



Learning How to Help Those Who Suffer from Depression, Part 2 | 11/7/21

Chapter 7: Helps that Harm

Why we are harsh with sufferers (76)

What accounts for our tendency of impatient care toward depression?

1. We judge others according to our circumstances rather than theirs
2. We still think that trite sayings or a raised voice can heal deep wounds. A person may have a great spiritual sorrow, and someone who does not at all understand his grief, may proffer to him a consolation which is far too slight. Cf. Prov 25:20
3. We tried to control what should be rather than surrender to what is. "We must deal with things as they are"
4. We resist humility regarding our own lack of experience.

The sound of reality (78)

- When we suffer depression... We wish that our preachers, Christian coffee shop talkers and answer givers knew more about the prison in which we suffer before they proposed to speak about it.
- Our salvation messages will prove inadequate if they do not meaningfully account for the large portions of reality that cause screaming in the world; particularly with depression. It has long been recognized that a spirituality focused only on sunshine, positive thinking, immediacy and quick fix Bible quoting " breaks down impotently as soon as melancholy comes."

The rupture of meaning (79)

We need a larger story in which our current melancholy signifies only a scene or a chapter.

We change the way we care (80)

- First, we are going to slow down and take a longer view. We are going to be at this for a while. The solution isn't just a matter of getting the words right.

- Second, matching the depths changes the way we speak in public. People who suffer depression and other mental challenges are always near us.

The larger story of God

82) Richard winter: "Our perspective on what is happening is vital to our sense of hope. So much depression arises because of a loss of perspective." When we no longer expect that a realistic way of help can come, we lose hope.

Next Steps

1. Eswine says we are harsh with sufferers when "We judge others according to our circumstances rather than theirs." (76) Describe how that might look in real life.
2. "It has long been recognized that a spirituality focused only on sunshine, positive thinking, immediacy and quick fix Bible quoting 'breaks down impotently as soon as melancholy comes.' " (78)
 - a. How could someone end up with the kind of mentality Eswine describes above?
 - b. Why would this mentality break down in the face of a significant trial like depression?
3. Eswine describes the burden that someone experiences when their own perspective is hopeless in addition to the hopelessness that often fills this world. How would this burden affect ordinary life events such as work, family or pastimes?
4. Eswine writes: "People who suffer depression and other mental challenges are always near us." (80) How should we respond to this reality?