

Dealing with Depression

*“Now **the Spirit of the Lord had left Saul, and the Lord sent a tormenting spirit that filled him with depression and fear.**”*

1 Samuel 16:14 NLT



- Do you know the difference between discouragement and depression? Has there been a time when you experienced both discouragement and depression?

Mental Health experts estimate that **16 million** American adults—almost 7% of the population—experienced depression at least one time in the past year. People of all ages and all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds experience depression. Depression affects people from all walks of life, no matter what their background, no matter what their age. It is estimated that 15 percent of the adult population will experience depression at some point in their lifetime.

What Is Depression?

Discouragement is a milder and more temporary mood swing than the bolder **depression**. Depression could be described as **discouragement on steroids**.

One definition: “Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest.”

One dictionary defines depression as: “A condition of general emotional dejection and withdrawal; sadness greater and more prolonged than that warranted by any objective reason.”

Why Do People Experience Depression?

- **Failure to achieve personal GOALS.**
- **CHEMICAL imbalance in the body.** Some psychiatrists look at brain chemistry with cases of depression. Changes in hormone production or function can cause depression. Any hormone changes in the body can cause depression— including menopause, childbirth, thyroid problems, or other disorders.
- **Grieving loss** - the loss of a loved one, a job, a special relationship etc.
- **Spiritual WARFARE** - Saul’s depression was the result of spiritual issues.

Central Lesson

Don’t underestimate spiritual issues when dealing with depression.

What Does it Mean That God Removed His Spirit from Saul?

*“Now **the Spirit of the Lord had left Saul....**” (16:14 NLT)*

In the Old Testament era, the Holy Spirit would come upon God’s servants to give them power to accomplish their mission. (see Numbers 11:17, 25-26; 24:2; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Samuel 10:6, 10; 11:6; 16:13; 19:20, 23). In the New Testament era, after Pentecost (Acts 2), the Holy Spirit indwells the believer. Also, the child of God becomes the Temple (The Holy of Holies) of the Holy Spirit (see Romans 8:9, 11,15; 1 Corinthians 6:19).

What Does It Mean That God Sent a Tormenting Spirit?

*“...and the **Lord sent a tormenting spirit that filled him with depression and fear.**” (16:14 NLT)*

Bible scholars show that in the Hebrew language, the expression “the Lord sent” actually means, “God permitted.”

“When the Bible says that an evil spirit came from the Lord, it means that God withdrew His protection from Saul after Saul rejected Him. When God withdrew His protection from Saul, these devils were allowed to bring a depression upon him.” (Website: Amazing Facts - Does God Really Send Evil Spirits?)

“...ancient Hebrew (like most all other languages, then and now) was literally loaded with **figurative** language... It frequently was the case that... verbs were used by the Hebrews to express, not the doing of the thing, but the **permission** of the thing which the agent is said to do”

“Hence, when the Bible says that the ‘distressing spirit’ that troubled Saul was ‘from the Lord,’ the writer was using an idiom to indicate that the Lord **allowed or permitted** the distressing spirit to come upon Saul.” (Website: Apologetic Press - Did God Send an Evil Spirit upon Saul?)

Bible teacher, Warren Wiersbe, explains: “God had permitted this spirit to trouble Saul (vv. 14, 23: 18:10; 19:9) as part of his discipline because of the king’s rebellion. By nature, Saul was a suspicious and revengeful man, and this gave the evil spirit a beachhead for his operations (Eph 4:25-27).” *The Transformation Study Bible*, 469.

Suggestions to Deal with Depression

1. See a **DOCTOR** for possible chemical imbalance and medication.
2. Get enough **SLEEP**.
3. **EAT** healthy.
4. Spend time with **OPTIMISTIC** people (their attitude can be contagious).
5. Build healthy **FAMILY** relationships.
6. Maintain a right relationship with **GOD** and others - Saul wasn’t right with God (see 1 Samuel 15:10-11).
7. **GROW** spiritually - devotions, Bible study & prayer, worship, fellowship, small groups, serve according to your spiritual gifts, witness.
8. Listen to Praise & Worship **MUSIC**. David played the harp and Saul found relief.

“And whenever the tormenting spirit from God troubled Saul, David would play the harp. Then Saul would feel better, and the tormenting spirit would go away.” (16:23 NLT)

Central Lesson:

Don’t underestimate spiritual issues when dealing with depression.

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday’s study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.