



Leadership Training Module 3:  
*Effective Biblical Counseling:  
Depression: Part 1 & 2*

**Leadership Training; Module 3**

**Effective Biblical Counseling: *Depression; Part 1 & 2***

# Introduction

*Depression Definition:* An ongoing, reoccurring debilitating mood, attitude or feeling of hopelessness and/or despair. Can be accompanied by extreme fatigue; impaired concentration; feelings of worthlessness or guilt; and occasionally suicide ideation. These are the reasons given for why the depressed person is not fulfilling his or her responsibilities in life.

The difference between *Depression* and deep *discouragement* is immobility.



In most cases, the cause of depression is not singular, it is complex.



## **Agreeing to the medical model presents a problem for gospel-oriented Christians:**

Declaring that someone has a diagnosed medical disease removes all hope –

- 1) because no mercy, grace, forgiveness, or restoration is available where no “sin” has been admitted.
- 2) because they are never cured. Medication is *control*, not cure.

**The pain and suffering of depression is real. John of the Cross called it, “the dark night of the soul.”**



Some other descriptions (cited in: *Depression; A Stubborn Darkness* by Dr. Edward Welch):

- “My heart is empty. All the fountains that should run with longing, are in me dried up.”
- “The mental pain seems unbearable. Time stands still.”
- “A veritable howling tempest in the brain.”
- “Malignant madness.”



Rather than rush to judgment, we must be careful to respect their suffering.

As counselors, we must always be caring, compassionate, good listeners.



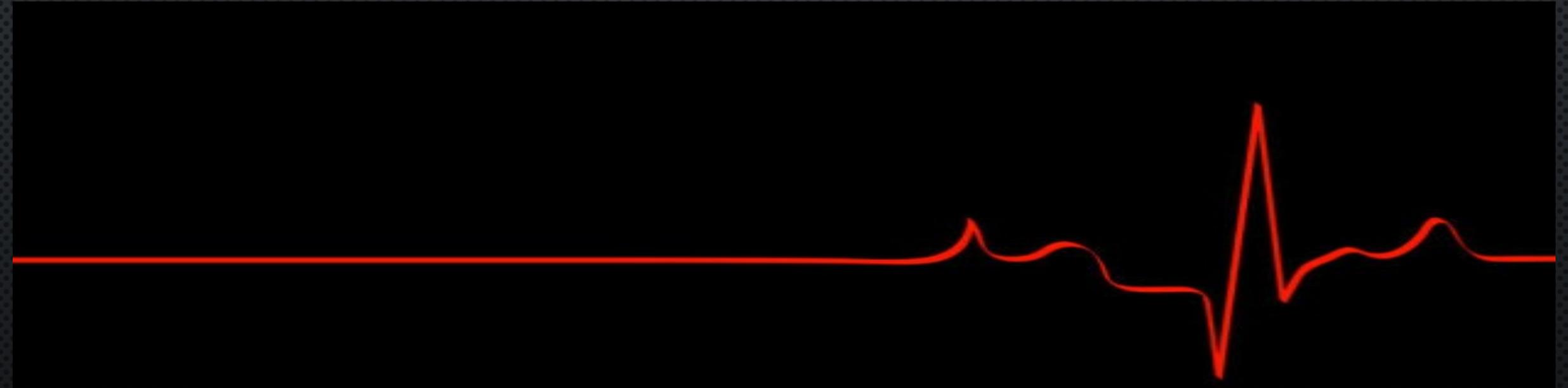
Why is depression considered an Illness or 'disease' by so many people?

A. Because, people who suffer from it feel badly on an ongoing basis, understandably want relief, and are unable to find it on their own.



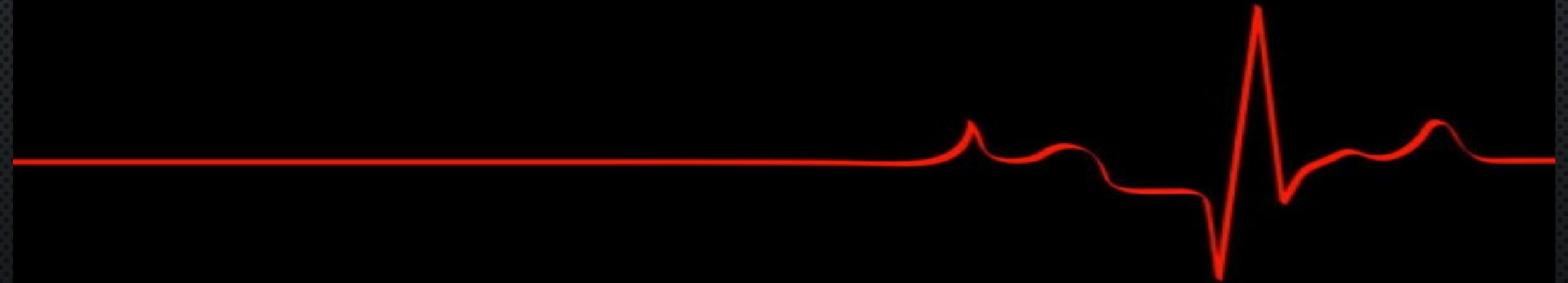
Why is depression considered an Illness or 'disease' by so many people?

B. Because, people who suffer from it think they are unable to control it themselves.



Why is depression considered an illness or 'disease' by so many people?

C. Because, when they consult a doctor he is typically able to prescribe medications that make them feel better.



# Why is depression considered an illness or 'disease' by so many people?

D. Because, finding a source for their predicament other than holding them responsible for anything in any way is desirable to them.

**CONCLUSION: Therefore, the biblical counselor is not qualified to help.**

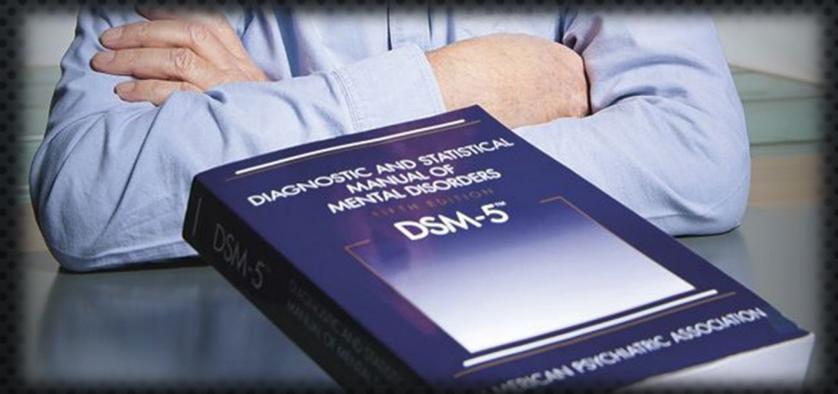


Why depression should NOT be considered an illness or disease:

A. Because, being made to *feel* better does not prove causality.

Why depression should NOT be considered an illness or disease:

The DSM V describes symptoms. It does not provide the cause or a cure.



# Why depression should NOT be considered an illness or disease:

Psychologist Irving Kirsch, PhD.; Associate Director of the Placebo Studies Program at Harvard Medical School.

“All told, we analyzed 38 published clinical trials involving more than 3,000 depressed patients. What we found came as a big surprise. It turned out that 75 to 87 percent of the antidepressant effect was also produced by placebos - sugar pills with no active ingredients that are used to control the effects of hope and expectation in clinical trials.”

# Why depression should NOT be considered an illness or disease:

“What you have with placebo is the ability within your mind to affect your condition.”

This is key. “The patient’s improvement is due to his belief that the medicine will help.”

Dr. Kirsch’s conclusion: “Depression is not a brain disease and chemicals don’t cure it.”



**Why depression should NOT be considered an illness or disease:**

B. Because, in the majority of cases, no measurable, clinical, verifiable proof exists that something is wrong with the body.



# Why depression should NOT be considered an illness or disease:

“For something to qualify as an illness, there must be evidence of damage to or malfunction of some part of the body’s tissue. There must be objective evidence that the body is not functioning normally. The proof must be obtained by objective tests that yield definable, measurable data” (Dr. Robert Smith).

# Why depression should NOT be considered an illness or disease:

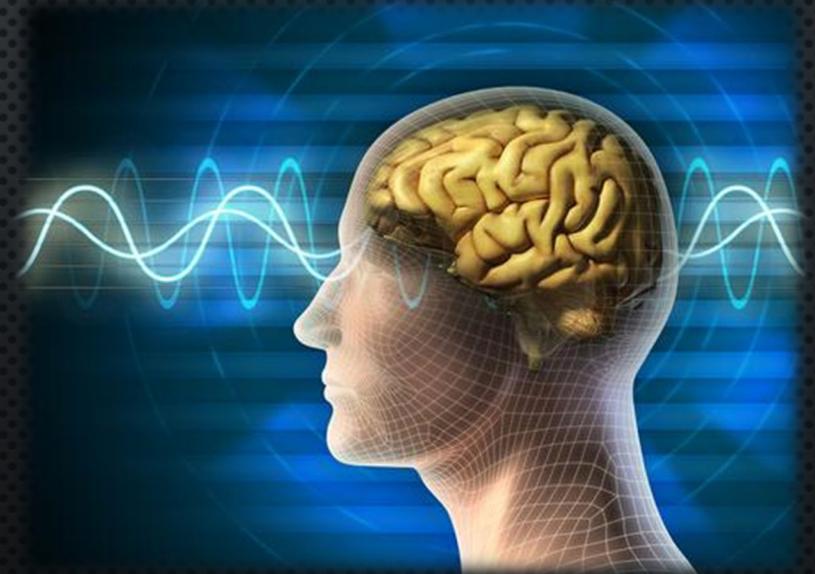
“No disease exists in the human body without some kind of change at the cell level, which results in abnormal function.... In fact, there are no laboratory tests or x-rays that can make the diagnosis of depression. What we do have are criteria that must be met—a list of symptoms that must be present—in order to make a diagnosis of depression”

(Dr. Hodges).

# Why depression should NOT be considered an illness or disease:

C. Because, chemical imbalance is a theory; not a proven fact.

“With depression, there is no proof that something is wrong with the body. The diagnosis ‘depression’ is based on thinking, feelings and behavior... subjective criteria.”



# Why depression should NOT be considered an illness or disease:

“The biochemical theory of depression is in a state of crisis. The data just do not fit the theory” (Dr. Irving Kirsch).

“A faulty theory will lead to faulty treatment” (Dr. Charles Hodges).

Former head of the *National Institute for Mental Health* in America:  
“At the best, our drugs offer some symptom alleviation. But we cannot provide what people need most. *People need meaning in life and they need relationship.*”

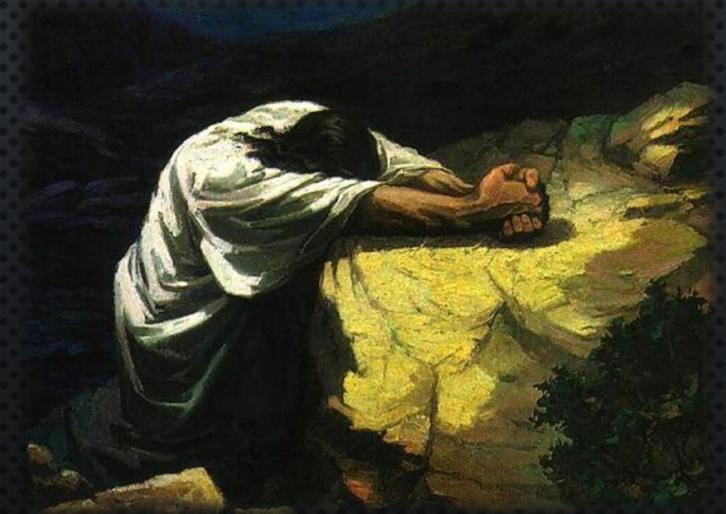
**CONCLUSION: Therefore, the biblical counselor is qualified to help.**



# Important Considerations Regarding Depression

I. Depression is not always caused by sin. Jesus suffered depression in the Garden:

Mark 14:33-34



# Important Considerations Regarding Depression

II. Depression is more likely due to an emotional-situational condition than a “chemical imbalance” or even a true, verifiable medical condition.



# Important Considerations Regarding Depression

III. Occasional bouts of despair and hopelessness are part of living and struggling in a fallen world.

2 Corinthians 1:8



# Important Considerations Regarding Depression

IV. We have come to think that we have a 'right' to feel good.

If not, I cannot be held accountable for neglecting my responsibilities in life.

Bottom line: Feelings become the basis and justification for actions or inaction.



# Important Considerations Regarding Depression

V. Some legitimate medical conditions that can mimic depression (testable):

A. Hyper and Hypothyroidism

F. Anemia

B. Brain Tumor

G. Meningitis/Encephalitis

C. Sleep Apnea

D. Adrenal Insufficiency

E. Hypoglycemia

# Important Considerations Regarding Depression

V. Some legitimate medical conditions that can mimic depression (testable):

H. Stroke

I. Diabetes

J. Parkinson's disease

K. Cushing's disease

L. Addison's disease

M. Multiple Sclerosis

N. Lupus

O. Hepatitis

## VI. THE SPIRAL OF DEPRESSION

Unchecked sin become the cords that bind us tighter and tighter. Proverbs 5:21-23



## VI. THE SPIRAL OF DEPRESSION

I. Depression occurs when we respond in an ungodly or unbiblical manner to wicked, difficult, challenging, or sinful circumstances.

David: 2 Samuel 11:1-17 (disobedience) ↘



lust ↘

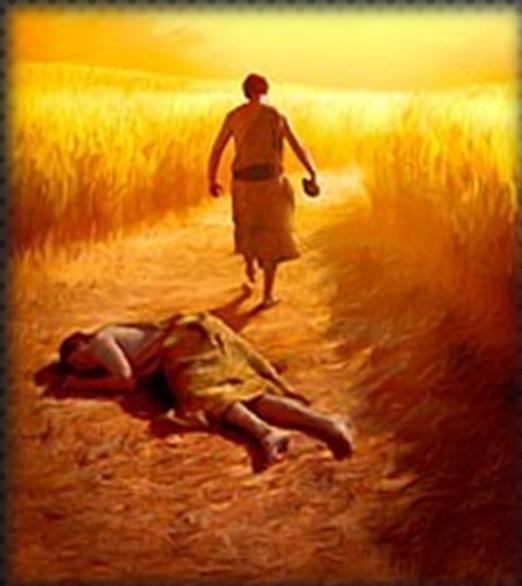
adultery ↘

murder. (Psalm 38:1-11)

# VI. THE SPIRAL OF DEPRESSION

## II. The Example of Cain

Genesis 4:1-14; (disobedience) ↗↘



jealousy ↗↘

sinful anger ↗↘

depression ↗↘

murder.

# VI. THE SPIRAL OF DEPRESSION

## III. The Example of Elijah

1 Kings 19 (fear of man) ↘

lack of faith & trust in God ↘

self-pity ↘

suicidal.



# VI. THE SPIRAL OF DEPRESSION

## IV. The Example of Ahab

1 Kings 21:1-14 (covetousness) ↗↘

pouting/self-pity ↗↘

manipulation ↗↘

subterfuge ↗↘

false witness ↗↘

murder.



# VI. THE SPIRAL OF DEPRESSION

## V. The Example of Jonah

Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-3; 4:1-11 (bias/hatred/contempt) ↻↻



turning away from God ↻↻

begrudging submission ↻↻

sinful anger ↻↻

stubborn/controlling ↻↻

self-pity ↻↻

suicidal.

# VI. THE SPIRAL OF DEPRESSION

## VI. The Example of Peter

Matthew 26:69-75 (ignorance) ↗

fear of man ↗

lack of faith & trust in God ↗

lying ↗

denying Christ ↗

hiding/weeping/cursing.



# VI. THE SPIRAL OF DEPRESSION

## VII. The Example of Judas

Matthew 27:1-5 (unbelief) ↘



deceit ↘

betrayal of Christ ↘

suicide.

## VII. Biblical principles for unwinding the spiral:

1. Fulfill all responsibilities regardless of how you feel.

The ultimate goal in the Christian life is not to “feel” better—  
it is to respond rightly to life circumstances.



## VII. Biblical principles for unwinding the spiral:

The ultimate goal in life is to please God, not alleviate symptoms.  
John 14:15; 13:17; Matthew 7:21; James 1:22; 2 Corinthians 5:9

In order to have real victory, we must live by God's Word,  
not our feelings.



## VII. Biblical principles for unwinding the spiral:

2. Realize God has great purpose in the things we suffer.

Romans 8:28-29; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 4:12

## VII. Biblical principles for unwinding the spiral:

3. Change your thinking.

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Corinthians 2:16;  
Philippians 4:8-9; 2 Corinthians 9:8**



## VII. Biblical principles for unwinding the spiral:

4. Find biblical solutions to difficult situations.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-5**



## VII. Biblical principles for unwinding the spiral:

5. Exercise good stewardship of your body.

**Romans 6:13; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20**



## VII. Biblical principles for unwinding the spiral:

6. Strive to live a disciplined life.

**Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27;**

**1 Timothy 4:7**



## VII. Biblical principles for unwinding the spiral:

7. There is always hope.

Psalm 42; 1 Corinthians 10:13;

1 Peter 1:3-5; 5:10-11

**Victor or Victim – *the choice is yours.***





*SANCTIFY THEM IN YOUR  
TRUTH; YOUR WORD IS  
TRUTH.*

JOHN 17:17



## Leadership Training: Module 3

Doing it Better



## Leadership Training: Module 3

Effective Biblical Counseling:  
Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety

Introduction

Fear, Worry and Anxiety are all related

Scripture shows us that God does not want His children living in fear, worry, or anxiety.



*"Do not fear"* is used 50x in the OT alone.

"Say to those who have an anxious heart, 'Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you'" (Isaiah 35:4).



# I. FEAR FACTORS

1. Fear is a powerful human emotion.

“Fear closes the ears of the mind.”



# I. FEAR FACTORS

2. Fear affects people physically.

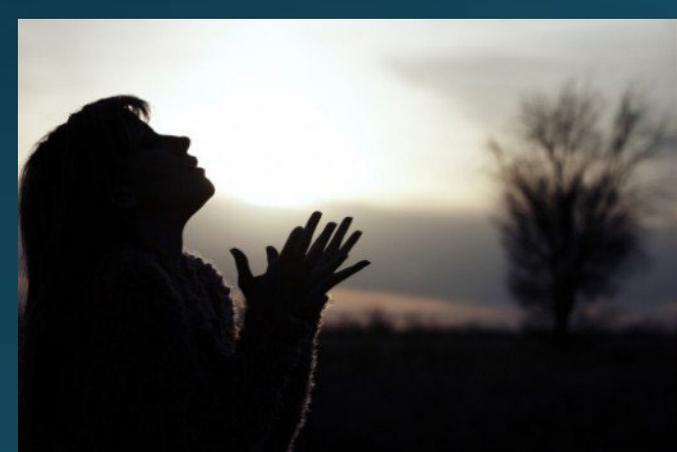
3. Not all fears are wrong, but some are.



# I. FEAR FACTORS

4. One good fear: Luke 12:4-5; cp. Romans 3:18.

“The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God, you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else.” Oswald Chambers



# I. FEAR FACTORS

5. Fear is a type of bondage:

Romans 8:15; Hebrews 2:15; cp. John 8:32.

6. Essentially, sinful fear is an issue of denying or rejecting God's sovereignty (Isaiah 46:9-11).

“Deny that God is governing all matter; deny that He is upholding all things by the Word of His power; and all sense of security is gone.” Arthur Pink



# I. FEAR FACTORS

7. Sinful Fear typically results from an unbiblical response to loss.

- Loss of a job.
- Loss of a spouse.
- Loss of health.
- Loss of security.
- Loss of a relationship.
- Loss of possessions.



# I. FEAR FACTORS

## 8. Love casts out fear: 1 John 4:18.

**Fear** is most concerned about what I might lose. (self-absorbed)

**Love** is most concerned about what I might give. (self-denial)



*“Am I losing my mind?”* is a common fear.



# I. FEAR FACTORS

“Extreme forms of mental illness are always extreme cases of self-absorption. The distinctive quality, the thing that literally sets paranoid [fearful] people apart, is their hyper self-consciousness. And the things they prize most about themselves is autonomy. Their constant fear is that someone else is interfering with their will or trying to direct their lives. For this type of person, self-abandonment is the worst fate. Rather than have that happen they draw deeper into themselves cutting the cords of sociability as they go” (Wm. Kilpatrick; *Psychological Seduction*).



## II. WORRY

Worry is a mild form of persistent fear. It is a steady, troubled spirit that appears anxious because of a mind that is bothered by life circumstances; some event, or person, or situation.



“Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind.”

Worry in the Bible literally means, having 'a divided mind.'



## The Exceeding Fear of the Apostle Paul

2 Corinthians 11:2-3

"sincere" 'single-hearted loyalty'; Gk *haplotes*; 'singleness of heart'

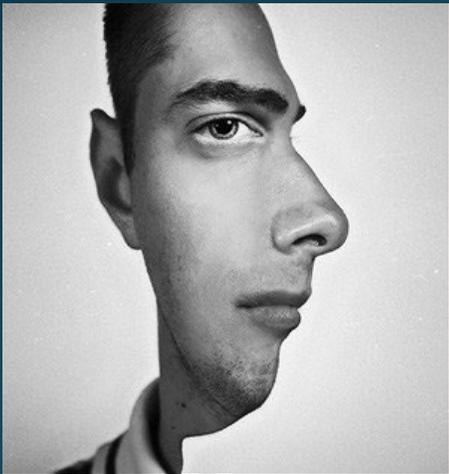
**Worry is sinful because it betrays a heart that either does not believe God, or does not trust Him.**

Of the person who doubts God: "he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8).

"double-minded" Gk *dipsuchos*; 'two-spirited'



“Such a person suffers from divided loyalties. On the one hand, he wishes to maintain a religious confession and desires the presence of God in his life; on the other hand, he loves the ways of the world” (Zodhiates).



“Instead of trusting God by submitting and yielding to His good pleasure, the worrier rebels and asserts himself in defense of autonomy, of independence from the God in whom he lives, moves, and has his being.” Stanley Gale



### III. Anxiety

Anxiety is an intense, at times panicky, form of fear and worry. It captivates a mind that is distracted and preoccupied to the point of great mental anguish and physical distress.



**Anxiety:** “painful uneasiness of mind; troubled in mind about some uncertain event; being in disturbing suspense; disquieted over a possible or impending judgment; concerned about some future unknown” (dictionary).



## A Tale of Two Sisters

Luke 10:38-42



“distracted” Gk *perispao*; ‘To draw different ways at the same time, to distract with cares and responsibilities...to be drawn around in mind...preoccupied with cares or business.’

“anxious” Gk *merimnas*; ‘anxious care; troubled, to take thought.’ from *merizo*; “To divide, separate into parts, disunited’; and *merimna*; ‘anxiety, care that brings disruption to the personality and the mind.’



“troubled” Gk *thorubazo*; ‘the noise of a tumult; a disturbance, noise, clamor, uproar; loud lamentation.’

Jesus addresses worry and anxiety. His Words offer real hope to overcome it: Matthew 6:25-34

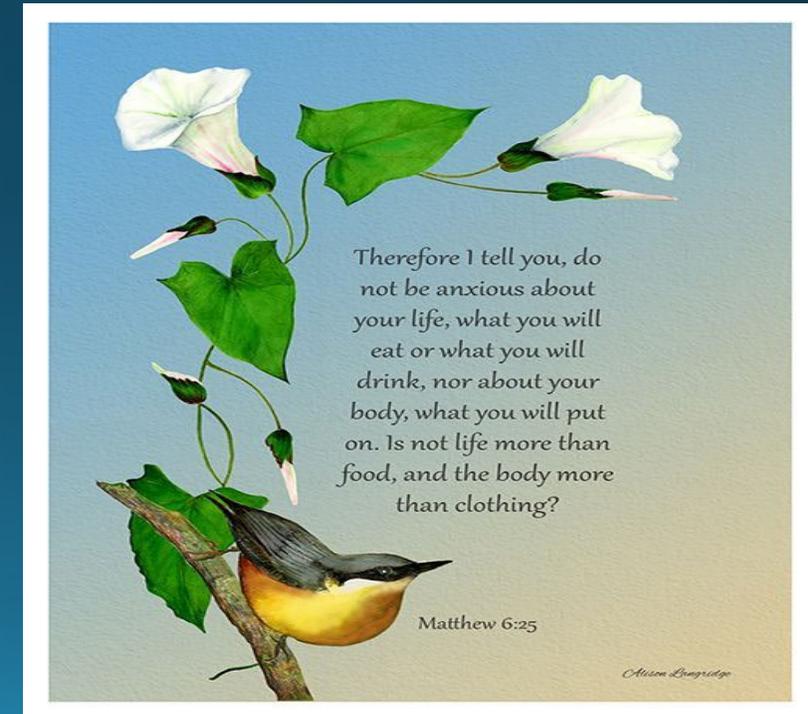


Anxiety is a spiritual and emotional assault on the mind.

# The Danger of a Divided, Fragmented Mind

*“do not be anxious”* (literally, anxiously careful); “take no thought” or care like the birds and the lilies.

Matthew 6:25



# The Danger of a Divided Devotion: The Downfall of King Solomon

1 Kings 11:1, 2, 4

“loved/love” is the same Hebrew word used to describe Solomon’s love for God in 1 Kings 3:3!

“Either God is served with a single-eyed devotion, or he is not served at all. Attempts at divided loyalty betray, not partial commitment to discipleship, but deep-seated commitment to idolatry” (Carson).



## The Problem of the Third Soil: Mark 4:18-19

*“the cares of the world”* Literally, ‘the distractions of the age.’ Satan’s most effective tool.



**The silence and contentment of the bird and the lily (v26).**

“When the bird comes into contact with the harshness of this life ... the obedient bird submits unconditionally to everything” (Kierkegaard).

Whether in cold, wind, storm, or drought, they wait in silent trust. This is internal peace and contentment undisturbed by the violent conditions of a fallen world.



*Why is this so hard for humans?*

Will you hush your mind and quiet your soul long enough to hear deliverance when it comes?

“Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling” (Zechariah 2:13).

*“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life...”*



Worry, like complaining, is a serious sin. The former because it admits a distrust of the wisdom God. The latter, because it admits a dissatisfaction with the providence of God.



***What would the birds think if they could observe us worrying?***



Psalm 37:25

Hebrews 13:5

“For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake”  
(1 Samuel 12:22).



# Five Steps to Overcome Fear, Worry, and Anxiety

1. Take control of your thought life. “Take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5; “Set you mind on the things that are above, not on things that are on earth” Colossians 3:1-3; Philippians 4:6-9).



# Five Steps to Overcome Fear, Worry, and Anxiety

2. Learn to trust God (Psalm 31:6, 14; 115:11; Proverbs 3:5-6) Test your faith in Him (2 Corinthians 13:5).

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock” (Isaiah 26:3-4).



# Five Steps to Overcome Fear, Worry, and Anxiety

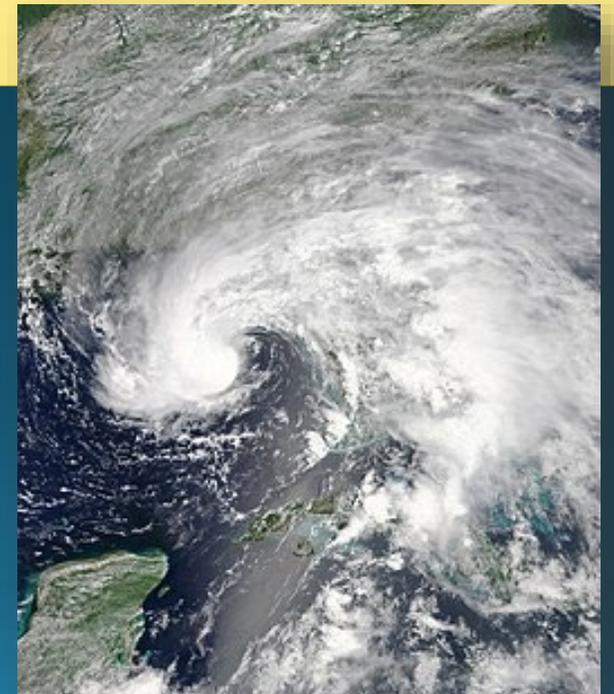
3. Repent of any unbelief (Mark 9:24).



# Five Steps to Overcome Fear, Worry, and Anxiety

4. Change what you can according to God's directive will (Ephesians 4:17-32); accept what you cannot change according to His decretive will (Daniel 4:35; cp. Psalm 16:5-9).

Anxiety is a tempest – a storm – that forms in the mind when loyalties divide and wills collide.



# Five Steps to Overcome Fear, Worry, and Anxiety

5. Remain singularly devoted to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2-3).



1 Peter 5:6-7; Psalm 55:22



“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).



Sanctify them in your truth;  
Your word is truth.

John 17:17