

May 7

Psalm 42, 53, 58, 81 and 101

Hey everybody, this is Ryan Shields coming at you from my office to bring your May 7<sup>th</sup> Project 4:4 Daily Accelerator. Today, we read Psalm 42, 53, 58, 81, and 101, but we are going to camp out on chapter 42 and 53.

## I. Indications of Depression

Every vehicle has lights on the dash. These lights indicate and warn that there is a problem. So it is with us, as humans. We have certain indicators which help us identify when something is wrong. David shares those indicators in his life, which reveal a feeling of depression in his soul.

Outwardly, David had every reason to be depressed. This Psalm was written when Absalom, David's son, was leading a revolt against his father. David's life and his nation were in turmoil and chaos. David felt that he had been forgotten by God. Spiritually, David was struggling.

Emotionally, David was drained. Some people weep and cry when they are depressed. David went on to say that it was continuous. His depression wouldn't let up and he couldn't stop crying. The wounds got a little deeper each time someone asked him, "Where is your God?" David was almost at his breaking point emotionally.

The indicators of depression were very strong in David's life. He felt spiritually dry, emotionally drained and continually overwhelmed. Maybe you have felt that way in your life...as if you stand watching a waterfall and see the water pouring out in a never-ending and overwhelming way. You're saying "That's how I feel. I feel so engulfed and overwhelmed in trouble that I see no hope."

[pause]

## II. Instructions for a Downcast Spirit

How did David deal with such a dark period in his life? This chapter tells us not only how David felt but also what David did. Notice the actions he took when he found himself in a period of depression.

First he made a choice about himself. This is evident when David asked himself, "*Why are you so sad, disturbed, and uneasy?*". David talked to himself and he made a choice.

Problems come to all of us. Some people allow their problems to make them bitter while some allow their problems to make them better. Many people can feel the same way in their souls, but their responses can be quite different. How is that so? The bottom line is the choice each makes. Do you choose to become bitter or better? One's outlook greatly determines one's outcome.

Whenever you find yourself in a period of depression, do as David did and ask yourself these important questions.

- 1. Is it a physical problem?** I am not a doctor, counselor, or a psychologist, but I know that God created our brains to be complex. Sometimes chemicals can be imbalanced and cause mood changes, clinical depression, and much more serious problems. This is physical problem and is a part of reality for many, many people. If you feel this may be your case, it would be wise to see a professional.

- 2. Is it an emotional problem?** Just a few years ago, I went through a period of depression in my own life. I was unhappy and didn't know why. Everything felt

grey. Everyday when I woke up, I hoped it would be different, but it was still grey. There was a strong temptation to turn to other things in order to feel "normal." While I can't say that I didn't succumb to those temptations at times, I remained close to God and continued to ask him to help me. He did and I learned to thirst for Him even more.

**3. Finally, is it a spiritual problem?** During the same bout of depression in my life a few years ago, there were some spiritual problems lurking as well. Things like laziness, discontentment, cynicism, and an "instant gratification" mindset were creeping in and growing inside me. Sin in our lives creates a distance between us and God. A feeling of depression may be the direct result of a spiritual problem.

How did David deal with his depression? First, he made a choice about himself. Secondly, he was honest with God. He talks to himself and then he talks to the Lord.

He doesn't use a bunch of religious jargon. Instead, he pours his heart out to God and tells Him how he feels. He looked to and found the one who is, *"our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"*.

One of my favorite hymns is "It is Well With My Soul"

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
when sorrows like sea billows roll;  
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

**Conclusion:**

Do you have depression? Friends, if you are depressed I want to first encourage you. You are not alone. I have experienced depression in my own life, and many other God-worshipers have as well – including King David. God knows His people and He knows what is going on in your body, mind, and soul. Don't turn away from God but turn to Him. Use this time to draw closer to Him and let him refine you, love you, and comfort you.