

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Your Love Awakens, You're Amazing God, Beautiful Savior, Awesome God

WELCOME

God's Promise. Share one promise of God that you have owned by heart and lived out in your life.

WORD

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

⁴ *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!*

DIFFUSE DEPRESSION, HOPE IN JESUS

The minefield of depression is a critical condition because it is fast becoming a common global mental disorder.

Depression is the leading cause of disability nationwide affecting how people function at home, workplace, school, and community. Worst yet, it can lead to suicide which is now the leading cause of death between the ages 15 to 29.

Globally, an estimated 350 million people of all ages suffer from depression. It has become very rampant that it is known as the "common cold" of emotional health. In the Philippines, one out of five Filipinos suffer from depression which makes our country rank highest in the number of depressed people in Southeast Asia.

Depression literally means "being pressed down" to a lower position. In Psychology, depression is a mood disorder, a psychological state that exists when the heart is pressed down and unable to experience joy. Depressed people feel trapped underneath a dark, heavy blanket of sadness, grief and hopelessness.

Depression affects people in all walks of life, no one is immune to it. In fact, even godly people in the Bible such as Moses, Job, Jeremiah, Elijah and others have all gone through depression. Just like these men of God, believers can also become depressed. If we notice signs of emotional or spiritual depression in our lives, whether it be circumstantial or clinical in nature, it is important for us to remember that God does not want us to remain downcast, He wants us to rise again.

Because the devil can use depression to infuse doubt and distrust in our mind, God has commanded us and He has given us the power of choosing to rejoice whatever the circumstance (**Philippians 4:4**). In order for us to choose to rejoice, we must first see things in the light of the Lord. God has given us the power to turn our depression into celebration through **H.O.P.E.** in Jesus.

HEAR WELL

Emotion is a gift from God that communicates to us something. At times, God allows depression to warn us (**Psalm 119:67**), slow us down (**2 Corinthians 4:16**), reveal our weaknesses (**2 Corinthians 12:9**), bring us to Himself (**Hebrews 10:22**) or develop our trust in Him (**Psalm 43:5**). It may also be a means to initiate a healing process (**Jeremiah 17:14**), develop our perseverance and maturity (**James 1:2-4**), confirm our life worth and value (**Luke 12:6-7**), rely on Him (**2 Peter 1:3-4**) and increase our compassion (**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**). Whenever we are depressed, we may learn to listen to our feelings and our body but we should not allow emotions to control us.

Elijah was a godly man of faith but he also went through a downward spiral of despair (**1 Kings 18:36-46, 19:1-4**). After God used him victoriously to rebuke Israel, he ran for his life. He felt alone and afraid but the good thing is, he ran to the Lord to hear Him well (**v. 8**).

Likewise, if we are experiencing spiritual dryness, we should not get used to it. Instead, we should run to God and intentionally listen to Him. Oftentimes we get depressed when circumstances blur our view of God and ourselves. In moments like this, we must seek a personal encounter with God and hear Him speak (**1 Kings 19:13; Psalm 143:8, 5:3**).

OWN GOD'S WORD

Elijah ran to God in his despair and He paid attention to hear His words. God revealed to Elijah His plans that he should not be afraid of Jezebel because He is in control of everything (**1 Kings 19:15-19**). He instructed Elijah what to do and promised that He will defend him.

Likewise, we must read the Bible to know God's promises. God has more than 7,000 promises written

WORD (cont'd)

in His Word which we must put to heart and mind, owning them, so that we will be able to live them out.

PREACH GOD'S LOVE TO YOURSELF

If we keep ruminating about the cause of our depression, it could soon adversely affect our moods and behavior. We should instead meditate on God's Word and His promises as if we are preaching to ourselves. Take note that while Elijah was in despair, he, too, meditated for 40 days (**1 Kings 19:8**).

So, when you are depressed, preach to yourself God's love and promises and others will notice the love of God shining on us. Keep hoping in the Lord and sing of His promises with joy (**Psalms 42:5, 11; 43:5**).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. **Rejoice.** What is the command in **Philippians 4:4**? How does it keep us away from depression?
2. **Hope in the Lord.** Have you ever been depressed? Briefly share how God lifted you up from the pit of despair?
3. **Keeping On.** How would you encourage someone who is apparently suffering from depression?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Take a purposeful pause to reflect and pray who you should share the love of God with, this week. Perhaps identify at least one person God will lead you to, who may be suffering from depression (signs of depression: loss of interest in usual activities, guilt, worthlessness, hopelessness, weight gain or loss, sleep disturbances, depressed mood, hyperactivity, apathy, lethargy, anxiety, slow thinking, suicidal thoughts).

Seek God's wisdom to help you apply the message today of diffusing depression through H.O.P.E. in Jesus.

ENCIRCLE YOURSELF WITH OTHER CHRIST-COMMITTED FOLLOWERS

Elijah was so depressed because he thought he was all alone (**1 Kings 19:14**). He catastrophized his situation with scenarios that are unfounded and unreal. This caused him to withdraw in isolation.

But whenever we become depressed, we should not withdraw from fellow believers, nor leave our small group and accountability partners. We should not give up meeting together for this where we can encourage one another to love and good deeds (**Hebrews 10:24-25**). We need to pray and care for each other and share the love of Jesus.

We should not let depression totally pull us into a downward spiral of despair and hopelessness. At the end of broken dreams, Jesus is the open door. Let us turn our depression into a hope celebration in Jesus.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends