

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO COMMON PROBLEMS

Lesson – 14b

"The Problem of Depression – Part 2"

INTRODUCTION:

- I. In our last lesson, we looked at some facts and figures about depression.
 - A. The National Institute of Mental Health provides the following definition:
 1. *A depressive disorder is an illness that involves the body, mood, and thoughts. It affects the way a person eats and sleeps, the way one feels about oneself, and the way one thinks about things. A depressive disorder is not the same as a passing blue mood. It is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away. People with a depressive illness cannot merely "pull themselves together" and get better.*
 - B. We also learned that there are two basic CAUSES of depression.
 1. One is SITUATIONAL – meaning, there has been a major life altering event, or a series of life altering events (either good or

bad), that have come in quick succession. This kind of depression can last a few days to a few weeks.

2. The other is PHYSIOLOGICAL – meaning, there has actually been a change or an alteration of brain chemistry that makes the victim plunge even deeper into depression, and who will experience recurring episodes of depression perhaps for the rest of their life. This kind of depression may last months or even years.

C. Last week we looked at the lives of Moses and Elijah – men who were hit with the storm of depression full force.

1. Even though the Bible doesn't use the word "depression" to describe their emotional state, they WERE despondent and clearly manifested all the characteristic symptoms of depression.
2. And we looked at the PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL and SPIRITUAL conditions that brought on depression or despondency in their lives.
 - a. In Moses' case, his emotional state was mainly due to stress – taking on too much responsibility.
 - b. With Elijah, his sense of despondency came from physical exhaustion mixed with a little self-pity – he was

suffering from a bit of a martyr complex, and his focus was entirely on himself.

2. These two examples are clearly cases of SITUATIONAL – a series of major life-altering events that came in quick succession and led to overwhelming stress, emotional and physical exhaustion.
3. The impact of these events eventually took its toll and plunged both men into a depressive state where they simply wanted the Lord to take their life.

II. However, in THIS lesson we want to focus our attention on a COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CAUSE of depression.

- A. This form of depression is one of the most devastating of all.
 1. It can overwhelm its victims so completely that they are often driven to the very brink of suicide.
 2. What KIND of depression are we talking about? We're talking about depression that is CLEARLY THE RESULT OF FLAGRANT DISOBEDIENCE and UNRESOLVED SIN.
- B. As we investigate this form of depression, there are a few VERY IMPORTANT things we need to understand.

1. First, we need to understand there are MANY KINDS of depression, just as there are many CAUSES or REASONS WHY people become depressed.
 - a. Every case of depression is uniquely DIFFERENT for a number of reasons:
 - (1). The stressful EVENTS in a person's life that bring on depression vary from person to person.
 - (2). The ability to HANDLE those stressful events varies from person to person.
 - (3). And the ENVIRONMENT in which we were raised varies from person to person.
2. The second thing we need to understand is that depression is NOT a sin, it's an ILLNESS – just as diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), or glaucoma are illnesses.
 - a. Medical researchers have established the fact that depression is often GENETICALLY linked – meaning that those with a family HISTORY of depression are FAR more likely to become depressed themselves.
 - (1). They're simply WIRED differently, and are more susceptible to depression – just as those with a family history of heart disease are FAR more likely to develop heart disease themselves.

3. The third thing we need to understand is that even though depression is NOT a sin, SIN can DEFINITELY LEAD TO depression.
 - a. Sadly, some are so naive to believe that unresolved disobedience and sin is the cause of ALL depression.
 - b. A few years ago I ran across a book written by a man who advertised himself as a Christian counselor. And he took the view that EVERY form of depression is because the victim is hiding some sin in their heart, and if they will merely ACKNOWLEDGE and CONFESS that sin, the depression will go away.
 - c. That's pure nonsense! In fact, that's the VERY charge Job's friends made against him. They believed Job's suffering, and ultimately his depression, was brought on by some unresolved sin in his life. They believed God was punishing Job in an effort to get him to repent.
 - d. However, let's be fair here. While it's certainly true that not ALL cases of depression are the result of sin, SOME ARE. And it's THIS kind of depression that we want to explore in this lesson.

BODY

- I. When we turn to the Scriptures we find the story of two men who went through deep depression that was CLEARLY brought on by sin in their lives.
 - A. As we look into the lives of these two men we can see their emotional state gradually slip into deep depression.
 1. And as in every case of depression, these men lost their ability to THINK and REASON properly.
 - a. One of these men became so depressed that he committed suicide.
 - b. The other man became so depressed that his friends FEARED he MIGHT commit suicide.
 2. Who are these two men? They are Saul, the first King of Israel and David, the man who followed Saul to the throne.
- II. Let's begin by first looking at the life of Saul.
 - A. Saul's problems began with disobedience.
 1. **1 Samuel 15:1-3** – *Samuel also said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD. 2 Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up*

from Egypt. 3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

2. **1 Samuel 15:7-9** – *And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.*
3. **1 Samuel 15:10-15** – *Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, 11 "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night. 12 So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." 13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said*

to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD." 14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" 15 And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

4. **1 Samuel 15:22-23** – So Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king."

B. His problem was compounded by trying to manipulate his own solution.

1. **1 Samuel 18:6-13a** – *Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. 7 So the*

women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." 8 Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" 9 So Saul eyed David from that day forward. 10 And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand. 11 And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice. 12 Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul. 13 Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

2. **1 Samuel 18:20-22** – Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. 21 So Saul said, "I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David a second time, "You shall be my son-in-law today." 22 And Saul commanded his servants,

"Communicate with David secretly, and say, 'Look, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you. Now therefore, become the king's son-in-law.'"

3. **1 Samuel 18:25-29** – Then Saul said, "Thus you shall say to David: 'The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'" But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. 26 So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king's son-in-law. Now the days had not expired; 27 therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife. 28 Thus Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him; 29 and Saul was still more afraid of David. So Saul became David's enemy continually.
4. **1 Samuel 19:9-12** – *Now the distressing spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing music with his hand. 10 Then*

Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence; and he drove the spear into the wall. So David fled and escaped that night. 11 Saul also sent messengers to David's house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." 12 So Michal let David down through a window. And he went and fled and escaped.

C. He drifted further and further from the Lord.

1. **1 Samuel 28:3-8** – *Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land. 4 Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa. 5 When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. 6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. 7 Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor." 8 So Saul disguised himself and put on*

other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you."

2. **1 Samuel 28:11-19** – *Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me." 12 When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!" 13 And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth." 14 So he said to her, "What is his form?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle." And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down. 15 Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do." 16 Then Samuel said: "So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become*

your enemy? 17 And the LORD has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18 Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. 19 Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

- D. When he was confronted about his sin, he became overwhelmed with depression.
1. **1 Samuel 28:20-21** – *Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day or all night. 21 And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was severely troubled...*
- E. He refused to confess his sins.
1. **(See: 1 Samuel 18)**
- F. And finally, after he lost all, he ended his life in suicide.
1. **1 Samuel 31:1, 3-4** – *Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell*

slain on Mount Gilboa... 3 The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers. 4 Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it.

III. Now let's turn our attention to the life of King David.

A. David's problems also began with disobedience.

1. **2 Samuel 11:1-5** – *It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. 2 Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. 3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" 4 Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity;*

and she returned to her house. 5 And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, "I am with child."

B. He compounded his problems by trying to manipulate his own solution.

1. **2 Samuel 11:6-11** – *Then David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. 7 When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered. 8 And David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift of food from the king followed him. 9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. 10 So when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" 11 And Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing."*

2. **2 Samuel 11:14-15** – *In the morning it happened that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die."*
3. **2 Samuel 11:22-27a** – *So the messenger went, and came and told David all that Joab had sent by him. 23 And the messenger said to David, "Surely the men prevailed against us and came out to us in the field; then we drove them back as far as the entrance of the gate. 24 The archers shot from the wall at your servants; and some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also." 25 Then David said to the messenger, "Thus you shall say to Joab: 'Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Strengthen your attack against the city, and overthrow it.' So encourage him." 26 When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. 27 And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son.*

C. He drifted further and further from the Lord.

1. **2 Samuel 11:27b** – *But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.*

D. When he was confronted about his sin, he became overwhelmed with depression.

1. **(See: Psalms 38)**

E. But David confessed his sins.

1. **2 Samuel 12:1-8** – *Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. 3 But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. 4 And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." 5 So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! 6 And he shall restore fourfold for the*

lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!'"

2. **2 Samuel 12:10-13** – *Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' 11 Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'" 13 So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."*

3. **(See: Psalms 51)**

F. He was fully restored by the Lord, but he would still suffer the consequences of his sins.

1. **2 Samuel 12:15-23** – *Then Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David,*

and it became ill. 16 David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. 17 So the elders of his house arose and went to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them. 18 Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, "Indeed, while the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!" 19 When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." 20 So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate. 21 Then his servants said to him, "What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food." 22 And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' 23 But now he

is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

2. **Psalm 32:1-5** – *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity ("GUILT" – NIV, NASV) of my sin."*

IV. These two men (Saul and David) show two completely different ways of dealing with depression that has been caused by sin.

A. Saul:

1. Sinned against God.
2. Attempted to manipulate his own solutions.
3. Drifted further and further away from the Lord.
4. Became overwhelmed with depression when confronted with his sin.
5. REFUSED TO CONFESS his sins.
6. Committed suicide.

B. David:

1. Sinned against God.
2. Attempted to manipulate his own solutions.
3. Drifted further and further away from the Lord.
4. Became overwhelmed with depression when confronted with his sin.
5. WILLINGLY CONFESSED his sins.
6. Restored.

IV. When it comes to dealing with depression – REGARDLESS OF THE CAUSE – there are some basic facts we need to understand.

A. First – Depression is warning us that something is wrong.

1. Depression is like a warning light on the dashboard of your car – it's warning you that something is wrong and needs attention.
2. There's two things you can do:
 - a. Ignore the light – pretend that it doesn't really mean what it's telling you.
 - (1). In psychological terms, this is called "DENIAL!"
 - b. Fix the problem – do whatever it takes to properly identify the extent of the problem and get it fixed.

- c. That solution may require medication, counseling, OR maybe simply repenting of some unresolved sin.
- B. Second – When depression is brought on by stress-related matters, follow the divinely inspired advice given to Moses and Elijah.
1. Every physician will tell you that physical or mental exhaustion can DEFINATELY contribute to depression.
 - a. It's like running an automobile engine at high rpm's for an extended period of time.
 - (1). Eventually, the engine will simply blow up.
 - b. The same thing can happen to us emotionally if we don't find some time to relax.
 2. If Jesus found it necessary to take Himself and His disciples away from the pressures of the crowd, then what makes us think we can get along without doing the same thing occasionally.
- C. Third – Regardless of the CAUSE of the depression, we need to guard against a number of subtle feelings.
1. Keep your eyes focused on Jesus Christ.
 - a. When we take our focus off the Lord, and turn our focus on the problems in our life, we will almost CERTAINLY fall into depression.
 2. So, don't allow Satan to deceive you into thinking:

- a. You're not able to do a task God has blessed you with, or has placed in your hands.
 - b. Or, you're somehow God's gift to the world.
 - c. Or, there's no one as faithful to the Lord as you -- that you and the Lord are the only one's who are standing up against sin and wickedness.
- D. Forth – Remember God is FOR you, not AGAINST you. (cf. Romans 8:31)
1. One of the greatest verses in the Bible is found in Paul's letter to the church at Rome.
 - a. **Romans 8:38-39** – *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- E. Fifth – Never forget that depression is a destroyer of the spiritual life.
1. Unless the depression is dealt with APPROPRIATELY and PROMPTLY it will eventually interfere with our relationship with God.
- D. And finally – If depression is the result of sin, then you need to confess that sin and repent of it.

1. Satan wants nothing more than to keep you thinking that God is your enemy and won't forgive you for some terrible sin.
 - a. If God could forgive the very men who were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, He can forgive you for whatever you've done.

CONCLUSION

- I. Have you been struggling with depression lately?
 - A. It's difficult, isn't it?
 1. But the encouraging thing to remember is that you are not alone – even some of God's greatest leaders got depressed.
 - a. And just as God helped them, He can help you too.
 - B. If your depression is the result of things that, for the most part, are beyond your control:
 1. Place the matter in God's hands – Let Him take care of the situation, and ask Him to give you the strength you need to make it through these difficult times.
 - C. But, if your depression is the result of something you've done:
 1. Confess that to the Lord, and let Him lift the guilt and restore your spirit.
- II. God intended for Christians to experience joy, not depression.
 - A. Do you remember what Jesus told His disciples about joy?

1. in **John 15:9, 11** Jesus said, *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you... 11. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."*
- B. But you can't truly experience that joy and peace if you don't have a relationship with the Lord.
1. If you're NOT a Christian...
 2. If you ARE a Christian who needs to RESTORE your relationship with the Lord...