

# *Prescriptions for the Heart*

## **Coping with depression**

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Depression is the most common form of mental illness. Most people experience it at least one or more times in their lives. The symptoms of depression can vary significantly in both severity and length. Depression can result from a variety of causes. The reasons for a patient's depression may be easy to identify or they can be difficult to diagnose. If the cause for a patient's depression are understood a doctor can often successfully treat the symptoms with prescription medications. However, if a patient does not respond to medications and/or the cause for a patient's depression is not clearly understood, your doctor may refer them to a Psychologist or Psychiatrist for additional help in coping with depression.

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### **A spiritual prescription for depression**

Individuals that suffer from depression often find that this illness will affect their spiritual health too. Depression can negatively influence your outlook on your relationship with God and other individuals in your life. As a result, it is important for individuals that suffer with depression to recognize the symptoms of this condition. After acknowledging the existence of the symptoms of depression one can effectively use scripture as spiritual prescription for encouragement and hope.

One of the primary symptoms associated with depression is the perception that their current situation is hopeless or cannot be improved. Individuals suffering from depression can often feel that they are powerless to control outside factors that are affecting their lives. One way to cope is to acknowledge that God is in control even if we are not. When life begins to feel like it is spinning out of control, we can turn to God for our answers.

Your doctor can provide you with prescription medications to help reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression, but medication alone may not be the best treatment. Understanding the cause for your symptoms is very helpful in reducing or eliminating symptoms of depression. Regular Bible reading and prayer time often helps patients cope with the symptoms of depression and can provide encouragement and reassurance of God's love and faithfulness. We will always have hope if we maintain an active prayer life with our Lord and seek His counsel for our lives, because "nothing can separate us from the love of God."<sup>1</sup>

Depression can be overcome when we trust in the Lord to guide us out of its darkness. When struggling with depression look for ways to enhance your spiritual life and the burdens of your heart will be lifted. Make a time of devotion and Bible reading part of your daily routine. Use this time to strengthen your faith and encourage your heart as you seek to overcome the symptoms of depression.

There are a number of good books that have been written specifically to assist individuals that are suffering with the symptoms of depression. Selecting a spiritual resource that was written by

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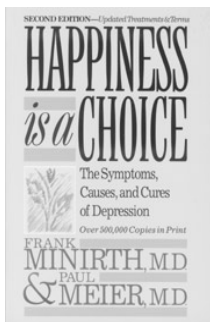
<sup>1</sup> The Holy Bible: New International Version. 1984. (Romans 8:39). Zondervan: Grand Rapids

an individual that has experienced a similar struggle in their life will help you identify with the experiences of others and understand that although you are hurting, you are not alone. These resources can also teach you new ways to cope with and resolve your feelings, so that healing can take place.

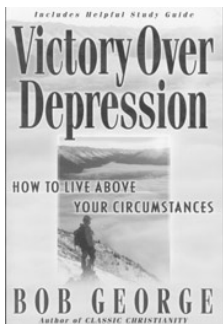
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### **Additional Resources that can help you cope with depression.**

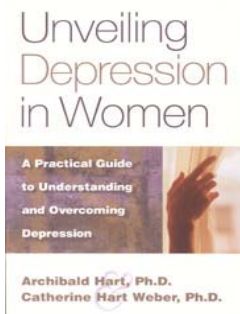
The following resources have been reviewed by the Christian Medical Association and have been found to contain sound Biblical and medical advice that can help you cope with symptoms of depression. These books can be found at your local Christian bookstore or you can order them directly from the Christian Medical Association at **888-231-2637**.



**Happiness is a Choice**, by Paul Meier, MD & Frank Minirth, MD. What causes depression? Is there a cure for depression? Why would a Christian suffer from depression? Whether depression is felt mildly or acutely, temporarily or persistently, it strikes just about everyone, including Christians. Learn about the symptoms, causes and cures of depression. This non-technical guidebook has been clinically proven to help overcome emotional pain. Paperback, 344 pgs.



**Victory over Depression**, by Bob George. Depression. Hopelessness. Anger. Despondence. Sadness. These are some of the feelings we experience when we're faced with difficult circumstances. Yet God has a higher purpose for us than merely taking away our problems. He wants us to live above them, and that's possible to do, even when we're in the midst of adversity. With a compassionate heart, Bob George shares how we can experience the reality of Christ as our hope in the midst of any seemingly hopeless situation. Paperback, 199 pages.



**Unveiling Depression in Women** by Archibald Hart & Catherine Hart Weber, PhD. There are times when life seems dark, when the burdens of stress rain down and the demands of living cloud your thoughts and feelings. But you are not struggling alone in this raging storm. In today's fast-paced society nearly every woman, at some time during her life, will experience some level of depression. This book offers a biblical perspective on how to conquer these debilitating emotions. Paperback, 233 pages.