

The background of the top half of the slide features a series of light rays or beams of light that originate from the right side and fan out towards the left, creating a sense of depth and movement. The rays are in shades of white and light gray against a dark background.

Dr. David Murray's Notes on Depression

The Caregivers

Introduction

- Encouragement for family members, close friends, and biblical counselors
- Marriages and other relationships under tremendous strain
- I Thessalonians 5:11 – Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.
- Galatians 6:9-10 – And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

1. Study

- The truth about depression
- What is the biblical truth concerning the downcast?
- Using the truth of Scripture as our foundation and lens, what are the legitimate contributions of human observation and wisdom concerning depression?

2. Sympathy

- Communicate that you understand, that you are concerned, and that you want to help.
- Listen well and don't jump in prematurely.
- Be thankful for a sound mind.

3. Support

- Pray with them.
- Be willing to talk and listen.
- Be graciously forward. Depressed people don't usually initiate contact.
- Congregationally, cultivate an atmosphere of encouragement. Develop a list of doctors and other caregivers that could be formed into a team to help. Acknowledge from the pulpit that depression exists in Christians.
- Maintain confidentiality.

3. Support - Suicide

- If someone is suicidal, what do you do?
- Ask careful, sensitive, loving questions to probe the state of mind. Often people will take the opportunity to open up.
- Ask, “Are you thinking about it?” and “Do you have a plan?” If they are thinking about it, you should get help and address it. If they have a plan, we should involve social workers, police, etc. and maybe get them to ER.

4. Sensitivity

- We should not make strong, discouraging statements (including from the pulpit) that paint depressed people as wrong or even unchristian.
- We can share Scriptural examples, songs, prayers, and biographies that acknowledge and address the reality of depression.
- We can teach on or make application on mental health or depression themes as appropriate.

5. Self-esteem

- First definition from Google: “confidence in one's own worth or abilities”
- A biblical definition: “confidence in God’s plan to use me as one who has been created and redeemed”
- Depression causes self-doubt and self-criticism and then low self-esteem.
- Avoid criticism and general negativity or over-praising others.
- Highlight their gifts, graces, good decisions, what God has done for them, etc.
- *Overcoming Spiritual Depression* – Arie Elshout includes a Christian view of self-esteem

6. Subjectivism

- People often try to chase emotions and read books about joy, peace, and assurance. But they feel worse because they don't have those things.
- You change feelings by changing thoughts, not by focusing on the subjective, but on the objective.
- What are the things that produce those good feelings? History of Old and New Testaments. Justification. Adoption. Atonement. Cross. Reconciliation. Substitution. Sacrifice.

7. Scripture

- Depressed people often cannot read a lot, including Scripture.
- Read with them.
- Encourage them to listen, and then discuss it with them.
- Personal Bible Reading has often greatly suffered. They find it unprofitable, or even negative. Private devotions can become a time of torment.
- Read ONE VERSE and then close it. Tell your conscience that that is enough.

8. Speak

- Listen more than you speak, especially initially.
- Things to NOT say:
 - “Pull yourself together.”
 - “You have nothing to be sad about.”
 - “Don’t be so emotional.”
 - “You’ll soon get over it.”
 - “It’s a sin to be depressed.”
 - “Just believe the promises.”
 - “At least it’s nothing serious.”
 - “Things could be worse.”

9. Submission

- Need for patience; go slowly
- Don't fight depression in a bad way. Address it as needed. Often depressed people get better and then lapse. But the goal is to not lapse as deep or for as long.
- Thin ice illustration: stronger people are less likely to lapse, but at first the ice can be pretty thin, and they go through again.
- Depression can actually produce so much good in someone's life, such as the fruit and the graces that are developed as well as the sensitivity to minister to other people.

10. Salvation

- Depression can be used to bring someone to faith in Christ.
- It can also be used to produce significant fruit in a believer's life.