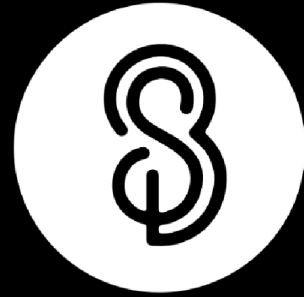


STONEBRIDGE CHRISTIAN CHURCH



DEPRESSION

Note to the Host: *Thanks for leading your group, creating community, and caring for your people! Remember, this is your group, and you have the freedom to navigate the conversation that best fits your group's dynamic. People come first!*

ICEBREAKER:

Tell us about a time in your life when you've felt the most depressed and if you can identify the cause what brought you into this period?

TALK IT OVER:

These questions are based off the sermon that took place on Sunday. Feel free to revisit any of the scripture that was discussed in the message. Answer as many questions as your time allows; don't feel pressed to get through them all!

- Half of Omaha reports feeling depressed. What do you think is causing so many people to feel this way?
- Often the people who don't struggle with discouragement and depression don't understand and offer rather simplistic solutions. What are some of those things people suggest to "fix them"? For instance: "If they would just..."
- Without giving names, do you know people who have struggled with depression, and can you share what you know of their struggle?

1) Depression can happen to good people: godly people.

After God's display of fire from heaven and the defeat of the prophets of Baal. Elijah expected his enemies were no more.

1 Kings 19:1-5 Now (King) Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of

them.” 3 *Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4 while he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” 5 Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.*

- What do you think are reasons why people who work hard to be godly can often find themselves falling into discouragement and depression?
- What are some unrealistic expectations that believers often have that can make them prone to despair when they find themselves in difficult circumstances?
- Do you think Jesus was ever discouraged or even depressed?
- Some believers think being depressed is a sin in some way, or a sign of weakness or immaturity. How would you reason with them to persuade them otherwise?

2) Isolation can aggravate our depression and discouragement.

(Elijah goes into isolation) *1 Kings 19:9-10 And the word of the Lord came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”*

- Yes, things were bad for Elijah but he had allowed himself to become so absorbed in self-pity that he had convinced himself of a number of things that weren't true. What are some of the reasons despair and isolation prevents us from seeing our situations objectively as others do?
- If people still have the emotional energy to climb out of despair and self-isolation what can they do to crawl out of that place?
- Depression can be like sinking into quicksand where soon it can become impossible for us to pull ourselves out. What can be done to help people when they reach that point?

3) Comparison and unmet expectations can aggravate our depression and discouragement.

- Life was not turning out for Elijah like he had expected and it was emotionally devastating for him. Give me examples of how people's unmet expectations in life build up over time pulling people into despair and discouragement.
- Today people are constantly comparing themselves with others (or the image they see others present on social media). What are some of the ways this ends up being harmful? If we can stop comparing ourselves with others we feel are above us or below us, how can we get an accurate assessment of ourselves today?
- So in summary: what resources are available today to help someone struggling with despair, discouragement and depression?

PRAYER:

Please don't stress about the time of prayer, pray however your group feels comfortable. This can either be one person praying, or you can go in a circle and have each person pray a few sentences. Be sure to change it up so your prayer time stays fresh in your group!

- Pray for someone you suspect is discouraged or depressed.
- Pray that God would bring new friends into your own life.
- Have someone record and distribute the requests to your group, to pray over throughout the week.

Week #4 - Chaos Dragons