

## **Introduction:**

“Depression is as old as human history. The Bible has many examples of people struggling with despondency and despair. In his depression and fatigue, Elijah asked for his life to be taken. Jonah felt deeply despondent after God did not destroy Nineveh. Jeremiah regretted the day he was born. Job’s wife advised him to curse God and die in the midst of the suffering and pain. Well-known church leaders like Martin Luther, John Bunyan, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, and J.B. Phillips struggled with depression and so did political leaders such as Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln.

Depression is no respecter of persons. It has been called the common cold of emotional disorders, and it appears to be on the rise. In the United States it is one of the most prevalent and serious mental disorders, affecting about 20 percent of the population at some time in their lives. People of both genders get depressed, although women are twice as likely as men to suffer from major depressive and dysthymic disorders.”

From *Understanding and Coping with Depression*

## A Song of Comfort for the "Dark Night of the Soul"

### Psalm 77

<sup>1</sup>I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. <sup>2</sup>When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands and my soul refused to be comforted. <sup>3</sup>I remembered you, O God, and I groaned; I mused, and my spirit grew faint.

Selah

<sup>4</sup>You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak. <sup>5</sup>I thought about the former days, the years of long ago; <sup>6</sup>I remembered my songs in the night. My heart mused and my spirit inquired: <sup>7</sup>"Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again? <sup>8</sup>Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time? <sup>9</sup>Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion?"

Selah

<sup>10</sup>Then I thought, "To this I will appeal: the years of the right hand of the Most High." <sup>11</sup>I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. <sup>12</sup>I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds. <sup>13</sup>Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so great as our God? <sup>14</sup>You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. <sup>15</sup>With your mighty arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.

Selah

<sup>16</sup>The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed. <sup>17</sup>The clouds poured down water, the skies resounded with thunder; your arrows flashed back and forth. <sup>18</sup>Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked. <sup>19</sup>Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen. <sup>20</sup>You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

## Life Lessons from Psalm 77:

1. Times of depression are something even the most godly wrestle with on occasion.

Psalm77:1-9

2. Taking time to recall God's specific blessings in our past, provides perspective and peace in the present.

Psalm77:10-20

### *How?*

- **STOP!** Take time to \_\_\_\_\_ .

Psalm77:10-12

- **LOOK!** Get a fresh \_\_\_\_\_ .

Psalm77:13-15

- **LEARN!** He will \_\_\_\_\_ you.

Psalm77:16-20

## An Action Plan to Overcome Depression:

For personal, family, growth groups, and ministry team use -

### 1. Examine Your Thinking:

- Do you recognize that it is normal to feel depressed now and then?
- Is your focus on the pressure / problems you're experiencing; or on your response to those pressures / problems?

### 2. Examine Your Behavior:

- Are you choosing positive or negative responses to your depression?
- Have you willfully stopped to recall God's blessings in your past?
  - pictures - old videos - slides - journals - albums - napkin exercise

### 3. Examine Your Future:

- Can the God who did so much in your past handle what you are facing today?
- Is there a specific, positive step you could take to **thank God** or to **help someone else** in order to demonstrate your confidence in God's love for you?