

5. How is this six-week message series, Breaking Free, impacting your life?

breaking free

Text: 1 Samuel 16:14-20

Though many factors contribute to depression, Christ has the power to break every chain that binds you. The same God who delivered the Hebrews out of Egyptian bondage has the power to rescue you today. Christ purchased your freedom and paid for your sin when He died on the cross (Ephesians 1:7). Christ forever defeated death when He rose from the dead. He is strong enough to pull you up out of your pit, and He is the light that shines brightly in your deep darkness (see John 1:5). Call to Him—He is your way out (Psalm 130:1). Surrender and Christ will set you free! Commit your heart to the Lord and trust Him now (Psalm 37:5).

Resource List:

Unveiling Depression in Women: A Practical Guide to Understanding and Overcoming Depression by Archibald Hart and Catherine Hart Weber (\$10.39 on Amazon.com)

Unmasking Male Depression by Archibald Hart (\$11.99 at www.christianbook.com)

What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do: Discouragement and Depression by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend (\$7.99 at www.christianbook.com)

Christian Counselors:

Cornerstone Christian Counseling
439 1st Ave NW, Hickory, NC 28601
(828) 322-4941

Dr. Steve Shores
630 4th St SW, Hickory, NC 28602
(828) 328-2100 (Office)

One Year Bible Reading

Nov. 23: Ezekiel 45:13-46:24, 1 Peter 1:13-2:10, Psalm 119:33-48, Proverbs 28:11
Nov. 24: Ezekiel 47:1-48:35, 1 Peter 2:11-3:7, Psalm 119:49-64, Proverbs 28:12-13
Nov. 25: Daniel 1:1-2:23, 1 Peter 3:8-4:6, Psalm 119:65-80, Proverbs 28:14
Nov. 26: Daniel 2:24-3:30, 1 Peter 4:7-5:14, Psalm 119:81-96, Proverbs 28:15-16
Nov. 27: Daniel 4:1-37, 2 Peter 1:1-21, Psalm 119:97-112, Proverbs 28:17-18
Nov. 28: Daniel 5:1-31, 2 Peter 2:1-22, Psalm 119:113-128, Proverbs 28:19-20
Nov. 29: Daniel 6:1-28, 2 Peter 3:1-18, Psalm 119:129-152, Proverbs 28:21-22

Symptoms of Depression

1. _____ > sad, unhappy, “blue”
2. *thought* > negative, pessimistic about the future, no motivation, decreased efficiency and concentration; suicidal in most severe forms
3. _____ > no energy, sluggishness, personal appearance can be neglected
4. *physical* > loss of appetite, loss of sexual drive, weight loss
5. _____ > sadness is the central mood disturbance, but often accompanied by fears, anxiety, tension, uncertainty, indecisiveness

The Plain Truth

_____ God opens the door of _____
to lift us in times of depression & doubt.

Here is how we can deal with depression and doubt

- 1) We need _____ through Life Groups.
- 2) We need a _____ for hurts, habits and hang-ups—Celebrate Recovery
- 3) We need help in sorting out real issues ~Christian _____.
- 4) We need a source of _____—Reading God’s Word.
- 5) We need encouragement—Gospel Coaching and deep friendships.
- 6) Challenge you to a _____
to attend worship starting January 4 through Easter, April 5. Please don’t miss! If you are sick—not feeling well or if you are traveling due to business you can tune in and watch online at www.christnc.com.

Please find a resource list of books and counselors on the back of the Life Group notes.

November 22 & 23, 2014

Breaking Free

Turning... Depression and Doubt into Deeper Faith

Life Group Lesson • Week of November 23

God didn't create us to live in a pit. But because of sin, all creation has been marred and broken from the beginning—this includes the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of humankind. "When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned" (Romans 5:12). Disobeying God is a sin today just like it was for Adam and Eve. Like a disease sin still infects us—men, women, boys, and girls. And the disease of sin still breeds through the dark places of disobedience, dread, despair, depression, and doubt.

Read 1 Samuel 16:14-23

1. According to v14 of this passage, why was Saul tormented with a spirit of depression and fear?

The Spirit of the LORD left Saul because he disobeyed God and as far as we know, never truly repented. God had instructed King Saul "to settle accounts with the nation of Amalek for opposing Israel when they came from Egypt" but for some reason Saul was unwilling to carry out the Lord's command. He partially obeyed, but as King over all Israel—as the leader of God's people—the LORD expected Saul to fully obey His word (see 1 Samuel 15:1-35).

While it's not our place to judge Saul's salvation, the lesson we can learn is this: rationalizing our disobedience and compromising with false voices is a dangerous place to live. "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). If we are going to break free from recurring disobedience that leads to downward spirals of darkness and depression, we cannot afford to compromise with the worldly standards around us. We must learn to "fear the LORD and serve Him wholeheartedly" (see Joshua 24:14a). Ultimately, God "is the one to whom we are accountable" (Hebrews 4:13b) not man (see also Luke 12:4-5).

2. While many factors can contribute to clinical depression, how is it that willful disobedience to the Lord and continued resistance to God's way can fuel even more depression and darkness?

While King Saul may have already been suffering from depression (see 1 Samuel 10:20-23), his prolonged and willful disobedience led him further away from the Lord—further in the opposite direction of breaking free. What (or who) is leading you in the opposite direction of breaking free?

Saul's disregard for God's mission with the Amalekites was in direct opposition to God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3. We cannot live in direct opposition to God's Word and expect to break free from depression and doubt. But we can make steps toward breaking free by living into God's Word (God's truth). It's a step-by-step, day-to-day process. We then stay on the path to freedom by allowing God's Word (God's truth) to live in us.

3. What fills your head—what thoughts are you thinking that are in direct opposition to God's Word (God's Truth) and His promises for you?

Psalm 119:105 says that God's Word is a lamp to guide our feet and a light for our path. In the space below, name at least two areas you will allow the Lord to begin redirecting your thought-life into alignment with His Word.

Our minds don't default to God's way of thinking. Remember, we are infected with a disease called sin that spreads death into our thought-life. Death wants us to dwell only on ourselves, and thus, continue in the downward spiral of self-loathing, self-pitying, or even self-exaltation. God alone is worthy of exaltation. This is why once we have accepted Christ into our hearts, we must intentionally spend time with the Lord and begin to learn what His Word says. He is our lifeline. We must learn how to praise Him, how to worship Him, and how to humble ourselves before Him.

In prayer we can go to God and ask: "What do you want me to see in your Word today, Lord? How can I know you more and love you more? I don't want to live only for myself, so how can I love others more?" As you spend time with the Lord, the fullness of His presence will begin to crowd out depression and doubt. And loving others more—through serving in the church and community, and being a part of a Life Group—will help you see the world around you differently.

4. How has serving others in the name of Christ made a difference in your life?

God has revealed Himself to us through His Spirit, through His Word, and ultimately through His Christ—the "Word made flesh" which is Emmanuel—God with us! We were not created to do life alone. God wants you to find healing and freedom. You may feel that you need to seek out Christian counseling. If so, do it now. You may feel that you need to let go of an unhealthy relationship or habit. If so, do it today. Listen carefully to the Lord's Spirit, and do whatever He tells you to do. Be fully obedient. Don't compromise and don't lose hope. If you're in a pit, remember things don't have to be this way forever. Though the night seems long, hang on: "Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning" (Psalm 30:5b).