

*The purpose of the first paragraph is to reveal stats and quotes from mainstream sources about the growing struggles teens may have regarding each topic. The purpose of the second paragraph is to reveal God's perspective by seeing what the Bible says regarding each topic and how we can receive help and guidance in our life's purpose through a relationship with Jesus.*

## DEPRESSION

Depression is a medical illness that negatively affects the way you feel, think and act<sup>29</sup>. 20% of teens experience it, but only 30% are treated<sup>28</sup>. It can come from screen & social media time, abuse, academic pressure, trauma, relationships, low self-esteem, etc. and can lead to bad diet, self-harm, suicide, isolation, bad school grades, substance abuse and more.

The Bible has characters who showed signs of depression (ex: Moses, David, Job). We live in a broken world (Rom. 1:18-32) and we're allowed to have these feelings and even question God (Ps. 13:1-2). But we should cry out to God (Ps. 72:12-14) and submit our struggles to Him for His comfort (Ps. 9:9) and strength (Isa. 40:31), even in the darkest times (Ps. 23:1-4). For those struggling with depression, Jesus promises rest (Matt. 11:28-30) and peace (John 14:27). As a Christian, we are able to give thanks at all times (1 Thess. 5:18) and receive encouragement from our Christian family (1 Thess. 5:11) every day (Heb. 3:13).

## BIBLE VERSES TO CONSIDER

Romans 1:18-32 “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this,

God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them."

Psalm 13:1-2 "How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?"

Psalm 72:12-14 "For He will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is the blood in His sight."

Psalm 9:9 "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble."

Isaiah 40:31 "those that wait on the Lord will renew their strength."

Psalm 23:1-4 "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light".

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

1 Thessalonians 5:18 "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

1 Thessalonians 5:11 "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

Hebrews 3:13 "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today.'"

Philippians 4:4-9 "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

Psalms 34:18 "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

Revelation 21:4 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death<sup>[a]</sup> or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"

Hebrews 13:15 "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name"

Psalms 50:15 "Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you."

2 Corinthians 1:10 "He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us."

Mark 2:17 "On hearing this, Jesus said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'"

Romans 8:22-24 "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?"

Galatians 6:2 "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

Romans 12:15 "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."

*Characters who experienced depression:*

- Moses (Numbers 11:10-16)
- David (Psalm 32:3-4)
- Elijah (1 Kings 19:4)
- Jonah (Jonah 4:1-9)
- Job (Job 3:11, 3:26)
- Jeremiah (Jeremiah 20:14-18)
- Isaiah (Isaiah 41:10)

## STATS & QUOTES TO CONSIDER

There are many different forms and levels of depression.

Definition from American Psychiatric Association:

- "Depression is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act"
- "Major Depressive Disorder is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for ages 15 to 44.3."
- "Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide."
- "322 million people worldwide live with depression."

An estimated 3.1 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 in the United States had at least one major depressive episode

Among people who suffer an episode of depression, at least half become depressed again later in life."

“The more time teens spend looking at screens, the more likely they are to report symptoms of depression.”

About 20 percent of all teens experience depression before they reach adulthood.

Only 30 percent of depressed teens are being treated for it.

Female teens develop depression twice as often than men.

Abused and neglected teens are especially at risk.

Approximately two-thirds of teens with major depression also battle another mood disorder like dysthymia, anxiety, antisocial behaviors, or substance abuse.

Young people who experienced trauma or disruptions at home, including divorce and deaths of parents, are at risk.

Some of the experts believe that we have raised our teens to have unrealistic expectations. Along with the messages from modern media sources that suggest that we should always feel good, they say many parents haven't taught their kids the kind of coping skills they need to survive in chaotic times.

In order to determine the diagnosis of depression, a health care professional may run routine lab tests, conduct a medical interview and physical examination, and ask standard mental health questions.

Treatment options for teen depression may include lifestyle adjustments, psychotherapy, and medication for moderate to severe depression.

As with most mental health disorders, depression in teens does not have one single definitive cause. Rather, people with this illness tend to have a number of biological, psychological, and environmental risk factors that contribute to its development.

Psychological risk factors for depression include low self-esteem, poor body image, a tendency to be highly self-critical, and feeling helpless when dealing with negative events. Teen depression and other mood disorders are somewhat associated with the stress of body changes, including the fluctuating hormones of puberty, as well as teen ambivalence toward increased independence, and with changes in their relationships with parents, peers, and others. Teenagers who suffer from conduct disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), clinical anxiety, or who have cognitive and learning problems, as well as trouble relating to others are at higher risk of also developing depression.

The rate for adolescents (ages 12–17) has risen 63% from 2013-2018. 47% for boys and 65% for girls. Therefore, teen depression rates are increasing.

Social media is a primary source of anxiety and pressure for adolescents. Teens become depressed when they compare their lives unfavorably to the people they follow on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Moreover, scientists have found correlations between teen smartphone use and depression. Excessive use of technology damages relationships, education, and extracurricular activities.

Many teens experience some degree of academic pressure. In addition, an uncertain economy and tough competition for college and graduate school make that pressure worse.

Teens typically experience their first romantic relationships in high school or college. While this is an essential part of teen development, teen relationships can also be emotionally challenging.

Today's teens have fewer coping skills. Parents try to shield them from experiencing failure and disappointment. Therefore, teens often have fewer chances to build resilience. Thus, they don't learn how to cope with challenges.

Today's adolescents spend so much time on screens that they don't get outside enough. Hence, they suffer from nature deficit disorder, a phrase coined by Richard Louv in his 2005 book *Last Child in the Woods*. Because teens and children are spending less time outdoors, they experience a wide range of behavioral and mental health problems.

In one 11-year depression study of 33,908 adults, researchers found that 12 percent of depression cases could be prevented completely with only one hour of exercise each week.

In a study known as the SMILES Trial (Supporting the Modification of Lifestyle in Lowered Emotional States), one-third of participants experienced remission from depressive symptoms after three months of a healthy diet.

Depression increases a teen's risk for attempting suicide by 12 times.

Depressed teens are more likely to have trouble at school and in jobs, and to struggle with relationships.

Depression in teens can look very different from depression in adults. The following symptoms of depression are more common in teenagers than in their adult counterparts:

- Irritable or angry mood
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Extreme sensitivity to criticism
- Withdrawing from some, but not all, people