simply nothing left.*

This is a very sad, difficult place to be. We need more hope!



Psalms 34:7-8: *7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear (revere) Him, and rescues them. 8 O taste and see that the LORD is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!*

Taste—because the Lord nourishes, just like the angel gave Elijah physical food.

Notice the angel was with Elijah, encamped around him. Elijah was not alone, even if he wasn't ready to see this.



OUR FIRST DEPRESSION SMALL STEP TOWARD GODLY PEACE—ACKNOWLEDGE:

Simply acknowledge that godly external input is present. Allow it to touch us, to get our attention. Even though it may not change how we feel, this acknowledgment can plant seeds of hope in our hearts and minds.

We are not suggesting this acknowledgment is some miraculous cure. Elijah acknowledged that God was present through the angel, but he didn't know how to move forward. It was beyond him at this point, and that was okay. He just needed to acknowledge that external help and hope from God were there.

Remember, Elijah had laid down for a nap when the angel gently woke him and offered him food, saying, *Arise and eat*. Elijah ate and then lay down again.

Though clearly cared for and strengthened, Elijah was not ready to respond. He needed further attention and repeated direction:

1 Kings 19:7: *The angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you.*



Notice the little detail about the angel touching him now for a second time, providing reassurance and encouragement. Physical touch has an effect on mental well-being. Research has shown that regular, positive touch like hugs or massage has been associated with improvements in mood, reduced anxiety and decreased stress levels in individuals with depression. It makes sense he would be reassured with the angel's touch. It would remind him he was not alone.

He was roused again by the angel's gentle, strengthening touch. God's care was evident as He carefully prepared Elijah for his next steps. God had not abandoned him. Elijah may have felt abandoned, but God had other plans. Elijah just couldn't see them at this point; he was overburdened with the issues in his life.

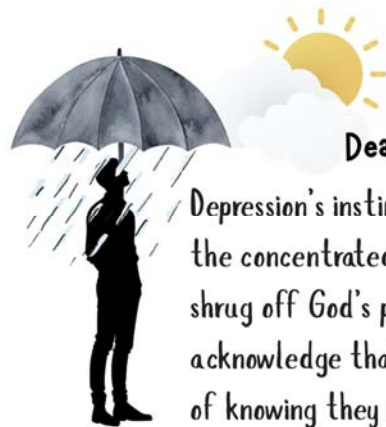
God is not yelling, "Elijah, wake up!" He is gently touching and giving him nourishment, saying, "It's time to move on." There is such great compassion shown in this experience. God's providence can work for us with similar patience and compassion.



Psalm 73:26: *My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

Our bodies and emotions are fragile and subject to exhaustion, sickness and discouragement, even to the point of depression. The phrase *strength of my heart* (literally, *rock of my heart* in Hebrew) signifies stability, endurance and refuge in God.

In this part of Elijah's experience, he is being shown care and given direction, even though he is not yet in a place where he can be happy and joyful.



Dealing with Depression's Challenges:

Depression's instinct is to internalize our pain, to deal with it within the concentrated quietness of our own minds. Even if we instinctively shrug off God's providences in our despair, let us try and simply acknowledge that they can and do exist. Let us take the small step of knowing they are there even if we cannot readily respond to them.

The first time Elijah received the nourishment from the angel, he went back to sleep. He wasn't yet able to move on. He was gently nudged again, given what he needed and told there was more for him.

It's okay if we aren't quite ready to embrace the next step in our own experience. God will continually give whether we are capable of receiving at that moment because He knows our heart. He knows who we are, He knows our brokenness and He is going to patiently give until eventually we can get to the point of being able to grab hold of what's next.

What a turn of events! This great hero of faith is now mired in the depths of his own despair. This sure looks and feels hopeless.

**Now that Elijah is in the depths of depression,
how will God lift him and show him a way forward?**

By observing the way God worked with Elijah to eventually rekindle hope in him, we can gain a much clearer understanding of how God can and will work with us when we enter our own despair. Again, there are no miracles here. While Elijah had an angel guiding him, we can also have God's messengers in the form of family, friends or the brotherhood present to help us along as well.

Elijah gets an angel restoring him with a gentle touch and special cake—what might we get? For those of us who don't suffer from depression, how can I be a "messenger"—an angel—for others?

(Source: *The Worst Thing to Say to Someone Who's Depressed*, June 6, 2025, by Angela Haupt <https://time.com/7291435/worst-thing-to-say-depression-depressed/>)

- ✗ Don't say: "Oh well, everyone feels like that sometimes." This is a well-intentioned response that often stems from a desire to normalize an uncomfortable situation. But instead, it minimizes it. Depression isn't just about feeling sad; it can lead to symptoms including fatigue, brain fog, social isolation, suicidal thoughts and weight gain or loss.
- ✓ Instead say, "That sounds really heavy. I'm here to support you however I can."

This is sound advice. Someone who does not suffer from depression finds it difficult to see how utterly debilitating it is and how someone can get stuck in such a hopeless place. There's no way to just "snap out of it." We can help by acknowledging this is a difficult challenge and assure the person they are not alone by being there for them.



OUR SECOND DEPRESSION OBSERVATION IS ISOLATION:

INTERNALIZING invites ISOLATION. In this state of mind, we are alone, as we have defensively shut down or minimized the effects of outside influences.

At this point, the depressed person ignores outside influences, just letting them go by. They are now shutting them down, minimizing them. They consciously do not want to let the outside in.

Let's reconnect to Elijah, who is experiencing isolation. Once he received strength a second time, he would be able to follow God's direction, even though he felt alone and was still struggling. But at least he was taking steps!

His heart may not have been in it, but he was taking steps:

1 Kings 19:8: *So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.*

Even though Elijah was depressed, God accepted whatever he could offer.

Mount Horeb is also known as Mount Sinai. Beersheba and Mount Horeb are about 260 miles (417 kilometers) apart. Back in **1 Kings 19:3**, Elijah left his servant in Beersheba and first traveled a day into the wilderness, so it should have taken maybe two weeks at the most to get there. Forty days was way longer than would be expected.

Incidentally, both Jesus and Moses miraculously fasted and prayed for 40 days and 40 nights, and all three (Elijah, Moses and Jesus) appear in the vision on the Mount of Transfiguration (**Matthew 17:1-13**).

Symbolically, the number 40 in the Bible often indicates a period of testing.

Elijah walked and struggled alone for 40 days. He was probably doing a lot of wandering at this point, considering it should have taken two weeks, yet he took 40 days.

God led Elijah to an unforeseen destination. Here, at Mount Horeb, he would begin the process of refocusing. Let's think about the lonely, quiet time he experienced during this 40-day journey. He had plenty of time to recount his experiences and what he perceived to be his own failures. If he is alone and just had these experiences, what went through his mind again and again?

Perhaps he continually played the recording in his head, feeling overwhelmed as he drags himself along to where God directed. But at least he is going! Even if it is taking him much longer that it normally would, he is still going.





Isaiah 40:31: *Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.*

Elijah was certainly gaining strength by being patiently cared for by the Lord's angel and was now moving little steps in the right direction.

He went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights—the Lord strengthened him and he arrived safely.

Even when someone is depressed, they can still be heading in the right direction, though slowly and feeling like a failure with every step. This is where Elijah was. But it is okay, as God understands. God sees where we are and can reach out with hope, little piece by little piece.



OUR SECOND DEPRESSION SMALL STEP TOWARDS GODLY PEACE—APPLY:

When in an ISOLATION state of mind, simply apply the external godly input we have received, to the darkness of our own perceptions. To apply this input is to respond to it. It is to communicate with God about where we are and how we feel.

Applying doesn't mean it's going to get better. It simply means applying godly input to our lives. We can almost hear Elijah's internal voice saying, *Yes, Lord, here You are. You have me going to this other place. I don't know if I can make it there. I'm weary. I'm done. I'm a failure. Why are You bringing me there? I don't know what to do. I don't know how You can change what has already happened.*

As he walks, he is applying godly input and taking those steps—*I am trying to follow God even though my heart is broken.*

Elijah has been on this journey for 40 days. He was nourished and miraculously built up, and yet when he gets to Mount Horeb, he only sees one thing:

1 Kings 19:9-10: *9 Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, What are you doing here, Elijah?*

God called him by name—can you imagine?

Of course, the Lord knew how Elijah had gotten to this point, but this question forced Elijah to examine himself and articulate what he was feeling.

10 He said, I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

This is so sad! This made no sense to him. He did everything God told him to, and yet he failed to bring Israel back to God—what he expected to happen didn't happen. Worse, he thought he was the only faithful servant of God left. This is the only thing he could see: *I alone am left.*



Rick, from a practical standpoint, when you help those with depression in your role as a minister, what is the pushback? Why can't they instinctively understand that isolating isn't good for them?

Rick

The depression is so deep, it's so dark and overwhelming that there is no other reality. When I start to press them, one of the reactions I often get is, "If they really knew who I am, nobody would want me around." This is part of the mentality of dwelling in a place of isolation, a sense that there is nobody else and with no hope.

I say, "Okay, but I'm here, and I'm not going to leave your side. I'm here with you; I want to walk with you and sit with you. We'll be quiet together—whatever it takes."

Another pushback might be, "Have YOU ever gone through this? Have YOU ever experienced depression?" No, I never have. I get depressed, but I've never experienced depression. There is a massive difference between the two.

"Then you can't possibly understand." I answer, "You're right. I can't. I can't even imagine. But here's what I know. I know who you are because God called you. I know you were made right in Christ Jesus. You were given God's grace and spirit, the same grace and spirit I was given. I can't enter into your experience, but I can walk alongside you knowing who you are in Christ."

It is important for us who don't go through depression to understand those who do, letting them know they are not alone.



Isaiah 43:1: *But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel, Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!*

I have called you by name.

What are you doing here, *Elijah*? Realizing the concept of being called one by one to Christ is a very personal thing. God knows who you are, what you're made of and what your weaknesses are. He called YOU. There is power in this hope.



God would now demonstrate to Elijah how His power and will can be manifested in unusual ways:

1 Kings 19:11-12: *11 So He said, Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD. And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire....*

Perhaps Elijah saw these great demonstrations of power as God's overwhelming ability to destroy sin, just as He had with the prophets of Baal.

He brought fire down from heaven to consume the sacrifice to show that God was powerful. Perhaps this was Elijah's expectation, and yet God was not in any of those things! Our expectations of God are often a little different than we think!



Dealing with Depression's Challenges:

As our depression internalizes and isolates our struggles, we want to be at least willing to notice and apply what God is willing to show us. Once again, even if this doesn't change our minds, it builds on the previous step of acknowledgment. This means we can now quietly begin cultivating the seeds that God's nourishment planted in our hearts. Continued small steps lead to progress.

Elijah wasn't yet ready to change. Even if applying what God is showing us doesn't change our minds, it at least puts the pieces in place. Apply what God shows us and just let it do what it is there to do—nourish the seeds that are planted in our hearts so we can continue with small steps, even if we feel like it is all worthless.

Two things have become abundantly clear: First, Elijah is really lost in his discouragement. Second, God is overwhelmingly patient and present with him.

**Following this experience in Elijah's life is distressing.
The depth of his despair is so real. How did God break through it?**

The dark distress of this experience is exactly what makes it so valuable to us. We are seeing how one of the mightiest prophets of all time suffered a sense of overwhelming defeat and how God patiently and intentionally worked him through it. The point is that God DOES love and DOES care for His people. We simply need to find a way to see, appreciate and accept that love.

(Source: *The Worst Thing to Say to Someone Who's Depressed*, June 6, 2025, by Angela Haupt <https://time.com/7291435/worst-thing-to-say-depression-depressed/>)

- ❌ "But you seem fine." This reflects a distorted view of depression, where people don't eat, don't sleep, don't go to work, look terrible, and don't shower. Many people work very hard to mask their symptoms because of the stigma and shame, and because of a fear of being a burden for their partners or loved ones.
- ✅ Instead say, "I'm really glad you shared this with me. You don't have to pretend with me." When we meet someone's depression with curiosity instead of correction, and empathy instead of evaluation or advice, then we become part of their healing environment. That can really change someone's life.

Rick

But it takes time. Meeting someone's depression with curiosity and empathy can change someone's life. I can't tell you how often somebody whose spouse or child or loved one is struggling very deeply would whisper to me, "Rick, can you fix this?" And the answer is, "No, but I can contribute. I can be there." We can all do this.

God spoke to Elijah through the angel, showing Elijah—and us!—every step of the way that we are not alone.



OUR THIRD DEPRESSION OBSERVATION IS INSULATION.

When dwelt upon, INTERNALIZING and ISOLATION naturally bring us to the point of trying to INSULATE ourselves from outside influences. By insulating ourselves, we rationalize that our state is comfortable and acceptable when we know neither is true!

We insulate to feel safe from outside influences.

Elijah was miraculously shown that God is present and above all. This should change everything, right?

What many of us think "should" happen is not necessarily the final answer—it is not necessarily in God's plan in His time:

1 Kings 19:12-14: *12 ...after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing.*

All these dramatic and powerful things were happening, but now there is just this *gentle blowing* (the King James Version reads, *still, small voice*, which may be more familiar). The point here is that God is all-powerful, but His power is not always displayed in dramatic ways.

13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle (his outer garment) and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave...

Perhaps here is the beginning of his outward progress. He moved towards the *gentle breeze*.

But next God repeats the same question and gets the same answer:

...And behold, a voice came to him and said, What are you doing here, Elijah? 14 Then he said, I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Elijah simply cannot shake the ISOLATION because he has INSULATED himself to dwell in isolation's grip. He is telling God, *I worked hard, and now I'm alone, and they're seeking my life*. As long as he remained ISOLATED, he could not find a way out! However, God Almighty would show him the way!

When we are isolated, we are only getting feedback from ourselves. We become our own unreliable echo chamber. The COVID-19 pandemic was a sad example of **INTERNALIZATION**, **ISOLATION** and then **INSULATION**.

Humans are social creatures. In the first year of the pandemic, anxiety and depression globally increased by a massive 25 percent, according to the World Health Organization, with young people and women affected the most.



Those of us who do not experience depression can look back on how we felt about being taken away from everyone else. We were given a little taste of what those who experience chronic depression go through.

Be available for them; don't try to "fix" them. Let them know they are not alone.



Psalms 16:8: *I have set the LORD continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*

David was actively choosing to keep God at his right hand. In ancient combat, warriors often carried their shields in the left hand and weapons in the right. The right side was more exposed, so a trusted ally would stand guard on that side. Here, God is David's protector to shield and support. David was not alone.

What are you doing here, Elijah? Elijah was not alone and God did not give up showing him this fact, even though Elijah could not yet embrace it. God is patient and persistent!



OUR THIRD DEPRESSION SMALL STEP TOWARDS GODLY PEACE—ALLOW:

Simply allow the several small things that God has put before us to have an effect. Give God's providence and promises permission to occupy a space in our hearts and minds and to take root!

I'll make a little space. Okay, maybe I'll make a little more space because God's goodness is continually there.

Having seen God's display and having been drawn to His presence in the gentle breeze, Elijah was now given work to do.

He was also now given a plain answer to his isolation—God had been planting the seeds of this answer all along:

1 Kings 19:15-16,18: *15 The LORD said to him, Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram (Syria); 16 and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat... you shall anoint as prophet in your place. 18 Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.*

Hallelujah! Elijah's efforts were not in vain as he had thought, but he was so depressed he couldn't see God's overarching plan. We need to always remember, no matter how bad things get, God has a plan and we are all in it.

Sometimes we initially lack the capacity to see it, and that's okay. It took Elijah a long time, too. As long as we allow God's input and we crawl along just the way Elijah did, it's okay. He knows our frame. He knows what we are made of. We are not alone.

ELIJAH WAS NOT ALONE! God commanded Elijah to continue his mission of removing idolatrous leaders. Anoint this king, anoint that king. He also revealed that 7,000 faithful men still lived in Israel. They were there in Israel the whole time. He was not alone! This would set Elijah in motion once again.

The 7,000 were there all along but Elijah didn't know about them. That's the problem with ISOLATION. It's hard to accept accurate news from the outside world.



Psalms 18:1-2: *1 I love You, O LORD, my strength. 2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my Rock, in whom I take refuge; my Shield and the horn of my salvation, my Stronghold.*

O LORD, my strength. Not only was Elijah not alone, but he was going to be in the company of others who also acknowledged God as their source of strength. He was a powerful prophet who struggled with human weakness, but was greatly blessed by God.



Dealing with Depression's Challenges:

Depression thrives when we internalize our struggle, isolate ourselves from others and then put up walls to further insulate us from outside influences. Our powerful and abiding hope is in the FACT that God is with us. Often, His presence can be felt through others who truly care about us. Let us acknowledge His love, apply it to our faltering hearts, and allow it to grow within us so that our depression can begin to fall away and, small step by small step, be replaced with gratitude.

It doesn't happen immediately. We have to work at it small step by small step. It doesn't feel like anything takes effect, just like with Elijah. When we go through these experiences, if we can just look at our experiences and say, *Well, I'm kind of like Elijah, kind of like one of the great prophets of God who had a lot of internal strife and struggle, and it's okay.*



Psalms 139:8-12: *8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me. 11 If I say, Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, and the light around me will be night, 12 Even the darkness is not dark to You, and the night is as bright as the day...*

The point here is very simple: GOD IS ALWAYS WITH US. If we are called to follow Jesus and we are trying, even if we continually falter and fall, He is still with us.

Even if it looks like it is continuously dark, His hand is there and can guide us. Let us look for those small things. For those of us who see others struggling, let's not let them be alone. Don't try to fix them; be present as their friend, be patient with them and support them so they can eventually, by God's grace, see things more clearly.

**So, how can I cope with depression?
For Rick, Jonathan, Julie and Christian Questions...
...Think about it!**

All scriptures cited are from the NASB1995 translation unless otherwise noted.



Next episode

Episode 1391: Why Are Many Called if Only Few Are Chosen?



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Text CQREWIND to 22828
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Bonus Material and Study Questions

Recommended additional study:

Ep.1125: Does My Anxiety or Depression Invalidate My Christianity? (Part II)

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1125-anxiety/>



Parents and Bible class teachers, continue your studies on this topic with these short, animated videos for kids at ChristianQuestions.com/YouTube:

- What happened with Elijah and the priests of Baal?
<https://christianquestions.com/cq-videos/videos-cq-kids/elijah-and-priests-of-baal/>
- What can we do when we're sad or frustrated?
<https://christianquestions.com/cq-videos/videos-cq-kids/what-to-do-if-sad-or-frustrated/>
- What is courage?
<https://christianquestions.com/cq-videos/videos-cq-kids/what-is-courage/>

These can help us acknowledge, apply and allow God's word, will and way to find space in our hearts to be planted, cultivated and fruitful:

Psalms 46:1: *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Psalms 116:5-6: *5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate. 6 The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me.*

Psalms 119:50-51: *50 This is my comfort in my affliction, that Your word has revived me. 51 The arrogant utterly deride me, yet I do not turn aside from Your law.*

1 Corinthians 3:16: *Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you?*

Colossians 3:1-4: *1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.*

2 Corinthians 4:7-11: *7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; 8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.*

2 Thessalonians 3:16: *Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!*

1 Peter 1:3-7: (KJV) *3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

1 Peter 4:12-13: (KJV) *12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

1 Peter 5:6-9: *6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.*

Study QUESTIONS

Ep.1390: How Can I Cope With Depression?

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1390-depressed/>

See:



1. Who does God call to be true footstep followers of Jesus? (1 Corinthians 1:26-30)
2. Describe Elijah's dramatic victory over the 850 prophets of Baal under the Lord's guidance. How did Elijah react to this remarkable victory over idolatry? (1 Kings 18:1-39, 19:1-4)
 - When have you done something righteous and been severely criticized for it? What was your reaction? Can you empathize with Elijah's?
3. **INTERNALIZATION** - Define "internalization" as it is used in this episode.
 - a. How did Elijah exhibit signs of internalization in his flight from Jezebel? (1 Kings 19:3-5)
 - b. How did God react? How did Elijah react? (1 Kings 19:5-6)
 - Why is Philippians 1:6 an assurance and a hope for you (and for Elijah)?
 - c. What is the first small step towards finding godly peace? Explain.
 - d. How does God continue to nudge and care for Elijah in his despair? (1 Kings 19:7)
 - Share what Psalm 73:26 means to you personally.
 - How have you had an "angel" or been an angel, when needed?
4. **ISOLATION** - Define "isolation" as it is used in this episode.
 - a. What was happening to Elijah at this time that contributed to his isolation? (1 Kings 19:8-9)
 - b. How does Elijah see himself now that God has nourished him and strengthened him? (verse 10)
 - How do you feel the joy and the encouragement of Isaiah 40:31? Can you share that with others?
 - c. What is the second small step towards finding godly peace? Explain.
5. **INSULATION** - Define "insulation" as it is used in this episode.
 - a. What did Elijah expect as a result of his actions? Of God's approach to him? (1 Kings 19:12-14)
 - b. Why can't he move on? How does God respond? (1 Kings 19:15-18)
 - How is Psalm 16:8 an "active choice" by David? How could it be for us?
 - c. What is the third small step towards godly peace? Explain.
6. Elijah is given hope and realizes he is not alone in Israel, nor without God. Can you use this beautiful example of God's persistent, patient care for Elijah for someone you know who is suffering despair?
 - Psalms 18:1-2: In what way is the Lord your strength? Your rock? Your fortress? How do you "take refuge" in Him?
 - Explain what Psalms 139:8-12 means to you in your Christian walk.