

Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures

Chapter 1: General Consideration

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I am going to begin our next series in asking you this question. I want you to raise your hand if you have never been depressed, never experienced depression. Everyone here has been depressed? What is the problem with you, Christians? Christians are joyful people! You have the abundant life! You have Christ! You have eternity! What is the problem? OK, you must be talking about when you were lost. When you were lost you were depressed, but now that you are saved you've never known depression. So, I will rephrase the question, "As a Christian, how many have you have never been depressed?" Same response; so, this is one of the reasons why D. Martin Lloyd-Jones decided to teach a series in his church on spiritual depression, and a book came out of it called, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*.

It is interesting, the cure is singular; the causes are plural. So, how many of you actually had this book in your library? This is a classic. It really is. It is a very powerful tool. I call it a battering ram against depression because as he points out in his first chapter, it is really something, though all of us have experienced it, it really is something we need to fight because it is anti-Christian. It is against what Christ has accomplished. And when he says, "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." If you apply that, you are not going to be depressed. You are going to have the peace of Christ. Paul teaches from a prison cell, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." The proper Christian life, when we are walking in strength, we are not depressed. We are joyful. We are accepting our trials as blessings from God. We are counting them all joy as it says in James. However, we are Christians in the battle and we have difficulties. And even our brother Paul said that he had great trials, for he had to wrestle with depression. At one point it says that when Titus showed up that he was strengthened to preach the gospel. It was something that happened even having a brother in his presence.

So, we are going to begin going through this and I want us to turn to a key passage he begins with in Psalm 42. We always want to begin with the word of God, and we will talk about these this Psalm, and if time remains we will look at some of his outline and his first chapter. If your library was completely obliterated or for some reason you had to go somewhere where you didn't have your library, or it was taken away from you, would you have enough having the word of God? If you just had your bible, would that be sufficient? Would you say, 'Oh no I don't have Owen; I don't have Henry; how am I going to make it through the Christian life? Well, I don't want you to lose your bible, and I want you to keep reading Owen, and Henry and others, and D. Lloyd-Jones, but those men are all valuable as they point to the word of God. This is an astounding book. It will solve all the difficulties you have with depression because it is the Lord's book and it is the Spirit's work to show you the Lord Jesus; and if you see Him high and lifted up all the things of this world grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.

So, let us begin in Psalm 42 here and see the heart of David, or more particularly, the sons of Korah: “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?” Now right here so far it simply looks like he has this great desire for God, which I know you have experienced as a child of God.

Then he says in verse three, “My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, ‘Where is your God?’ When I remembered these things I pore out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God with a voice of joy and praise and with a multitude which kept a pilgrim feast. Why are you cast down, O my soul and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.” Notice his condition. He says, “Why are you cast down, O my soul?” This is a saint writing. His soul is cast down. He is recognizing it. He is even inquiring, ‘Why is this so? Why are you disquieted within me?’ There is this roaring within him.

“Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.” He goes on to declare even further: “O my God, my soul is cast down within me. Therefore, I will remember you from the land of Jordan and from the heights of Hermon, and from the hill Mizar. Deep calls to deep at the noise at your waterfalls; all your waves and billows have gone over me.” Where else is this mentioned in scripture? Someone quotes this. Jonah, when he was praying in the belly of the fish. He said this, ‘All you waves and billows have gone over me.’ There is something of the trials, the depressions, the difficulties, coming over this writer, and Jonah, and I believe over the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross. I believe all the waves and billows of God’s wrath fell upon him including the depression of being rejected of His father: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” That is the greatest of depression right there.

Do you think the Lord Jesus doesn’t know how you feel in depression? Look at the cross, because the greatest depression is not to be able to sense God. That is the heart of depression: where is God in all of this? Remember the enemies are saying, ‘Where is your God? You shouldn’t be in this condition. Look at you, you are at the bottom of the heap. Where is your God?’ And so, he is saying it to himself probably, ‘where is my God?’ And now the world is saying it to him.

“All you waves and billows have gone over me. The Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime.” You see he has encouragements for his own soul. He said to his own soul: “Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him.” Now he says, “The Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime; and in the night, his song shall be with me, a prayer to the God of my life.” Now notice the tense. What is the tense here? “The Lord *will* command his loving kindness in the daytime.” *Will* command; *will* is future. He is not sensing it right now. He said it in verse five: “Hope in God for I *shall yet* praise him,” but right now in that very sense, he is depressed. He is dealing with depression, and we like for depression to have a little button; to push this button and depression is gone. That would be nice. That is what the medical world

wants to give us, just take this pill and you will be OK. Just keep taking the pills, if you get depressed just take two of them! We want a quick fix, and yet in depression sometimes we slip into it day by day and we don't get out of it day by day.

And he talks in future tense: 'I know God is going to work. I know I am going to yet praise him. But I am not praising him now with the intensity that I want to; my depression is so before me; all of his waves and billows have come over me; all of his waves! And so he says, 'The Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime.' His faith is saying, 'The Lord is going to work.' Verse nine: "I will say to God my rock, why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" Look how honest he is: "Why have you forgotten me?" Well doesn't the Lord say, "I will never leave you nor forsake you; so you may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper.' And yet sometimes we say, 'Why have you forgotten me?'

Because depression is right here and he keeps us from seeing that God is right here. There is a battle going on. "Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a breaking of my bones, my enemies reproach me while they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" So he says that a second time, but notice he counters in verse eleven, "Why are you cast down, O my soul? Why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God."

Now let us ask some questions about this. We can go on and read verse Psalm 43, but notice how it ends: "Why are you cast down, O my soul? Why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God." Some thought these two Psalms were one Psalm at one time. We have two and we hear this questioning three times: "Why are you cast down, O my soul? Why are you disquieted within me? And his answer is the same in each case: hope in God.

What situation do we find the psalmist in? Why is he crying out like this? He desires God, but he hasn't seen the answer to that yet. The enemies are talking to him. Whether they are talking to him from without and are actually saying, 'Where is your God?' or his own heart is saying, 'Where is God in all this?' If you have never had this happen I don't think you are honest with yourself. We have often wondered, 'Why is this happening to me? What did I do that this would come to pass? Is God judging me? Am I under his discipline?' Sometimes depression is nameless. Have you ever experienced that with depression when it comes over you and you say, 'Where did that come from? Why am I depressed?' And you can't really ferret it out.

I was a terrible Christian for three years; terrible Christian to other Christians for this reason: when I was saved I came from such darkness to light. I didn't know what depression was. I mean how could you be depressed? Because I was in the pit of hell, I smelled the flames of hell sizzling in my soul and God cast me into the light of Christ so quickly overnight. It was like wow. The scriptures command you to rejoice always. Just do it! And I would run into Christians that I was a terrible influence upon them because I would just rejoice in the Lord and

I would never even say, 'Oh honey, I am so sorry you are feeling so bad, or Brother, what is the matter? Tell me all about it.'

You see I was a terrible ministry to other people. We are to weep with those that weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. And when you are weeping you don't want someone around you rejoicing so much. In Proverbs there is a curse upon you when you wake a brother with loud noises and all sort of joy in the morning because some people wake up kind of sad and quiet and they need a little time to get going and you have all this joy and they cannot take it at one time. And the Proverbs says that there is a curse on that. You become all things to all men and wherever they are and whatever condition they are in you can take them from where they are and say, 'Brother, I understand how depressed you are. Sin does that. I know how depressed I was before the Lord saved me.'

So, I finally learned this, because then after those three years the Lord let me fall into deep depression. I needed that study. I don't want to do it again. But I needed it. It was years of depression fighting it. Psalm 42 was one of my favorite Psalms, because it says that my soul was thirsting for God. I just couldn't find God. And part of my problem was false teaching: there was this higher plain that Christians could find and they wouldn't have to sin anymore. They could be above all of this. They could somehow conquer the battle and be over it once and for all. It was a higher life teaching. I wasn't taught well that the battle is in the trenches day by day and fighting depression day by day. We need to be looking to Christ, Jesus himself, and we need to be praying with the Psalmist and saying to ourselves, 'Hope in God.' There were a number of things that helped me in the scriptures, particularly in Isaiah where it says: 'as a thick cloud your transgressions have been blotted out.' God just put that over me: all of your sins involved in all this depression, which was laid upon Christ too, it is all blotted out like a thick cloud. The Lord just wiped away the skies and I saw that I was in Him.

Also He used Hebrews where it said: 'by one offering Jesus Christ has perfected forever them that are sanctified.' It was done. It was complete. I was already perfected forever. He also used the verse: "I will never leave you nor forsake you so that you may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper.'" And I would argue, 'Lord, where are you? I am so depressed.'

But God intervened and said to me: 'Are you going to live in your depression and trust your depression or are you going to trust my word? I am not leaving you nor forsaking you.' I know exactly where I was. I could drive to that place in East Feliciana Parish. I was underneath this roof painting and God just blessed me with that word. My mind said, 'I want your word. I will accept your word. You have not left me.' That began to destroy my depression.

This book! I cannot believe I am teaching it because I only read the first chapter. The first chapter so destroyed my depression, I never read the rest of the book! It was a shaft of truth and it was this Psalm. The way that Lloyd-Jones dealt with this Psalm, by the time he got to the end of the chapter...well, that is how you write a book! The rest of it was good and we will go through it all. It is all needed. I must admit I was an older Christian when I read that first

chapter, so I had all this time in the word and all this preaching and all this truth that I knew that I could apply.

The second chapter is extremely important because it takes us through the gospel and takes us to the problem that some people have: they try to live in sanctification, but they never understand their justification. If you don't get solidly fixed in your mind what Jesus has accomplished for you, you will never be able to walk with Him and for Him and understand what He has done. You will always hit the wall of sanctification, because you cannot be sanctified without Christ's justification. You have to have a backbone and justification is the backbone of the Christian's life. The backbone holds up the body while all this buffeting is going on and allows the body to move, but if we try to enter the Christian life and say, 'I need to be just like Jesus' and we are not thinking constantly, constantly about what He has accomplished, and when we sin, we won't have any place to go to.

You might say, "I was trying to live perfectly today and I sinned." And then you sinned some more, because you were not going back to the cross. That is where you are going to find relief, and so you are always trying to be on this treadmill.

But you say, "I am always trying to get better and I am not getting better I am getting worse. I am always looking at the law and I seem to be going down instead of up." You need to be looking at the law, but only after you have looked at the cross. You are justified in Jesus Christ. You are sanctified in Him. He accomplished all of your salvation.

So, here we have this brother; in this condition. You may see yourself here. We get alone with depression and we don't battle it properly. Some people have claustrophobia. Thankfully we are in a big room for those of you who have claustrophobia, but I know people who do and I sense that at times depression is a very claustrophobic problem, because you are alone with your thoughts. Your thoughts keep coming up and if you don't deal with them properly, they will multiply. They are like rabbits. One fear will multiply to two. We have to battle them with the word of God.

How does this Psalmist deal with this problem? How is he attacking it here? What is the first thing he is doing to deal with this? He reminds himself of the goodness of God and the faithfulness of God. He begins going back to the Lord himself. You see we are the problem. God is not the problem. God is glorious and holy and wondrous and good. He has given his Son. But if I deal within myself, I am the problem, and my problems will only create more problems. My depression will only engender more depression. And so by thinking about the Lord; you notice he is calling upon God; he cries out for God in the first verses: "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for you, O God."

I think of this picture of the deer that has finally found this stream and is lapping all of the water it possibly can. Our soul is like that. We need the Lord. We need him, himself. And so he goes to the Lord. And you notice in verse five he begins questioning himself: 'Why are

you so cast down? Why all this trouble within you?’ Notice how he deals with that. What are his next three words: “Hope in God.”

It says in Romans chapter eight, we are saved by hope. Depression is the loss of hope. How am I ever going to get out of this? You cannot see your way out. It was Christian, who was in Doubting Castle and the Giant of Despair was bludgeoning him to death, and he did not get out of there until he looked in his pocket and found the Key of Promise.

God has said something: hope in God! God has a way out of this depression. He has the way to beat this Giant Despair. “Hope in God for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.” That doesn’t mean wait till tomorrow to start praising him. But have you ever praised God and it is just a little hollow? You are not praising Him how you once had, maybe when you were first converted. Well praise Him and you will praise Him yet more; you will think of Him yet more. You think of what Christ has accomplished for you: that He is interceding for you right now, that He knows where you are, exactly why you are there and how to relieve your distress. Remember, He did say, “It is finished!” He wasn’t always separated from His Father on the cross. He accomplished all of you salvation.

Yes, there are many troubles and they come in pairs, they come in threes, they come in quadruples of problems; yet all of them are destroyed by considering Christ. There is no problem you have that He cannot take care of and He will in His own time. We want it over right now, and yet, the Lord may use that protracted time where you are always battling it—battling from hope. “Lord, I know I will yet praise you, for you are the help of my countenance.” What is your countenance? It is your face; your face tells people what is going on inside you. And some of us are pretty good liars. We can put on this smile and nobody knows what is going on inside of us. Other people are transparent and whatever is going on here is right here. You know which one you are, but the Lord knows what is really there. Sometimes we put on our church face, ‘Now I can’t let the brethren know I am really in this much trouble,’ but I would rather be among the brethren with trouble and putting on a face then staying at home and letting depression yet beat me all the more, and it will.

You say, ‘How can I go among the people of God? I am so cast down. I will drag them down.’ It will drag them down even more if they know you are at home fighting this alone without them and that is why we come together: because there are those of us in this congregation that are depressed today. You have on your game face. You have on your church face. Nobody knows. Maybe you husband or wife does not know the difficulties of this. You don’t even want to tell them. You might cast them down.

I know of a brother who didn’t want to share all of his difficulties with someone else, because he did not want them to know what those darts were. Hide those darts! They don’t need to know. But we come together to share and bear one another’s burdens and there is somebody in this congregation who has been where you have been.

Let us look at II Corinthians 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation...” That is a big word—*all*; and tribulation is a big word as well: whatever your difficulty, whatever your trial, this word says that God comforts us in all our tribulation: “...that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” Wow! Whatever trouble you are going through, God is going to comfort you and he is going to bring you across people who need that comfort and he will use you to be that source.

You see, sometimes God blesses us directly in prayer, but sometimes we are among the brethren and God will use another brother to strengthen us. He binds the church of God together like that. We are living stones and compacted together, and your trial may need to be shared with other brothers and sisters. They will say, ‘We know where you are at and this is what God did.’ They will point you to a scripture. They will point you to a deliverance and God will use that to strengthen you, because remember: He sends them out two by two. We are not lone rangers. We need the body. And so the Lord ministers to us in this way.

Now you notice at the end of this Psalm, Psalm 42, that the deliverance is expected, but did we see it yet? It says, “I shall *yet* praise you.” Well, he is not in tomorrow yet. It seems like tomorrow he will praise him more. That is what he is saying, but at this very moment he doesn’t yet see the blessing. That is part of hope. Hope doesn’t see the final answer. Our hope surely will not be fulfilled until we see the Lord Jesus. We are always going to be in this posture of looking to Him who has much more to come than we have right now.

We talk about pie in the sky. Well, Steve Graham says, “No we have pie right now.” We have Christ right now and He is our all and all. We are not as the world that has no solutions or many solutions, they think, to a problem. We have one person. We go to him personally. We deal with Him and we receive from Him, and He may do it personally, directly in prayer, or He may do it with the brethren, but He will answer.

So we see this brother in difficulty. We see him questioning his own heart. We see him talking to himself, and he says, “Hope in God.” He is preaching to himself. And this is the key: you cannot just let the enemy talk to you, right? You have to talk to yourself, in more powerful terms than the enemy is talking to you, because the enemy will keep talking: “Where is your God?”

“I will tell you where my God is: He is in the heavens and is doing whatsoever He pleases. If it pleases Him that I am in this situation right now, I am going to preach to myself: Hope in God.” That is what the Psalmist is doing. He is not waiting for someone else to preach to him. He is preaching to himself.

He is talking to himself, and Lloyd-Jones says our problem is that we listen to ourselves and we need to be talking to ourselves. Do you get the distinction? We are listening to ourselves and we need to be talking to ourselves. There is a big difference. When you just listen, you are passive and your flesh will tell you a lot of things: ‘I am miserable! I am tired of

all this! It is getting worse!’ These things just keep coming out: more and more fears; more and more trials and you need to be talking to yourself: ‘Hope in God.’

OK it is getting more difficult. God wants it to grow more difficult so I will look at Him more and more and see Him more and I will come to a time when some other brother will need this. I will receive comfort from God. I will hope in Him. He is the health of my countenance. My face is going to change. It is even changing right now as I am preaching to myself: ‘Hope in God!’ Just think of the person you are hoping in: God! He made all things. Can you not make a solution? Well, He has given His Son. How shall he not with him give us freely all things...and you go over to Romans 8, the antidote for all problems, there nothing present or things to come or past, present, future, that can separate us from the love of Christ...and this depression is trying to win the battle. It will not. It cannot separate me from the love of Christ.

He has justified me who can condemn me? The enemy has condemned me: ‘Where is your God?’ He is right here. He is Lord. He has conquered everything. He has conquered you and you have this preaching battle and you will win, because the Lord has won. You are on the winning side. It is not like the LSU game yesterday. We know how that turned out. We know how this one turned out: and Christ won! He won all the battles. He rose from the dead. What is the biggest problem God the Father ever had? His Son’s is death. He raised His Son from the dead. That is the biggest problem He ever had. He raised Him from the dead. What is your problem compared to raising a dead Son? Nothing! Paul said, “How can we compare the trial of this life to the glory that is to come?” We have to shift our minds to the pie that we have there, but it is right now, it is ours in Christ.

The world will say, ‘You are just playing mind games.’ Well *you* are playing mind games. *You* are denying God. He created you and you tell me you came out of an explosion? That is a mind game if I have ever heard one. He created all this wonder and these complexities and these powers that are even keeping your body operating right now. He is my Savior. So you preach to others. You preach to yourself. What does Paul tell Timothy? Preach the Word! That is what they need. They need the word, so you preach the word to yourself.

Now you have it. By God’s grace I began preaching—preaching to myself—preaching this Psalm—preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. And depression has come, but it doesn’t get to stay as long as it use to. It is not the guest I once made it. It felt like it just had to come here to stay. It is an enemy that has to be beaten down and talked to and run off. It is not welcome, because Christ has conquered. Now are we simply saying we don’t have problems? Yes, I may have cancer. I might have zero balance in my checking account on November 22 and I have eight days of the month left and bills are still due. That happens, and all of those things can be sources of depression, but we have to deal with those scripturally, and come at them with God’s cure, singular, the Lord Jesus.

Now let us look at some of the things our brother points out here in the first chapter. Some of you have heard tapes of Lloyd-Jones. He is a very pensive brother. He is a very

anointed brother. Al Martin said of him at one time: 'He doesn't use a lot of illustrations. He is different from most preachers. All he did was preach the word. He gave illustrations from the scriptures, but not a lot of illustrations from outside of that. He just preached the word.' But he points out that depression is a common condition and it is one by which we miss a lot of God's blessings. We don't want to continue in that because we are forgetting what God has done. That is where the blessing is, in Christ. Depression is forgetting what God has done. He also says that it is a condition which brings blight upon God's name.

Have you ever heard someone say, 'I saw this Christian, and that Christian had something I knew I did not have, and it convicted me. I wanted to know what they had.' The Lord used that to draw them as a magnet to Christ. Well, that is what we should be in our best situation. We should be around others and be a shining light. We don't want to be just a dim little flicker spark. We want to be a burning and a shining light as John the Baptist. What was John the Baptist always doing? People would ask him: 'Are you the Christ?' He would reply, 'O no! I am not the Christ.' He was always pointing to the Lord Jesus.

People would say, 'You know Jesus' men are baptizing more than you are now?'

John would reply, 'O good! He must increase, and I must decrease. Tell me more.'

You see John the Baptist was always...he didn't do any miracles the scripture says...but everything he said of Christ was true. And every time you heard him speaking he was talking about Christ. He had one weak spot at the end of his life, and that points to some of the reasons we might be depressed. He is in prison, right? Probably he didn't have the best of food. Who knows what vermin he saw down there, and here is the Lord Jesus Christ, and he says, 'Are you the one? Or are we looking for another?' That is his weakest point. It is the Lord Jesus who tell John's men, 'Tell him the dead are being raised, lepers are being healed, the gospel is being preached to the poor. Don't tell him yes or no, tell him all these things that are happening; all these great things that God is doing, that will encourage his heart.' And then he goes on to say that there has never been a greater than John the Baptist, even in the midst of John the Baptist sinning. You see how he forgives him of that sin; he points that it is a regular thing that can happen in men's hearts, even as great as John the Baptist can be depressed in prison; that there has never been a greater than he that walked the face of the earth.

It is a common problem, but one we need to battle so that we might be testimonies. And then he points out some reasons for depression: he says some people live looking at the experiences of others. They see victory in others but they don't see it for themselves and they covet that. They really don't know how to deal with it. They don't know how to find this for themselves. This is a problem.

He brings up a point of temperament: that some people are given more to depression than others. He talks about introverts and extroverts. He says you need to know yourself. The Psalmist says, "Why are you cast down?" Is it partly because of your temperament? Do you know if you are an introvert or an extrovert? Do you know if you are one who lives more within

you or lives more in a sense without yourself? I would add to that, are you more an optimist or pessimist? We need both. We need those who will look at something very clearly in the church and say, 'We have a problem.' Not just, 'Oh, everything is just fine. We will be able to get through this.' They actually (the pessimists) deal with the glass half empty.

Do you know yourself? It is important, because those who are introverts have a difficulty with two things: we have something we call self examination and we have introspection. What is the difference? All of us are to examine ourselves. "Examine yourself and see if you are in the faith." That is a command of scripture. You need to look at yourself. But introspection is where you continually look at yourself and only yourself; and you are living with your own cogitation; and you are not doing what Robert Murray M'Cheyne said, "One look at yourself and a thousand looks at the savior." Just look at yourself and consider your sins, consider your weaknesses, but don't live in that. Don't be living in a morbid introspection but a healthy examination that drives you to Christ. And Lloyd-Jones says this is a problem that some introverts have.

Know your temperament. Temperament might change over the years. You might start out one way and you start moving to another. I think all of us have certain elements of introversion and some elements of extroversion, but it is in a different situation we might be more of an introvert, but in another situation we might be more of an extrovert. In our homes we might be an extrovert, but in public we can be quite an extrovert. We are very complex. I don't think you can just put a label on people and say look, 'you are this, this and this.' Or you will always be this, this and this. I think sometimes conversion changes a lot. You were always introverted and God saves you and you found that there was this work in you to be an extrovert.

Lloyd-Jones points out that sometimes introverts are superficial. It is all a mask. They just have all this going out because they don't want people touching the inside. They are sort of on the offensive. They are doing the talking and you are not talking to them. It is not like one is better than the other, but God has both in the assembly, and there are probably a lot more categories than introverts and extroverts.

Do you know what you are? If you don't, the question is not so much, 'do you know what you are,' but, 'do you know Christ?' So, if you are casting yourself upon the Lord, and you don't understand all about yourself, that is ok. We are very complex. The Lord knows the heart, but it helps if you know that you have a tendency towards one or the other. Whether you are being superficial and putting a mask on or you are an introvert who tends to spiral down in your own thoughts if you don't catch yourself and say, 'Wait a minute. Hope in God. You will praise Him. He is the help of your countenance and your God.' And you preach to yourself instead of listening to yourself. That is the key; you are talking to yourself instead of listening to yourself.

He also points out a problem or another cause, can be your physical condition. Lloyd-Jones points out that Spurgeon had a problem with gout and this caused him to have bouts of depression. And we wonder if Spurgeon lived today, would he have had as much problem with gout; is there some medicine that would have helped him more? He was tremendously depressed at times. They actually had to carry him into the pulpit he was so depressed. The message he preached was probably very encouraging, but he, himself, suffered from depression. He had to spend a lot of time in France in a better climate. He was not able to be in London because of this depression. He dies at an early age. The Lord's purpose was that he would not live into his sixties and that he would suffer much. Partly because he could be such an encouragement; he had to fight so hard this depression. He was able to encourage other Christians.

Lloyd-Jones says, speaking generally, you can put tiredness, overstrained, illness, any form of illness can be a source of depression because we are spiritual and physical. We like to divide the two. We are at some level of tiredness, but if you are extremely tired you can be irritable or depressed. We have to recognize these and sometimes get more sleep. That helps a lot of depression. They say as a culture we are losing more and more sleep. Our average number of hours sleeping is going down. Fifty years ago we got eight hours of sleep and then we moved to seven and now we are looking at six. Things happen in sleep that doesn't happen any other time. There is restorative thing going on in the body and in the mind. I like to burn a candle at both ends. I cannot wait for heaven where there is not candle, but all light. We don't have to go to sleep in heaven.

But if we could get enough rest we can work harder and be more efficient and maybe even ward off difficulty we have had because of a lack of concentration or sleepiness. So, physical difficulties are a problem. He mentions a third cause: dealing with an astounding blessing and an astounding trial. Some great change in your life; whether it be a vast blessing, you are on this mountain top, you come off the mountain top—where are you going to go? You just go down. Where is the mountain? He says he watched carefully individuals in his congregation who incurred a great blessing, and he thought, 'Where is this going to go? Are they going to fall off with this?' So you need to watch the things you are going through, the providences of life can bring us into the temptation of depression.

He mentions the advisories, and he says at the bottom of all these is the enemy trying to exacerbate this. Whatever it is, if it is a temperament, a physical condition, a blessing, a trial, the enemy doesn't mind using that. And so we are in a wonderful time of teaching on putting on the whole armor of God and we want to have it on in defending ourselves against the enemy.

Finally he says, the ultimate cause of all spiritual depression is unbelief. We are not casting ourselves upon the Lord and trusting him. We don't want to make that too simplistic, but unbelief is a big sin and some have argued that every sin has unbelief in it. If we really

believe God and trust in him we wouldn't be involved in that sin and the sin of not looking to the Lord and trusting in him, whether it is a physical malady, we need to trust the Lord in it and battle this difficulty.

Well the final thing I want to remind you of is the preaching to yourself. C.J. Mahaney in his book that Brother Fred has recommended on spiritual life, he talks about preaching the gospel to yourself every day. John Owens said you ought to review your conversion experience every day and set your mind on things above and not on things of the earth; if they are set upon things above, truly in Christ, justified by Him, kept by Him, that you will have the strength then to deal with whatever trial or depression comes upon you, because it will come, it will knock at your door, and it may even take up residence for awhile, but you will know better how to drive it out by preaching to yourself the Lord Jesus.

Questions for Consideration:

1. In what two ways does the Psalmist describe his depression in Psalm 42: 5, 11?
2. In the context of the Psalm, why is he in this condition?
3. What does he set himself to do to deliver himself from this dilemma?
4. What is his state at the end of the Psalm?
5. State the five causes of depression that Lloyd-Jones presents in chapter 1.
6. At the bottom of page 20, what does Lloyd-Jones indicate as the main principle that we must derive from this Psalm in our battle with depression?