



Sermon Series—Dealing with Depression
Part Three—Responsible Thinking
2 Corinthians 10:3-5

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Objective Sentence: Everyone can deal with depression by taking two critical steps that will help us manage our feelings and emotions.

Introduction: Stuart Sorenson, RMN: One thing common to almost every form of depressive illness is treatability. Depressed people tend to think in a particular way. They tell themselves the same sort of gloomy, pessimistic things over and over again. This is what psychologists call negative thinking. After a while this pattern of thinking becomes a habit. When that happens it is described as automatic negative thinking. This habit formation is one of the most damaging aspects of depression as it locks the sufferer into a downward spiral which drags them deeper and deeper into despair.

Ed Hinson: Depression may be fueled by circumstances far beyond our control, but depression is often the end result of not properly handling our problems. *It results when we allow life to control us instead of us controlling life.* Most depression has a spiritual and psychological cause rather than a physical one. Depression is most serious among the divorced, the widowed, the unemployed, the guilty, the lonely, the empty. Loss of meaningfulness to one's self and to others often causes serious depression. Lack of self worth, lack of feeling essential to others, and a lack of intimacy with God all contribute to one's becoming depressed. Depression is a far more common problem than many people realize. It is a form of self-imposed isolation... Physical illness, the loss of a love one, divorce, guilt, unemployment, being widowed, loneliness, the sense that one has failed, and many other difficulties may lead to depression.

Pastor Dan: Most people are not content, happy or prosperous because they are seeking these things. The problem is that they fail to realize that contentment, happiness and prosperity are a by-product of character development. *Dr. Chuck T. Falcon:* Don't worry about whether you are happy. Develop interests, activities, and friendships, be kind, help other people, strive to be virtuous, accept emotional pain, and improve your thinking habits. Work on your personal

problems, using small steps to make sure you don't become overwhelmed. Work on only one or two simple things at a time, breaking large or complex problems into goals you can easily accomplish. A depressed person needs a wide variety of interests and activities, and to enjoy and value friendships. Having these priorities will make him or her more pleasant, give him or her practice in socializing, and increase chances of finding romance. Interests, activities and a good network of friends and acquaintances will cause his or her painful longing to cease. *National Institute of Mental Health*: Expect your mood to improve gradually, not immediately. Feeling better takes time. People rarely snap out of depression, but they can feel a little better day by day. Don't allow negative thought habits interfere with problem solving. Keep an open mind to possible solutions.

We should take depression seriously. Cicero was correct when he said, "The diseases of the mind are more destructive than those of the body." The major cause of suicide is depression. One person commits suicide every 13 minutes in the United States alone. One hundred and ten people commit suicide each and 40,150 a year take their own lives.

#1. *One thing common to almost every form of depressive illness is treatability*

A. *Dr. Chuck T. Falcon: Negative thinking habits play a very important role in depression. Research shows depressed people tend to minimize their accomplishments, talents and qualities. Their thinking habits focus on or exaggerate problems and faults and minimize or fail to see the good things in their lives. They tend to recall negative things more often than positive things, and they tend to minimize, overlook, or forget feelings of pleasure in their lives. They may feel preoccupied with loss or personal problems, perhaps wallowing in thoughts about self-pity, inability to cope or escaping their problems.*

1. *You Are Not Responsible For Every Thought You Think But You Are Responsible For What You Do With Every Thought You Think (2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down arguments [imagination] and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ).*

a. *Author Russ Harris; The Happiness Trap*: Eighty percent of everyone's thoughts contain some sort of negative content. So it's normal to have negative thoughts; it's part of our "evolutionary heritage" [a part of our fallen or sinful nature]. The difficulty isn't that we have negative thoughts. The problem comes when we believe that our thoughts are true. For instance when one reads an article in one of the tabloids you and I realize that the story is biased, it is exaggerated, taken out of context and not credible. Most of us who read the headlines of the National Inquirer at the checkout counter of the grocery store don't take any action as a result of the article because we don't believe it is true. A great deal of the thoughts passing through our minds are like tabloid stories: exaggerated, taken out of context, biased, untrue and not credible. Do not act on the negative thoughts passing through your minds, do not dwell on them. Step back from a negative thought so you can get a better perspective and ask these questions: Is this thought true? Is this thought important? Is this thought helpful?

- b. *Source Unknown:* The Ancestor of every act is a thought. If your thinking goes wrong, then your life goes wrong.
 - c. **Proverbs 23:7** For as a person thinks in his or her heart so is that person.
 - d. *Steven Covey:* Sow a thought—reap an action; sow an action—reap a habit; sow a habit—reap a character; sow a character—reap a destiny.
 - e. **1 Peter 2:1-3** Get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. ² Like newborn babies, crave the pure spiritual milk of God’s word so that you will grow into a full salvation experience. Cry out for this nourishment, ³ now that you have had a taste of the Lord’s kindness
 - f. **Philippians 2:13** God is working in you giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.
 - g. *Fred Price:* The life span of a thought is determined by how much attention you give it. What you feed grows and what you starve dies. Strength or weakness—attention is the fuel causing thoughts to live.
 - h. *Ralph Waldo Emerson:* A man is what he thinks about all day long. The key to every man is his thought. With our thoughts, we make our world.
 - i. *Dr. Chuck T. Falcon:* Happy people experience failure, disappointment, rejection, negative emotions, pain, and great sorrow just like depressed people. But happy people keep a positive attitude by gracefully accepting sadness and suffering as normal parts of life, while doing what they can about their problems. This also makes them more pleasant to be around and improves their social lives.
 - j. *E. Stanley Jones:* You are transformed into the image of that on which you habitually concentrate. Whatever gets your attention gets you.
2. **Beware of the Sources from which Thoughts Originate** (*Capture Time; (Responsible Thinking June 24): Everyone has a desire or weakness that can be exploited by criminal influence. The exploitation process leading to temptation begins with a thought that is attractive to our taste of negativity.)*
- a. **People have the ability to Influence our Thinking**
 - * **1 Corinthians 15:33** Bad company spoils good manners.
 - * Association brings assimilation; you will assimilate the behavior with which you associate. (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)
 - b. **The Natural Desires of our Flesh Influence our Thinking**
 - * **2 Timothy 2:22** Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts
 - c. **Circumstances influence our thinking**
 - * *National Institute of Mental Health:* People who have low self-esteem, who consistently view themselves and the world with pessimism or who are readily overwhelmed by stress, are prone to depression.
 - * Physical illness, the loss of a love one, divorce, guilt, unemployment, being widowed, loneliness, the sense that one has failed, and many other difficulties may lead to depression.
 - d. **The World Around Us Influences our Thinking**
 - * **Romans 12:2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by

the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

e. Drugs and Alcohol Influence our Thinking

* **Proverbs 20:10** Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

* Pastor Dan: The marketers of alcohol who spend billions making their products **attractive** fail to tell us some alarming facts. King Solomon, the wisest man in the world in his day, spoke of the dangers of alcohol saying, “It is **addictive** [wine is a mocker]; strong drink is raging [**it is destructive**]; and whoever is deceived by it is not wise [**it is deceptive**].

f. Disease

g. God Influences our Thinking (You Need to Pray) (**Matthew 16:13-19**)

* Matthew 16:17 Jesus said to him, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.

h. Satan Influences our Thinking (**Matthew 16:21-23**)

* **Matthew 16:22-23** But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. “Heaven forbid, Lord,” he said. “This will never happen to you!”²³ Jesus turned said to Peter, “Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s!”

h. Ed Hinson: Our feelings are the symptoms of our true inner thinking. They change when our thoughts and beliefs change. Feelings are guides that can help us better understand what’s occurring within us, but they are not good guides for establishing a permanent course of action. To impulsively follow our feelings rather than God’s Word is the worse thing we can do.

i. Author Unknown: Sometimes you can’t do much to change a problem, but you change how you think about it and in this way you can change how you feel.

j. Dr. Chuck T. Falcon: Replace negative thoughts with positive thought alternatives every day. If you tend to blame circumstances or other people for your depression, combat these thoughts of helplessness by reading or by repeating, “I made myself depressed. I didn’t have to respond that way.”

Closing and Invitation; A Vein of Insanity; Capture Time March 8: A lady in our congregation was struggling emotionally and found herself in the psychiatric wing of the hospital. I went to see her and during the course of our visit she said to me, “Pastor Dan, my mind is filled with crazy things and I think I am going insane.” She described the thoughts she was thinking. It was amazing but I had thought some of the same thoughts. “Dear Lady,” I said, “There’s a vein of insanity running through each of us. You’re not crazy and the only difference between you and me is that you choose to listen to, and accept the thoughts that I choose to reject and ignore. If I did everything that went through my mind, I’d be a madman.” Paul wrote to the Corinthians and said, “Casting down imaginations [arguments] and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” Although we’re not responsible for every thought we think; we are responsible for what we do with every thought we think. Why do we have bad thoughts? And why do we think about things we don’t want to think about? We can thank Adam and Eve for that scar. Humanity inherited a corrupt

nature from them. Wrongdoing stained the heart of our fore parents. That stain was permanent and they passed it on to the entire human race. This explains the vein of insanity running through our lives. What is our hope? Change your thoughts and change your world.” W.R. Inge said, “The soul is dyed the color of its leisure.”