

# DEPRESSION AND TOPPLED IDOLS

## Bible Study Assignment

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The Bible often looks at depression as a whole-personed negative experience that results when we fail to get or maintain something we highly cherish. It may be some person, item or situation that we value or place our hope in. When we lose it, we become depressed.

The thing itself may be a bad thing that we should not desire. Yet more often it is a good thing that we want too much. It is an inordinate desire, a craving that controls us, a “good-desire-but-bad-master” dynamic. In either case, the thing functions as an idol. When our idols topple over (note the Jeremiah 10 imagery), we become depressed.

### PART ONE

The following study surveys four cases of depression recorded in Scripture. Read each passage, then write out your observations about the person’s situation, emotions, beliefs, motives and actions, and the counsel God’s Word Bible gives.

#### CASE #1 - CAIN in GENESIS 4

1. Read carefully Genesis 4:1-7.
2. Describe his SITUATION. What was happening to him?
3. Describe his EMOTIONS. What was he feeling?
4. Describe his BELIEFS. What was he thinking?
5. Describe his DESIRES. What was he wanting?
6. Describe his BEHAVIOR. What was he doing and saying?
7. Describe GOD’S ANSWERS. How should Cain change?

CASE #2 - PSALMIST in PSALMS 42-43

1. Read carefully Psalms 42-43.
2. Describe his SITUATION. What was happening to him?
3. Describe his EMOTIONS. What was he feeling?
4. Describe his BELIEFS. What was he thinking?
5. Describe his DESIRES. What was he wanting?
6. Describe his BEHAVIOR. What was he doing and saying?
7. Describe GOD'S ANSWERS. How should the psalmist change?

CASE #3 - JEWISH LEADERS AND PEOPLE in HAGGAI 2

1. Read carefully Haggai 2:1-4.
2. Describe their SITUATION. What was happening to them?
3. Describe their EMOTIONS. What were they feeling?
4. Describe their BELIEFS. What were they thinking?

5. Describe their DESIRES. What were they wanting?

6. Describe their BEHAVIOR. What were they doing and saying?

7. Describe GOD'S ANSWERS. How should the people change?

#### CASE #4 - JESUS DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD in LUKE 24

1. Read carefully Luke 24:12-35.

2. Describe their SITUATION. What was happening to them?

3. Describe their EMOTIONS. What were they feeling?

4. Describe their BELIEFS. What were they thinking?

5. Describe their DESIRES. What were they wanting?

6. Describe their BEHAVIOR. What were they doing and saying?

7. Describe GOD'S ANSWERS. How should the disciples change?

**CONCLUSION:** In each case, the persons you studied showed depression along with other wrong emotional and behavioral responses. And in each case, this bad fruit arose from idols in their heart. i.e., sinful desires and beliefs. Often the things they wanted were good things, yet the persons wanted them too much (inordinate desires, “good-desires/bad-masters”). When they failed to get the thing they desired, or when it was taken away from them, they became depressed. Their toppled idols produced their depression.

## PART TWO

Apply these same biblical insights to a time in your life (past or present) in which you were depressed or tempted to be depressed.

1. Describe your **SITUATION**. What was happening to you?
2. Describe your **EMOTIONS**. What were you feeling?
3. Describe your **BELIEFS**. What were you thinking?
4. Describe your **DESIRES**. What were you wanting?
5. Describe your **BEHAVIOR**. What were you doing and saying?
6. Describe **GOD’S ANSWERS**. How would God have wanted you to handle this situation and to change? How well did you actually do this?
7. What general lessons can you learn from this study as to how you can prevent depression and how you handle it when you face it?