



If I am a Christian, Why am I ... **Depressed?**

By Jan Brunette

I sat on the floor beside the bed, wrapped in a fetal position. Sobbing uncontrollably, I kept saying over and over again, “Abba, Daddy, why won’t the inner pain go away? Why am I not feeling joy in my life?”

Washed in despair, I wondered how this could be happening to me. I had been a devout Christian all my life. I had been through difficult times before, yet nothing had created such inner pain and emptiness. I didn’t see an end to the circumstances and believed there to be no hope.

The next morning, waves of depression swept over me. My husband came upstairs to check on me and asked me to come down for breakfast. I refused. Hoping to give me a reason to get up, he reminded me that I would be missed if I didn’t go to Bible class. I didn’t respond, for that was the last place I wanted to be that morning. Instead, I lay in bed swallowed in my own self-pity.

After he left, I tightly wrapped myself in my blanket, allowing my feelings of depression to wrap even tighter. “I can’t,” I cried. “I just can’t.”

Slowly and reluctantly, I pulled back the covers and walked into the bathroom. I looked into the mirror. My eyes were red and puffy and my face red and blotchy. I couldn’t believe how horrible I looked. There was no way I could go to Bible class.

As though I were being gently nudged to do so, I showered, got myself dressed, and put on some makeup. This time when I looked in the mirror, I discovered that the red, puffy eyes were gone. My face didn’t look so haggard. I was stunned and realized that my next steps were to get something to eat and go to Bible class.

My day was still difficult, but my spirits lifted. Words that women shared at Bible class and the beautiful passages we discussed in Scripture made me realize

how merciful God was to me. If I had chosen to stay in bed, nothing within me would have improved, and my view of life would have continued to appear hopeless.

This was not the last time I encountered depression, but it was the last time it was severe. When I look back on it now, I believe it was God’s loving Spirit who gave me those gentle nudges. He opened the doors to resist the temptation to stay in bed, and He empowered me to move forward. I walked through His doors of hope into a lasting hope that provided strength for my future.

Now, I believe in my heart and soul that every experience in my life is not about me but about the glory of Christ in me. My precious Jesus desires to reveal Himself to me and through me and often uses the most difficult of times to do so. But it doesn’t stop there. He desires that I later use what I have experienced and learned to give a message of lasting hope to others who are going through the same trials.

During those times when depression overwhelmed me, I turned my heart toward Him and His love. I sought Him in His Word. It helped me to understand that when all else is gone — *even the joy of the Lord* — He promises to be with me.

I learned that faith is not based on my feelings but on His strength and His love. He is all I need, and He is enough. *Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever* (Psalm 73:25-26).

Today, when dark days surface, I find comfort as I remind myself of His great sacrifice for me. Snuggling with Him in His Word daily, I take in His unwavering, unconditional love and know that He has already carried my hurt, my pain, and my depression to the Cross. His desire is to comfort and to forgive. Offering His resurrection power and His Holy Spirit to me daily, I can embrace His love every morning and know that He will never fail to guide, lead, and instruct me in the way I should go. That’s what His earthly life and sacrifice were all about.

I am redeemed. I am free. I am forgiven, even if — or when — depression should rear its ugly head again. That is what His nail scars were all about.

[See a related Bible study, “Lord, Please Raise Me Up When I am Down,” by Jan Brunette on page 36.]