

Rabbi Yehudah on Depression

Some feel that Rabbi's and Pastors have it all together. When in reality we are like Captains on a sinking ship, calm cool and collected so as not to frighten our passengers as we gently guide them to the life boats. Fact is (to continue with the analogy) we are in the "same boat" as you. For us, we may have been down the lane further than most or better maps and compasses or better telescopes than others so we can see ahead a bit to be able to assist others on their journey when they have lost their way. But the fact is we too are mortal, we too put our pants on the same way as you do. We too at times need Rabbi's and Pastors of our own. I guess what makes us so good about helping others is that we have been there before and have experienced much of what you have. Some religious leaders may hide behind a plastic Superman mask, but I humbly stand before you naked with nothing to hide.

Sometimes I write commentaries of the Scriptures, or essays on current events etc. And it means so much when I get feedback saying that something I have said helped you in some way. I just Praise God that He can use me in such a way. Sometimes I like to right enigmatic free verses which only to those it applies can point there finger and say, "That's it! That's what I've been trying to say for years! That's how I have felt all along."

Depression has run on both sides of my family and if you read the Prophets you can tell they too dealt with this spiritual juggernaut. As a Rabbi I say it comes with the territory. But it's the struggle that makes us stronger. It tears down and wears down those of the world, but with the spiritual we use what is thrown at us against the enemy and we overcome and on the other side of the fray we are better for it.

This free verse is for those who battle now and again with depression. Some fear to admitting they struggle with it because it may make them appear "crazy" "weak" or less spiritual than others. Never let anyone condemn you or your spiritual walk because you battle with depression. It is a burden I gladly bear because I know with each battle I get wiser and stronger and more equipped to help others. Take solace in that God has deemed you worthy and strong enough to face this type of adversary.

Defeating Depression

You have heard that beauty is in the eye of the beholder right? But have you ever heard that life is 10% action and 90% reaction? Maybe not, but it is true. Life is not so much what happens to you, but how you respond to it.

Neil Anderson said in His book “Victory over the Darkness”:

“You are not shaped as much by your environment as you are by your perception of your environment. Life’s events don’t determine who you are; God determines who you are, and your interpretation of life’s events determine how well you will handle the pressures of life.”

When we are depressed we do not think or perceive events in our life correctly, we tend to look and believe the worst of the negatives that enter our mind. We convince ourselves that the worst is a true and undeniable fact and that drives us further into depression. Most of us know this to be true and some of us recognize this when we are in the throes of depression but we seem unable to control the downward tailspin.

We must first of all know, realize, believe and accept that;

1. God is on our side (Rom. 8:31).
2. God is our ever present help in time of trouble (Psalm 46:1).
3. God loves us unconditionally and just because we fail and sin means He may be disappointed in us and hates our failure and sin, but it doesn’t mean he loves us less.

When we are depressed we tend to think God has it in for us, or that we are being punished for something we did or didn’t do. This is a classic lie from Satan.

Depression can either be:

1. **Physical** – Caused by a genetic chemical imbalance, a sickness, a surgery, or substance abuse.
2. **Mental/Emotional** – Caused by stressful and traumatic life events.
3. **Spiritual** – Caused by unresolved and un-confessed sin such as anger, jealousy and the like.

There is no easy “In Jesus Name” fix for depression as some Charismatics and “name it, claim it” people would have you believe. Again I am a believer in miracles and the Gifts of the Spirit. Yes you can be delivered from it, and yes you

can overcome it. The initial relief may be handed to you on a silver platter by God in the form of deliverance, but you must work to maintain that freedom.

It boils down to a battle of wills with God's help. You have to WANT to TRULY be free from depression, and when you are in it there is a morbid comfort in being depressed. You may be depressed so much that it feels normal, or you may like the attention you receive from being depressed. But when you are depressed you have to truly want it, get off your tuchus and act! God is not going to "zap" you better when you allow yourself to get depressed. This means you have to force yourself to do think you may initially not want to do. But do it and the "oh so coveted" feelings will follow suite.

1. Identify the cause: Physical, Mental/Emotional, Spiritual or a combination of two or more.
2. Refuse to wallow in self-pity and repent if necessary.
3. Live: Get off your tuchus and go to work, take care of your kids, fulfill your God given responsibilities. Refuse to stay in bed all day, or eat yourself into a guilt trip, or get drunk or high, etc.
4. Get around caring people, relax and have fun. Go to dinner and a movie with friends, get active and social. Remember, Judas and Peter fell when they isolated themselves.
5. DWDD (Do what David Did) He praised God anyway and encourage himself in the L-RD (I Sam. 30:6).

This requires us to:

1. Renew our minds (Rom. 12:2), form new habits.
2. Take control and take captive depression when it comes knocking (II Cor. 10:3-6).

We live in a religious society of cheap easy believism and sleazy grace where all we do is sit on our tuchus and God does it all for us like a divine genie. No, sorry, wrong answer; we do what we can and God does what we can't. This may not be found in the Torah, but it is true nonetheless, the old adage that, "God helps those who help themselves."

I battle depression, mostly the physical kind, so it is therapeutic for me to write this and I am actually preaching to myself more than you, because I need to be reminded of these straightforward and simple things quite often.