

# Truth and Spirit Ministries

## Breaking the Cycle of Depression Part I

By Denise Bostic

The Bible declares that we, as believers, overcome the devil by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. (*Revelation 12:11*) Having been redeemed by the Lord we now have a testimony or maybe even several testimonies that we are able share with others about the victory that he has brought into our lives. Our testimony brings glory to Christ and contains power to positively impact others for him. The Lord Jesus has set me free in many areas of my life through the power of his Spirit. One such area he set me free was from chronic depression. He gave me vital truths in his word that not only set me free but that have also *kept me free*. It's my hope that by sharing them on this website that they may benefit any that may be going through this same struggle right now. My prayer is that you will receive the healing and deliverance power of Christ that will set you free to live a life of joy, hope, peace and purpose in the Holy Spirit.

Before I begin I would like to say some things that I believe are important. As believers we each have our own personal relationship with God. One of the greatest things about our relationship with him is that we can talk to him and he can talk to us. He cares about us deeply and will speak to us concerning our lives. He speaks to us by his Spirit. His Spirit is a gift to us and his work is to progressively minister to us everything that pertains to our salvation. He takes what Jesus possesses and gives it to us. (*Acts 2:38; John 16:12-15*) He teaches and imparts understanding to us from God's word and brings to us the divine protection, healing, deliverance and prosperity that Jesus has obtained for us through his sacrificial atonement. As our divine Comforter and *Counselor* he can bring us healing, give us discernment, wisdom to resolve problems and prepare us for the future by showing us what is yet to come. (*John 16:7*) When we receive the ministry of the Holy Spirit into our lives he will help us to overcome all things in Christ.

Although there is nothing wrong with believers receiving Christian based counseling or therapy, I want to emphasize that the greatest physician and therapist that we could ever have in our lives is the Lord himself. If we cultivate an ear to hear what his Spirit is saying to us then we can receive the spiritual blessings that he desires us to have. The Spirit will lead and guide us into all truth and over time, bring us the victory of Christ into every area of our lives. (*John 16:12-13; I Corinthians 15:57*) These things that I share in this teaching are what God revealed to me in my personal life through his word to help me to conquer depression. Although each of our circumstances may differ, the symptoms of depression among those that suffer with it can be very similar. Jesus said that *the truth* will set us free. Whenever we apply the truth of God's word to our lives we are sure to receive powerful results. I know I did and I give all praise to God and him alone for healing me and setting me free.

## Delivered From Depression

I understand what it feels like to suffer the pain, sorrow, hopelessness and darkness of depression because I've been there. Thankfully, the Lord delivered me from all of that. Although some believers may have a testimony of being supernaturally delivered from depression, that was not the case in my life. God took me through a *process* that over time brought me healing and led me to victory. He began first by exposing the root causes of my depression. He then began to tell me the truth that he knew I needed to hear from his word to overcome depression and he also told me the truth that I needed to *hear about myself*. After that he took me through an inner healing process and lastly, he gave me powerful spiritual keys to enable me to overcome and be free of depression completely. You see, sometimes our victory doesn't always come instantaneously, sometimes it's progressive. It's a process that's well worth the time however because it brings forth much spiritual fruit as a result.

## The Crown of Thorns

It's important that we yield to this process that God wants to take us through. If we don't we will only be prolonging our miserable condition. It's better to get our healing and deliverance underway by taking the divine therapy that God wants to give us so that we can start our journey to being made whole. There are always root causes of depression in the lives of those that suffer with it and God wants to expose what they are and pluck them up by the roots. He doesn't want to just put a band-aid on our problems and pain; he wants to completely *cure* us. He wants us to experience joy instead of sadness, peace instead of turmoil, hope instead of despair and freedom instead of bondage and oppression.

When he first begins to deal with us it can seem very painful, much like as if someone were pulling a large thorn out of an infected sore or wound. You may be one that has not one thorn but *many*. These thorns may be personal problems, hurts from past abuses, loss of a loved one or a serious illness. No matter the depth of your pain, it's not beyond God's ability to heal. No matter how great your problems, there isn't one that God doesn't have a solution for. There is no pit so deep that he cannot reach down into and lift you out. All you must do is receive it by grace through faith in Christ and his sacrificial atonement. Jesus took away your thorns at the Cross. They were placed upon his head at his crucifixion. His sacrifice is all sufficient to give you everything you need in *every* area of your life.

Although it may seem painful when God is removing these thorns, know that this is a first but necessary step to starting your healing and delivery process. As long as the thorn or thorns remain, healing or deliverance cannot come. After that is accomplished you can begin your journey to healing, having godly solutions and being made whole. However you must trust God implicitly. If you are one that has difficulty trusting know that he will even help you to do that. He will lovingly and patiently deal with you until you are completely healed and set free. Free to live the life that he has called you to live.

*Jesus took our thorns upon himself by wearing a crown of thorns during his crucifixion. Before he went to Golgotha, he also took the stripes for our healing. Those stripes are not only for physical healing but our inner healing as well. Many of us have gone through situations that have wounded our minds, souls and spirits. We must bring them all to the so*

*he can heal us from them. One major thing that I learned through this entire process is that believers can carry things like pain, sorrow anger, unforgiveness, etc. for many years. But why are we bearing all of these things when Jesus already bore them for us on the Cross? Brothers and sisters in Christ, we can't bear them but he can. When we don't give these things to him, we suffer unnecessarily and it prevents us from moving forward as we should. When we take the time to stop and allow him to heal us of from our wounds of the past then we are able to move on into our future.*

***<sup>4</sup>Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup>But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed... (Isaiah 53:4-5)***

### **No Condemnation in Christ**

Unlike religious folks, God doesn't condemn us for being depressed; he only wants to set us free so that we can receive the hope, joy, peace and purpose that the Spirit wants to minister into our lives. (*Romans 8:1-2, II Corinthians 3:7-9*) He intimately knows all of our thoughts, feelings and concerns. He also knows what led us into the trap of depression. He knows our personal history. He knows exactly what kind of personal problems we've been having, if we've been deeply wounded by others or are still grieving over the loss of a loved one. He also knows that we suffer for lack of knowledge as to how we can overcome it all. *He knows that we don't know what we don't know.* He sympathizes with all of our weaknesses and is interceding for us on our behalf. In his grace and mercy he has already provided healing, deliverance and solutions to our problems through his sacrifice. Whatever we need it is found in him and him alone. (*Hebrews 4:14-16; Colossians 1:19-20; 2:1-4*)

His will for you is that you be happy and live in health and prosperity in every area of your life. He ministers to our soul because he knows that when our soul prospers, *we will prosper.* (*III John 2*) It doesn't even make any difference what has happened in the past because he provides not only healing but forgiveness as well. He not only gives us forgiveness but also helps us to forgive others as well. He lives to work out all things for your good. (*Hebrews 4:14-16; Romans 8:28*) In order to receive all the good things that he wants to give us however it's important that we give him free access to work in our lives. You see, God won't interfere or intervene in our lives if we don't want him to. He will be right there in an instant however when we call upon his name.

*A lot of legalistic Churches will accuse and condemn you if you have any kind of sin or struggle in your life. They don't realize though that **all believers** are a work in progress and that it's not only necessary to have God's help but that its also very beneficial to have the Church's help and support in overcoming these things. This is only possible however when we walk in a spirit of love and grace towards one another. When I suffered with depression, I would've never dreamed about telling anyone in the Church that I went to at the time about it. Unfortunately a lot of believers today feel the same way. If they are struggling with some sin or problem they are afraid that they will be judged for it instead getting the love and support that they so desperately need.*

*God is just the opposite though. He never condemns us when we are struggling, instead he'll be our staunchest supporter or ally. He wants us to come to him for the help that we need. He has already provided everything we need to obtain the victory over depression. Through the Cross the Lord Jesus has given us another path to follow rather than the path of sin and death. He can now lead us into paths that are filled righteousness and all the fruit of his Spirit because he fulfilled the law on our behalf. Now we need to trust in that perfect work that he has done for us and let him live through us. It is only the Spirit who gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. (John 6:63) We should now live according to the Spirit and not the flesh.*

***<sup>1</sup> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4)***

## **Our Great Physician**

It bears repeating that there is always a root cause or causes to depression. You may know what some of them are but as you allow God to minister to you, you may be surprised at the things that he will reveal to you that you didn't even know about concerning your condition. Jesus is our Great Physician and the first thing he wants to do is give you a *diagnosis* of your condition. A diagnosis must first be given before he begins prescribing you a treatment plan. He is the expert here and knows exactly what you need. He sees and knows what you do not. He can get down to the root causes in order to help or heal you and set you free. No matter what the cause or causes may be, know that the Lord has the cure for whatever ails you.

According to experts there are a number of reasons that people may suffer from depression. It can come as a result of taking certain medications, genetics, having a serious illness, loss of a loved one, personal problems, major events, substance abuse or past physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. The word depress means *to lower in spirit; deject; to push or press down; to lower; to lessen the activity or force of; to weaken. Depression is the condition of feeling sad or despondent.* [The American Heritage Dictionary] Depression is physically and spiritually toxic to our lives as believers. It robs us of our inner joy, peace, spiritual strength, courage and hope. It can affect our physical bodies and spiritual lives in a very negative way. It can cause sicknesses and diseases and greatly hinder us from fulfilling the divine purposes that God has for our lives. This is precisely why we need to be set free from it.

*During Jesus' earthly ministry he moved with compassion on those that needed both physical and inner healing by healing and delivering them. Today he is still that same Great Physician and he wants to make you well or whole in every area of your life. When we go to him he will purify our souls of that which is spiritually toxic to our lives so that we are able to go on to live a spiritually healthy and happy life. (Matthew 9:36; Luke 6:19)*

**<sup>31</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. (Luke 5:31)**

## **The Real Culprit behind Depression**

Depression is usually the result of some form of oppression. What is oppression? It can have multiple meanings. *It means to keep down by unjust use of force or authority; to weigh heavily upon the mind or the spirit; difficult to bear burdensome.* [The American Heritage Dictionary] It also means *to suppress by maltreatment or abuse; to overburden; to depress mentally. Oppressive means marked by persecution, hardship, etc.; producing depression.* [Webster’s Pocket Dictionary] Oppression produces depression. There can be different sources of oppression. Oppression can come from circumstances or problems in our lives or it can come through *men or the devil.* (James 2:6, Acts 10:38)

All of these forms of oppression will weigh heavily upon the mind and spirit until a resolution, healing or deliverance comes forth. It is God’s will for us to be delivered from all forms of oppression. Depression is a heavy weight in our lives that greatly impedes or spiritual growth and race to the finish line. As believers in Christ, we need to have faith in God that he will deliver us from all forms of oppression. He is able to provide solutions to any and every problem that we may have, heal our wounds and deliver us from the attacks of men or the devil.

According to the Bible, oppression, as it relates to men or the devil is *when one exercises harsh control over another; it is when one uses their power against another.* [2616 Joseph Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament] If we allow others to control our lives or use their power against us, we will become oppressed and worse yet may become slaves to their control. All of this can lead us into depression. In life we will have to contend with those who will try to oppress us and we must resist them firmly. Those that operate in a spirit of control seek to dominate by pressing or pushing down others *by force.* This is not something we should ever submit to however because it is not God’s way rather it’s the devil’s way.

It’s also the way of the fallen nature of man which can be easily influence by the devil. We should not be giving control of our lives over to anyone who is not yielding themselves to God or we could find ourselves being oppressed by them. Those that find themselves in the position of being pressed or pushed down on a continual basis can go from oppression to depression because their personal God-given freedom has been stolen from them. God created us to have an innate desire for freedom though. The only true path to freedom is in Christ. The Bible teaches us we are only to submit to God and that as far as our submission to men goes; we should only follow them as they follow Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1) Jesus has set us free from all forms of oppression that man or the devil tries to place on us. He did that so that we could live in the freedom of his Spirit.

The culprit behind all oppressors is the devil. He has made his life’s work to oppress people. During Jesus’ earthly ministry he began delivering people from the oppression of the devil even before he went to the Cross. In the book of Acts we read that when Jesus walked the earth he healed and delivered many that were *oppressed* of the devil. (Acts 10:38) The devil puts sickness and diseases upon people and brings them into all sorts of

terrible bondages. He can also oppress the saints in their minds if we aren't vigilant against him. Today, he wants to deceive believers into thinking that he can harm us in these same ways. The truth is however that Jesus said that he can't harm us at all. Why can't he harm us? *We no longer are a part of his dark kingdom; we have been purchased by the blood of the Lamb. We now belong to Christ.* Through the Lord's victory on the Cross we have been given authority over the devil and his demons and *can cast them out.* God doesn't want us to be in bondage to the devil or men either. Later we will learn how exercising your believer's authority will help you to stay free from chronic depression.

Over the process of several years the Holy Spirit taught me many things to help me overcome the oppression that the devil was throwing at me. He taught me the truth that he came to expose and destroy the devil's work. *(I John 3:8)* With his word and the help of the Holy Spirit, we can also now expose the devil's deceptions and destroy that which he tries to bring against us through others. We no longer have to let the devil take advantage of us because of lack of knowledge. The Lord has given us everything we need to turn the tables on the devil and cause him to flee. He helps us to be aware of his schemes. *(II Corinthians 2:11)*

Now we can firmly resist him by putting on the whole armor of God and wielding the sword of the Spirit against him. The Lord has given us authority over all the power of the enemy and he cannot harm us anymore. We must now keep the door closed to the enemy of our souls by resisting and rejecting his oppression by not "caving in" to it. Instead we should cast off the weights of oppression and depression that the devil may try to place upon us. *(Ephesians 6:10-18; Luke 10:19)*

***<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV)***

## **Live Free From Religious Oppression**

The Bible speaks of religious oppression. Jesus spoke out against it publicly during his earthly ministry. Those that sat in "Moses' seat" (the Pharisees and Sadducees) greatly oppressed the people of Israel by heaping many rules and regulations of men upon them. Because they didn't receive God's way to righteousness through Jesus and teach truth to the people they were actually closing the door of the Kingdom in people's faces. They were hypocrites though because they didn't actually practice what they preached. *(Matthew 15:1-9; Matthew 23:1-15)* There are believers today that also are being oppressed by religion. This oppression can be placed upon us by men. When we are under this heavy yoke we are not free to serve Jesus because we are enslaved to keeping the traditions, rules and regulations taught by men. This can come about when one receives false teaching or when men try to bring us back into bondage to the law.

Paul encountered this in Jerusalem. In the Book of Galatians he wrote about his trip there and how some false brethren had tried to bring him, Barnabas and Titus back under the bondage of the law. However Paul wrote that they didn't give in to these men's *control*

*tactics*. Paul had been set free by Christ and he would never allow himself to be oppressed by such slavery and oppression again. (*Galatians 2:1-5*) He used this story to prove a point to the Galatians who had received false teaching from men (the Judaizers). They fell for the lie that they were obligated to be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law. This slowly began bringing them back under the oppression and bondage to the rules and regulations of the law. Paul wrote them a letter to remind them that Christ had set them free from the law through the Cross. He didn't want them to be in bondage to the law or to the men who had brought them this false gospel. (*Galatians 1:6-10; 5:7-8; 6:12-16*)

Paul taught believers that it is our personal responsibility not to allow others to bring us into *bondage* now that Christ has set us free. (*Galatians 5:1*) How does bondage relate to depression? All bondages are forms of oppression. *Oppression leads to depression and both of these will deprive you of your freedom in Christ.* Often believers that are depressed have come into some form of bondage or even multiple bondages. One such bondage is religion and/ the legalism of the law. Both of them are oppressive because they're man-made systems that demand strict adherence to rules and regulations of men. It is usually a system where *the leadership exercises harsh control over the congregations and uses their power against them.* This was the case of the Pharisees of Jesus' day. Today there are men of the same spirit that rule over people with oppression. Christ wants to break these oppressive chains so that we can be free to live in his Spirit.

*Being under the bondage of the religion or legalism of men is a heavy yoke that we are unable to bear. (Acts 15:10) Eventually we will become crushed under the weight of this burdensome yoke because we will find that it is impossible to actually keep so many rules and regulations. Our continual failure to live up to such an impossible system will cause us to suffer condemnation, oppression and eventually depression if we are not set free from it. We need to receive the freedom that Christ has given us and cast off this yoke so that we can now take the yoke of Jesus which is easy and light. (Matthew 11:28-30)*

*Religious oppression was a contributing factor to the depression I was suffering. I was trapped in a vicious cycle of failure to live up to the demands of the law. Whenever I knew that I had failed, I felt condemned. Thank God the Lord set me free from all that! If you feel oppressed (weighed down) by your Church experience, take it to the Lord. He will give you insight into your situation and show you exactly what to do about it. Just know that through the Cross the Lord set us free from every form of oppression including religious oppression. Now that Christ has set us free we should never give in to the demands of the legalists.*

***It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1)***

## **Exposing the Enemy of Our Soul**

Jesus said, **"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."** (**John 10:10 KJV**) The thief he speaks of here is the devil. He wants to rob us of our faith, hope, joy and peace that we've been given in Christ. He wants to slowly try to kill us spiritually and if possible to destroy us in some way. The only way that he can succeed at this though is if we believe his lies and deception. Jesus also said this about the devil.

**“He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (John 8:44)**

When we suffer depression Satan will take advantage of our weakened state and attack our minds and spirits. He is the enemy of our souls and he plays dirty. The only weapons in his arsenal though are his lies and deception and he will bombard our minds with them in the hopes that we will receive them. This is why those that suffer depression struggle with all kinds of negative emotions such as despair, hopelessness, self-pity, negative or pessimistic attitudes, repressed anger and to the extreme, for some even suicide. We must, however, resist him by standing firm in the faith. Satan knows that we are children of the most high. He knows what kind of power we possess through Christ. He knows that God has raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in heavenly realms. (*Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 10:19; John 1:12-13; Ephesians 2:4-7*)

This is why he tries to *push or press us down* from our position in Christ and if possible try to destroy us in some way. He wants to try to lower our spirits, weaken our faith and stop us from exerting the power that we've been given in Christ to spread the gospel in the earth. The truth is though that he really has no power to do all of this. He only wants us to be deceived into thinking that he can exert this kind of power in our life. His power is illegitimate and can he can only have a negative effect on those that actually believe his lies. The facts are we have been given power over him through Christ. We must always remember that greater is he who is within us than he that is in the world. (*1 John 4:4*)

The devil may be roaming around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour but we don't have to be one of his victims. The Lord Jesus Christ has given us the privilege of using his name which is above every name in heaven and earth. Through his victory through the Cross the Father has given him all power in heaven and earth and we have been granted access to that power through the Holy Spirit. (*1 Peter 5:8-9; Matthew 28:18; Acts 1:8*) We must rely on him to help us overcome the enemy through the power of the blood of Christ and his Spirit. We must exercise our God given authority over him by casting him out of our lives.

***<sup>19</sup> Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. (Luke 10:19 NKJV)***

*Jesus is our hope in all things. He is not only our Savior but Healer and Deliverer as well. It is not his will that Satan take advantage of you. He loves you and wants to rescue you and deliver you from all evil. (II Corinthians 2:11; Matthew 6:13) The antidote for the poisonous lies of Satan is the truth of God's word. His truth will tear down the strongholds that the enemy has set up in our minds. When we receive God's truth Jesus said it will set us free. (John 8:32) Therefore in order for us to be set free the first thing that we must do is combat the lies that the enemy has told us with the word of God.*

*We must also be willing to hear the truth about our own lives as well. This is where our personal relationship with the Lord comes into play. When the Lord is dealing with us he will give us the pure, unvarnished truth out of love. He does this because we need to know*

*truth in order to face up to reality, expose any areas of deception we may have and extinguish any lies that we may have come to believe over time. This in turn will help us to die to self, be crucified with Christ and allow him to live through us. (Galatians 2:19-21) How will we come to know the truth about ourselves? The Holy Spirit will speak to our spirits what Jesus wants us to know.*

In Part II of Breaking the Cycle of Depression we will learn effective and powerful keys from God's word that will help us to combat and overcome depression whenever we find that it is pressing in on us. This will help us to maintain the freedom that Christ has released us into. We will also learn some truths concerning depression that will reveal something about ourselves as well.

Part II