

# Emotions, Mental Illness, and Spiritual Deliverance

---

## DEFINE -

**1. Emotions** — state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others. Feelings contribute to your emotional state.

**2. Mental Illness** – “diagnosable” mental disorders - It is a medical problem, just like heart disease or diabetes. Mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behavior. Examples of mental illness include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders and addictive behaviors.

“Many”? (ALL) people have “mental health” concerns from time to time.

Mayo clinic - Mental illnesses are health conditions involving changes in thinking, emotion or behavior (or a combination of these). Mental illnesses are associated with distress and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities.

Mental illness is common. In a given year:

- nearly one in five (19 percent) U.S. adults experience some form of mental illness
- one in 24 (4.1 percent) has a serious mental illness
- one in 12 (8.5 percent) has a substance use disorder\*

Mental illness is treatable. The vast majority of individuals with mental illness continue to function in their daily lives.

**3. Spiritual Deliverance** — the action of being rescued or set free from spiritual bondage (strongholds)

---

## Saddleback church – (statement)

Every one of us probably knows someone that struggles with mental illness, as these startling statistics from Kay Warren’s article, “[Hope for Mental Illness](#)” (Huffington Post, August 2015) illustrates—

Sixty million Americans - that’s one in five adults - will experience a mental illness in the coming year. That means **every one of us knows someone who is living with a mental illness** - depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, an eating disorder, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder and some additionally have a substance abuse.

- Half of all adults will suffer from mental illness in their lifetime.
- Half of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of 14.
- One in five children will have a mental illness by age 18.
- Ninety percent of people who die by suicide also had mental illness.

- **How the Bible Gives Hope for Mental Health**
  - The Bible offers hope and help for people that struggle, as expressed in these **top 5 Bible verses about mental illness** (via [openbible.info](http://openbible.info))—
  - When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. (Psalm 34:17-20)
  - Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)
  - So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. (Matthew 4:24)
  - For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7)
  - Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)
  - And the Bible has inspired believers and churches to care for people, for their health and well-being: spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally. Tommy Hilliker (Saddleback Church's pastor of ministry) describes it this way: "[We care about the whole family, and we want to care about them for their whole lifetime. We want to minister to the physical, spiritual, emotional, relational and mental needs of a person because Jesus did.](#)"
- 

### Focus on the Family article –

Could depression be demonic in nature? My personal view is that it can be traced to demonic powers and that mental illnesses almost always have a spiritual basis. If this is true, then only God can take them away, and medications and psychological remedies will only mask the real issue. A person needs *deliverance* from the spirit of depression, not a regimen of drugs! Would you agree?

We understand your concerns, but we simply can't go along with idea that *all* depression is demonic in origin. We're also not comfortable with your suggestion that there is no legitimate place for the use of medication in dealing with this common psychological condition.

Please don't misunderstand. We're Bible-believing Christians, too, and we take the reality of the supernatural realm as seriously as you do. But this doesn't mean that we should discount the validity of psychology, medicine, or the value of common sense solutions to everyday problems. You may be right in assuming that *some* cases of depression are attributable to demonic activity, but we suspect such instances are extremely rare. In many cases, feelings of

depression are directly related to *physical* causes, such as chemical imbalances in the brain. In these instances, appropriate medication can be a tremendous help to the patient. Far from simply "masking" the real issue, antidepressants can normalize disturbances in neurotransmitter function in the brain. In certain individuals they are the *only* way to get to the root of the problem.

To broaden the discussion, we think it's a serious mistake to suppose that all mental illness is demonic. One might as well say that all physical illness—for example, an ear infection or a case of strep throat—is demonic. Illness of *all* kinds—physical, emotional, and mental—is an aspect of human brokenness. It's a result of the fall of man as we find it recorded in Genesis Chapter 3. Since God designed human beings as physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual beings, the effects of the fall find expression in *every* aspect of human nature. Accordingly, it's uncommon that we encounter a problem that's *exclusively* spiritual. That's why Christians *can* find substantial help with many of the difficulties they face in life by consulting with a qualified physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or counselor.

Before closing, we want to emphasize the point that *clinical* or *major depression* is a very serious problem and should be treated as such. Its causes can be extremely complex, including a blend of genetic, biochemical, personal, family *and* spiritual factors. Clinical depression is more than a temporary emotional slump. It involves a *persistent* - lasting two weeks or longer - and usually *disruptive* disturbance of mood and often affects other bodily functions as well. If this describes your family member's condition, you should definitely pray for them and confront the powers of darkness on their behalf. But don't neglect to encourage them to take their medications and to remain under the care of a trained physician or qualified counselor. The best plan is to address the problem from *all* possible angles.

If you'd like to discuss this subject at greater length with a member of our staff, [call Focus on the Family's Counseling department for a free phone consultation](#). They'd be pleased to assist you in any way they can.

#### **Another article – stresses the need to distinguish and discern between...**

- 1) Physical illness or disability;
  - 2) Moral perverseness;
  - 3) Relationships with other people;
  - 4) *Mental illness*;
  - 5) Doctrinal errors and beliefs;
  - 6) Sin;
  - 7) Personality
-

## Article of caution for zealous Christians -

### 1 Peter 5:7

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."

Since most people in the U.S. identify as Christians, it's safe to assume that you may have heard this scripture more than once or twice over the course of your lifespan. Despite Christianity being the majority religion, many Christians are split when it comes to the topic of mental illness.

In fact, the stigma of mental health seems to magnify exponentially in religious groups. This is partially attributed to the notion that mental health is caused by demonic activity, an intergenerational curse, or a consequence of sin. This belief has been held by several religious groups for decades, if not centuries, and mislabels people with mental illnesses as spiritually impure or weak in faith. Some even go as far as to relegate deliverance of mental illness through some form of religious tradition, purification ceremony, or prayer.

While there has been significant research to disprove the belief that mental illness is caused solely by spiritual impurity, these beliefs are still commonplace in many religious spaces. While some churches have recognized the need to provide professional mental health services or referrals to community resources, some continue to preach messages of "pray away the mental illness," and use scriptures like 1 Peter 5:7 as the Biblical stamp of approval.

The problem with these "pray it away" messages, is that it fails to recognize that mental health is similar to physical health. If you think about it, no one blames a woman for being diagnosed with breast cancer. Instead, she's likely to receive support, prayer, AND professional treatment. It's highly unlikely that her faith or "lifestyle" will be called into question. So why do we feel the need to make statements that suggest people "choose" depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorders? Do you see how strange that seems?

Too often, people in the church have faced significant fear and shame at the thought of disclosing a mental illness and the possibility of being subjected to statements like...

- *If you attended church more often you wouldn't be dealing with this*
- *That type of stuff doesn't happen if you're **really** saved*
- *You must be doing something wrong because God would've delivered you by now*
- *You just need to pray about it*

Rather than expose themselves to these insensitive remarks, people would rather cope in silence than to face judgment and scrutiny of others.

The reality is that mental health treatment and faith do not have to be separate entities. You don't have to check Jesus at the door in order to seek professional counseling. In fact, several studies have shown that people of faith have better mental health outcomes when they participate in psychotherapy. The belief that life will improve or that one serves a greater

purpose, aids in the therapeutic process for people of faith. But in order to undergo treatment, people must recognize psychotherapy as an option... and that starts with the messaging around God and mental health.

People can be freed of shame and guilt once they recognize that healing can occur concurrently with faith, prayer, fasting, and counseling. We should never be shamed or made to feel less than, if we decide to seek professional support. A person's faith is not deficient, nor is it a sign of spiritual immaturity if someone lives with a mental illness... It's a simple reminder of our humanness. Give yourself grace and mercy to seek the support that you need.