

Depression

UNVEILED



Uncovering the Truth from a Christian Perspective

■ by Shawna Sapp, MSW, LCSW

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.
John 16:33

At some point in our lives we may unfortunately experience what it is like to feel depressed or know someone who is suffering from depression. Children, adolescents, and in some cases, even infants can experience depression. Whether we experience it as a young child or as an older adult, it is important to know the key symptoms of depression, but also be aware that depression may disguise itself. Depression affects a person emotionally, but also physically and spiritually. Depression affects the whole person.

Everyone's experience will be uniquely different depending on the factors that are impacting him or her; however, there are usually some key symptoms that make depression undisguisable. I say undisguisable because depression tries to disguise itself in order to survive, just as a virus tries to survive in the human body by living off its host. The truth of the matter is that depression cannot stay disguised because God finds a way of unveiling it. He does this by allowing us to depend on him more during this dark and difficult time. When we are faced with feelings of desperation, helplessness, or hopelessness we often turn to God. It is during this time that God utilizes depression to heighten our awareness and increase our dependency upon him. A verse from 2 Corinthians 4:16 provides us with this truth, "Therefore we do not lose heart, though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly, we are being renewed day by day."

Key Symptoms of Depression

Emotional: We typically associate depression with emotional symptoms. Children will sometimes experience the same symptoms as adults including sadness and low mood. The main difference between children and adults is that children will typically act out or display angry behavior.

Emotional symptoms can result in a loss of interest in school or activities a person once enjoyed, in addition to affecting an adult or child's ability to function at home, work, or school.

Sometimes symptoms of depression are disguised physically and/or spiritually

Physical: If you or a child has aches, pain, or headaches that do not respond to treatment, depression may be the cause. It is common for people to visit their healthcare provider about physical symptoms not realizing that depression is the root cause. Depression can also affect sleep and appetite.

Spiritual: Children and adults alike may wonder where God is during this point in their lives. As a caregiver or parent, this can feel very disheartening; however, take comfort in knowing that this is a normal part of spiritual growth. Instead of feeling discouraged, it would be important to recognize this as an opportunity to provide children and adults with support and encouragement from God's word. I believe John 16:33 relates perfectly in this case, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

- Continued on Page 2 -

Article taken from the Jan | Feb 2018 issue of *PRESSING ON*, a Publication of Chicago Christian Counseling Center
Chicago Christian Counseling Center has locations throughout Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana

www.chicagochristiancounseling.org

800.361.6880 | info@chicagochristiancounseling.org

facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling | Text CCCC to 22828 to join our email list

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.

Depression

UNVEILED

Uncovering the Truth from a Christian Perspective

■ by Shawna Sapp, MSW, LCSW

- Continued from Page 1 -

Is depression different for men and women?

Men and women will likely experience depression in different but similar ways. For example, both men and women will likely experience classic symptoms of depression including feelings of hopelessness, low energy, or difficulty concentrating to name a few; however, the main difference between the two sexes is in the way the depression is presented. Men will more likely deny their feelings or hide them from others while women will be more vocal about their feelings.

As men and women approach middle-adulthood, ages 45-65, circumstantial issues such as job loss, loss of a loved one, or even substance abuse can impact a person's faith. It can be easy for a person to become distant from God during this time and depend on himself or others for support. While God will surround us with support from our loved ones during these times, the truth of the matter is God wants us to first come to him. Proverbs 3:5-6 says exactly this, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Depression in the elderly

The elderly's experience of depression will often correlate with a sense of loss. This may include loss of loved ones and loss of independence due to loss of major faculties. Losing one's independence can be very devastating, especially when a person prides himself on his independence, however at this point in our lives, God usually will surround us with the necessary care and love that is needed. As a caregiver, it would be important to spend additional quality time with your loved one. Tell stories and reminisce about the past. This is a time for reflection or even celebration of past accomplishments. Another crucial factor is that depression can sometimes look like dementia in the elderly, and it is important to get an accurate diagnosis from a health care professional so that treatment for depression is not delayed.

Reach out and get help

If you or a loved one is suffering from depression, I urge you to place your hope in God's hands as he has now provided you with an opportunity to reach out and get help. I would also like to add that as a Christian, I have personally experienced depression and its strongholds on my faith; however, no matter how devastating or impactful it may be, God's love for us will always be greater. ■



"Christ's love is greater than anyone can ever know, but I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:19-21 (NCV)

Shawna Sapp is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and sees clients in our South Holland, IL and Schererville, IN locations.

Article taken from the Jan | Feb 2018 issue of *PRESSING ON*, a Publication of Chicago Christian Counseling Center
Chicago Christian Counseling Center has locations throughout Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana

www.chicagochristiancounseling.org

800.361.6880 | info@chicagochristiancounseling.org

facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling | Text CCCC to 22828 to join our email list

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.