

Dr. David Murray's Notes on Depression

The Causes

Resources by Dr. David Murray

- Pastor of Grand Rapids Free Reformed Church and Professor of Old Testament and Practical Theology at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary
- www.headhearhand.org
- Christians Get Depressed Too (book)
- The Happy Christian (book)
- Christians Get Depressed Too (films on website)
- Lists of Top Ten Books, including on depression, preaching, fighting porn, marriage, and many more

Purposes of This Overview

- To share some of my sabbatical with you
- To introduce you to the ministry of Dr. David Murray
- To encourage those who may struggle with depression
- To equip those who interact with people struggling with depression

Some Preliminary Thoughts

- This study has value even if depression is not a major issue.
- Humility is needed for a topic that has often been met with oversimplification, insensitivity, and even arrogance.
- If you are really struggling with depression, I would encourage you to talk to me or someone who can help.

Depression Is Quite Common

- Estimation: 20% of people will struggle with depression in their lives.
- Christians have very similar stats.
- Suggested reasons: awareness of sin, hyper-sensitivity to evil (unlike unbelievers), spiritual warfare

Identifying Depression

- Feelings: overwhelming sadness; anger; (irrational and irritable); worthlessness; anxiety; panic; suicidal thoughts
- Thoughts: extreme negativity; false filtering; obsessive thinking; distractions; bad memory
- Body: weight fluctuation; pain; fatigue
- Relationships: withdrawal; strain
- Behavior: good things stopped; negative things start; disinterest in clubs and hobbies

Three Dimensions in Assessing Depression

1. Length: how long has it been?
2. Depth: has it been significant?
3. Width: what is the range of symptoms?

Warnings

- Avoid an all-body approach.
- Avoid an all-spiritual approach.
- Avoid an all-mental approach.
- Depression usually has multiple components.

Five Causes

- Stress: life events and lifestyles
- Psychology (the way we think): Phil. 4:6-9; God has linked the way we think with the way we feel.
- Sickness: living in a fallen world takes a toll on our bodies and brains; the brain is the connection between the body and the soul.
- Sin: truly spiritual causes of depression usually involve sins where the Christian deliberately rebels against God, knowingly and continually.
- Sovereignty: sometimes “it pleases God” to afflict us with depression as a test or a stage on which to show His glory; He has wise and loving motives in doing this.