

Out of the Cave

Out of the Cave – Part 1

2020 happened – Calls to mental health hotlines – up 900%

Divorce filings up 26%

25% of young adults considered suicide (CDC)

10% of all Americans

Depression is real – mental illness is real

1 out of every 9 people are on some type of depression medication

1 out of every 5 people have been at some point

Anti-depressant use has gone up 300% and it continues to increase

Depression has become the number one health problem in the world

There are very real biological contributions to depression and anxiety

But if we allow the biology to become the whole picture

We will miss the real solutions

Depression is not a malfunxion of the mind. It's a signal.

It's trying to tell us something

If you're depressed, if you're anxious, you're not weak and you're not crazy

You're a human being with unmet needs in other parts of your life

Second – there is a stigma on depression and mental illness – think less

We understand when someone gets physically sick

We don't think anything less of a person when they have the flu

We've got to remove the stigma of depression – other mental health issues

The only area where illness becomes your identity

My illness is not my identity.

What does the Bible say?

Let me make sure we're all clear – God wants us FREE

Living full lives – happy – with meaning

And freedom is why Jesus came

(Galatians 5:1 NIV) It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.

A lot of great people of faith got depressed

Jeremiah – wrote a whole book of the Bible on his depression

Lamentations

(Lamentations 3:17-20 NIV) I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is. So I say, "My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the LORD." I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.

Apostle Paul

(2 Corinthians 1:8 NIV) We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.

Another great man – at the transfiguration of Jesus – Elijah

1 Kings 18 – major victory – defeated the prophets of Baal

God's fire came down and consumed water soaked sacrifice

Wicked King Ahab – wife Jezebel – did not like Elijah

(1 Kings 19:1-4 NIV) Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them." Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."

Here's Elijah – fearless for three years – one incident – one threat

He turns and runs out to the edge of the desert and gets depressed

How We End Up in the Cave

Let's look at the factors that cause depression...

9 factors causing depression (7 are psychosocial, and 2 are biological)

Psychological reasons give rise to the physical symptoms

Elijah did at least 6 of them

Most of the reasons is because of our lifestyles – we're doing it to ourselves

Since it's a disease of lifestyle – we have to change our lifestyles

No amount of medication – counseling – Scripture can do it alone

Let me give you 6 things I think are adding to our depression...

1. Life imbalances.

Johan Hari – “Lost Connections”

“We need to talk less about chemical imbalances and more about the imbalances in the way we live.”

Elijah's depression came right after 2 major spiritual victories

Reminds us that we're not our best when we're tired

Vulnerable when we're tired

More and more research is pointing to our lifestyles as the leading cause

Research shows that depression is more prevalent for the type of lifestyle that has become normal in our society

“We were never designed for the sedentary, indoor, socially isolated, fast-food laden, sleep-deprived, frenzied pace of modern life.”

Stephen Ilardi

Author, The Depression Cure

So what do we do? Order our lives – give attention to the pace

(Ecclesiastes 4:6) Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

2. Comparing ourselves with others.

Elijah said, "I'm no better than my ancestors"

He was comparing himself and that made him more depressed

Comparison is the thief of joy.

~Theodore Roosevelt

I think this is one of the biggest issues of our day

Narcissistic society with a lack of identity

Peer to peer mentoring – instead of elder to youth mentoring

Amplifies the mental triggers 100 times

It's a recipe for a complete mental health meltdown

Online/Social media

Research shows these have changed the brain formation of youth

And now a generation of adults

Some of social media platform contributors/creators are talking about it

They are renouncing what they've done

Because of what it's done to the human mind and psychology

Social media – we compare our miserable life with other's highlight reel

(Galatians 6:4-5 NIV) Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load.

We've got to stop comparing ourselves with others

Because we all have different assignments

3. Ruminating and self-talk.

Cow chewing the cud – ruminating

Feelings of inadequacy – creates self-talk

Rumination is the focused attention on the symptoms of one's distress

As opposed to its solutions

It's when we over-think or obsess about situations or life events
Such as work or relationships
It's self-talk – and the devil loves to show up there

That's what Elijah did – he got alone in his thoughts
And the story got worse and worse
"I'm the only one left!" – But he wasn't – he believed a lie

"95% of your emotions are determined by the way you talk to yourself."

~Brian Tracy

(Philippians 4:8-9 NIV) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things... and the God of peace will be with you.

Control your mind – control your life
Best solution – process with someone else
Call someone – share your frustrations

4. Inability to process pain in a healthy way.

Life is tough – and everyone medicates
We all feel pain – and then we all do something for that pain

So many are medicating in some unhealthy way

According to the Washington Post – during the full quarantine in 2020
Overdoses nationally jumped...
18% in March
29% in April
42% in May

For some people, drinking or binge-eating becomes a way to cope with life
TV – video games – working more
Trying to drown out their pain

So how do we deal with our pain?
Jewish psychiatrist from Austria named Viktor Frankl

Bestselling book – “Man’s Search for Meaning”
He believed that Sigmund Freud’s theory was wrong
That life is not about pleasure – it’s about meaning
And when you don’t have any meaning
You dull yourself with pleasure

After WW2 – he worked with suicidal patients in Vienna
Ones who had been in concentration camps

He gave them 3 things – called it Logotherapy
Meaningful work – something to do that matters
A community of friends who love you unconditionally
Take whatever suffering you experience and find the positive in it

Not a single patient committed suicide on his watch

So how should we medicate?

(2 Corinthians 1:4-6 NIV) God... comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

There is purpose in my pain.

5. Isolation and loneliness.

Elijah “left his servant there”
He did what so many of us do and it’s a trap
Remember...

The first problem in the Bible wasn’t sin.

It was solitude.

(Genesis 2:18 NIV) The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.”

Feelings of isolation and loneliness affects more than 1/3 of all adults
More than half of young people
Remote learning – online services

(Romans 12:5 NLT) "...Since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others."

We need each other

Tell person next to you... "You need me" – "I need you"

The most intimacy some married couples have had in months

6. Spiritual warfare.

This one gets forgotten

We're not human beings having temporary spiritual experiences

We are spiritual beings having a temporary human experience

You are a spirit being

And there's a war going on in the spiritual realm

Led by an enemy who hates you

Question: What would you be willing to do?

If I told you someone was coming in your house tonight?

(1 Peter 5:8-9) Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith...

He's working harder to destroy you than you to keep it from happening

I think we've become so accustomed to it as a fact of life

We shrug it off and carry on – business as usual

(Ephesians 6:11 NIV) Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Bottom line...

God has given us authority, but we have to use it.