

Jody Shee



Ditch
Depression
Devotional

Jody Shee

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DEVOTIONAL

This is a one-week sample of my 31-day Ditch Depression Devotional. You can purchase the full version—all 31 days, complete with assignments—from Amazon.

INTRODUCTION

When you're at work, school or church, out shopping, eating, or just hanging out with friends, you see a carefully guarded, polished side of those around you that likely doesn't even closely represent reality. You would be amazed if you saw the default setting in the minds and hearts of your comrades. They hide it well. It's the social norm to appear like a sane functioning adult. And that is probably a good thing, because who wants to cope with the inner wrangling of others when you have your own to deal with?

I have a hunch that many people, perhaps even you, walk around with low-grade depression with fluctuating spikes and reprieves. You wouldn't tell people that. It's just not something you talk about. But it's always there.

The severity of depression can be a result of many things, including hormones and other physical and mental maladies, some of which would be well-served by the guidance of a professional.

Your God-given temperament also plays a role in your natural emotional fortitude. You may wish you were cheerful and unaffected by rocky turbulence as others appear to be, but that's just not realistic. (Avoid comparing your insides with other people's outsides.)

Fortunately, the topic of depression is widely covered in the Bible. And so, we are going on a month-long devotional journey together. We're going to quit being secretive about depression so we can perfect the mental, emotional and spiritual tools to deal with it.

When you are done with this book, you will have replaced heaviness and despair with comfort, hope, peace and purpose. You will learn to turn to God and the Bible instead of chocolate and potato chips (or worse, drugs and alcohol). You'll come face to face with who you are,

followed by an enriching look at who God is and then a look at several Bible characters and how they dealt with situations that could have left them in a depressed stupor.

The most effective way to traverse this book is to go one day at a time. Don't be reading ahead. Sufficient for the day is the reading and pondering of the chapter thereof.

To begin, the 1913 edition of "Webster's Dictionary," defines *depressed* as "pressed or forced down; lowed; sunk; dejected; dispirited; sad; humbled." Who doesn't relate to those words?

PART 1: SOBER MINDED

For the first nine days, let's examine some thoughts, feelings, viewpoints and attitudes that are recipes for depression. The Bible encourages us to be sober minded. *Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.* (Titus 2:6) Sober minded means to be of sound mind, or be in one's right mind. Goodness. Do we need to be told to be in our right minds? Apparently so, and it's the key to overcoming depression. Rather than listen to our thoughts, we need to purposefully direct our thoughts.

Here's a profound summary of the concept of being in your right mind: *Now the first thing you have to do is take a firm grip of yourself, to pull yourself up, to stir up yourself, to take yourself in hand and to speak to yourself. As the Apostle puts it, we have to remind ourselves of certain things.* (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones from the book "Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Its Cures"—1965, see Appendix 2).

So that's the goal of Part 1. You will look at some of your natural dispositions that lead you down the path to depression, and you will consider the Biblical thinking that will turn you around and face you in the right direction.

Day 1: Selfishness Has No Purpose

Selfishness or self-centeredness is one of the strongest poisons of the heart leading to depression. We were born as “me-monsters.” We learned as babies how to get attention and secure whatever we want to make us comfortable. It’s something we don’t automatically unlearn. We grow up thinking that life is about pleasure. That means we must always be comfortable, happy and fulfilled. Isn’t that what we want for our children? Wouldn’t that be what God wants for us as His children?

Actually, life’s purpose is about God’s pleasure. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* (Rev. 4:11)

The first step in turning your thought and emotional life around is to realize that you weren’t created for yourself. God is at the center of the universe, not you. Determine to make decisions and plans around God’s pleasure and not your own. As you grow in spiritual maturity from reading your Bible each day and praying, you will grasp all that this means.

For now, realize that selfishness is akin to living life as a practical atheist. God is not in all your thoughts. *You* are in all your thoughts.

Beware that you don’t go through another day tuned in only to your own thoughts and feelings with no regard for God’s thoughts and instructions. *A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.* (Prov.18:2)

You can tell if you are plagued with self-centeredness if you have an unthankful disposition. Thankfulness focuses your thoughts outside of yourself to God. Make thankful thoughts of praise a daily priority.

Look at Psalm 103 for inspiration. David praises God for forgiveness of sins; for God’s lovingkindness and tender

mercies; for good things to eat; that God is slow to anger; and for God's righteousness.

Turn your eyes upward. Look out the window and notice how faithful God is in causing the sun to rise each day and set each evening. He does it without fail. He gives the birds and squirrels food to eat every day, for His pleasure. He made sea creatures in the ocean depths that no human has ever seen, for His pleasure. This is the thought direction in which God took Job when He finally spoke to the dear depressed man in Job 38 after Job's friends had advised him how to think—incorrectly. His friends tried to make him be introspective, delving into all his actions, inactions and failings. But here's the point: God wanted Job to be extrospective. Job's friends tempted him to look in. Society and pop-psychology always advise you to look inward. But God says to look up. Read Job 38 and notice all the questions God asked Job. None of those questions and answers were about Job. They were about God.

Back to your purpose. God made you as part of the highest form of earthly intelligence to recognize, acknowledge, praise, honor and serve Him. That's your purpose. Not to be happy, healthy, wealthy and fulfilled. Be thankful for who God has made you to be and for the gifts He has given you that you can use for His glory and to the benefit of others.

How did He make you to honor Him? That is for you to discover. What can you do to bring Him glory? Start with your upward thoughts, your prayers, your desires and your ambitions. Ask Him what you can do for Him today. Start on a new adventure of selflessness with an aim to be an instrument to bring glory to God.

Going deeper:

■ If the whole idea of being God-centered sounds unappealing or foreign to you, consider whether or not you truly know God. Do you have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ that started when you recognized

that you were separated from God by sin? Have you come to the end of yourself and recognized that to be right with God, you must acknowledge your sinful condition and accept Christ's death and resurrection for you? If not, learn more by going to Appendix 1.

- Start a journal. Either buy one or start a new page on your computer. Each day for the next week, write five things you are thankful for, and consciously thank God. At first, you will likely thank God for the things around you that make you comfortable—your family, job, health, food on the table, etc. But then, branch out into marvelous aspects of God that you find in nature or from reading your Bible.

- Read Psalm 103 and Job 38 and record any insights you receive.

- Surrender your ambitions, hopes and plans to God before you go any further with this book. To help, talk to God through the song “Jesus, All for Jesus” written by Robin Mark and sung on YouTube. Simply type the song and singer information into YouTube.

Day 2: Anger is Ugly

Have you noticed that when you're angry, people tend to run away from you? You end up sitting on an island by yourself. *God* doesn't even want to be near you. That's not where you want to be. Leave anger to God for His righteous judgment.

Remember in the Old Testament when the Israelites were dying of thirst and they complained to Moses about it? God told Moses to strike the rock, and water would come out. Sure enough. Water came out, and the Israelites quenched their thirst. Then it happened again. This time God told Moses to *speak* to the rock and water would come out. (Start reading at Num. 20:7.) But Moses was angry with the people and he hit the rock twice. That's not what God asked him to do. Water came out again, and the Israelites drank.

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But God was angry at Moses for being angry and disobeying Him. The consequences of that were severe. *And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.* (Num. 20:12)

Moses, who was put on this earth to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, didn't get to enter the Promised Land himself because of his anger and resulting disobedience. Surely that was depressing.

Anger takes a matter into its own hands and executes a verbal or physical punishment. The toll it takes on the other person is one thing, but the consequences to your own life in emotional-, physical- and relationship-grief are another. *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* (James 1:19-20)
Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (Rom. 12:19)

Learn to zip your lip. Give your flash fire or slow burn to God. After all, He's the one in control anyway. Let Him deal with the person or circumstance. Only God can work the righteousness of God. While He does that, your part is to forgive, sometimes over and over, like Jesus has to do for you.

Your emotional well-being depends on your ability to forgive and to turn grievances over to the Lord. *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* (Eph. 4:30-32)

This indicates that anger isn't as much a feeling as it is a choice. You can put it away. Instead, you can choose to be kind and tenderhearted. It is possible.

Understand that your anger puts a wedge in your relationship with God and others. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:* (Psa. 66:18) Left unchecked, you end up depressed. *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* (Eph. 4:26)

Going deeper:

■ Anger is just not how life is to be done. God doesn't operate in anger (Psa. 103:8), and He requires that we don't either. For further study on how we are to operate instead, read James 3:17-18; 2 Tim. 2:24-25; Prov. 14:29; 16:32; 19:11.

■ In your journal, write down the people and circumstances that either have you angry right now or that tend to cause your anger to flare. Is there some part of that you need to surrender to God? It's time to get on your knees about it. Do you need to make a decision to separate yourself from an individual or situation? Make that decision and separate yourself, if that's appropriate. Do you need to make things right with someone? Visit or call that person about it today before you chicken out. If there's someone you need to forgive but it seems too difficult, ask God to forgive that person through you.

Day 3: Loneliness is Not a Sin

Who can underestimate the depths of loneliness and its spiral into depression? It can easily and quickly lead to the emotional abyss. If you have ever experienced loneliness—caused by physical, emotional or spiritual isolation—I don't even need to describe the despair, and you don't need to be reminded.

The feeling of loneliness is not a sin that needs to be repented of. The first time the word *alone* is used in the Bible is Genesis 2:18 when God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone.* Thus He created a spouse for Adam.

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I know what loneliness is and the depression it leads to. I was single until age 39, and not because I wanted to be single. Depression was almost unavoidable, but I always knew in my heart that God understood, and this time was only for a season. Things would get better.

If loneliness leads you to the depths of despair, just know that God is there. He understands. Remember when Jesus was left alone to face His darkest hour? Everyone turned away from Him, and He had to face the cross alone. He was more alone than anyone has ever been. You know the anguish He experienced wasn't entirely the physical pain of the cross. No. Remember what He cried out on the cross? *My God, My God. Why hast thou forsaken me? Forsaken* means abandoned or deserted. He was left alone—by God! He died of a broken heart, and maybe not solely for us, but also from the experience of being abandoned while He took on the sins of the world, and God turned away.

But he rose again. And now He's alive in heaven sitting at the right hand of God making intercession for you. *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* (Heb. 4:15)

You can and should pray to Him and ask for relief. One of the things He has ordained that should help with loneliness is the body of Christ—the church.

I know, sometimes going to church alone is anguish. You might conclude that you will just worship God alone in your house or out in nature. You can do that. But you do need the church, because He gave spiritual gifts to His children, and when Christians all gather together in church exercising their gifts, they are like Christ and all He was. You need that. And the body of Christ needs you. Some in the body have the gift of exhortation, and you need to be around these kinds of people, just as they need the gifts you have, if you know Jesus as Savior. Everybody needs the body, not just you.

Loneliness is an emotional weakness, but not a sin. Ask God's help while you are weak.

Consider Paul's thorn in the flesh. God didn't take it away, but He taught Paul, *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.* (2 Cor. 12:10)

Loneliness is not comfortable, but God provides respites when you pray and ask. His strength can come out when you are weak. Ask Him for a dose of strength and relief today.

Going deeper:

■ If you are not part of a church, start praying and looking for one, trusting God's guidance. He has a place for you. Do a Google search for churches in your area, then check out some of their websites, including their doctrinal statement and the ministries they offer. Determine to visit a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching church each week until you find the one for you.

■ If you are part of a church, find a ministry you can get involved in with the goal of using your spiritual gifts. Remember the lesson from day 1: Your life is about glorifying God, not about you being comfy and happy. Getting involved in church is a determination you need to make, not a feeling you wait for. Take yourself in hand and put yourself out there.

■ Most importantly, you're never alone. Take a break, close your eyes and worship God to the song "Lord You Are Always Here With Me," written by Bo and Elsa Jarpehag. Type it into YouTube to listen to it.

Day 4: Bad Circumstances Happen to Good People

Nothing happens in your life outside of God's control. Do you believe that? If that's the case, why do bad things happen to people trying to live for the Lord? Everyone has probably asked that question when faced with a tragedy. That question comes in so many forms. Why would God create a person and then allow that person to go through unbearable suffering?

Job, who suffered as much as anyone, tried not to ask those questions, but those around him did, forcing him to engage in speculation. Was Job depressed? Yes, he was. But we know that God was near and was in control, even though it was Satan who asked for permission to make Job's life miserable:

Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. (Job 1:10-12) And after that, Job lost just about everything, except his wife, who told him to curse God and die.

It seems like a cruel experiment. But the bottom line is that God had His reasons. We know that He tries faith. *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:6-7)*

God was pleased with Job before the trial. He called him "my servant Job" two times before Job lost everything. And

God was pleased with Job *after* the trial, calling him “my servant Job” two times after it was all over in Job 42.

Look at the end of Job’s trial, after his friends made his life even more miserable with their speculations and after God finally spoke and explained Himself to Job, *Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. ...I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* (Job 42:1-6)

After the awesome God spoke to him, Job must have realized that he was merely a dot on a map and calendar. Who was he to question and figure out the God who transcends time and space?

Then, God had some words for Job’s friends, who supposed they had divine insight into why all the bad things had happened to him: *The LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.* (Job 42:7)

What was the right thing Job had spoken? Paraphrased, he said, “God, you can do whatever you want, and no one can stop you. I talked about things I didn’t understand. I see you now, and I am despicable in comparison. I repent.”

You can’t know why tragedy and suffering happens. Try not to theorize from your personal perspective when you find yourself having to muddle through disaster and heartbreak. Instead, hang on to God, who uses people and circumstances to accomplish His bigger, unknown-to-us eternal plans.

Going deeper:

■ Your circumstances might be undeniably bad, but God is undeniably good. I know a song that just might help your

perspective today. Listen to this praise song by Don Moen, “God is Good.” Simply search for that information on YouTube.

■ “Bad circumstances” are human words for God’s word *trial*. Trials have a purifying purpose. Notice God’s purpose and view of trials in these verses: 1 Pet. 4:12-13; Job 23:10; Psa. 66:10-12; Isa. 48:10; Rom. 5:3-4; James 1:3-4. Write down the ones you’d like to remember.

■ Are you still working on your thankful journal? If not, stop now and think of things you are thankful for and write them down. Make sure to thank God for them.

Day 5: Unfulfilled Expectations Aren’t Limiting

You worked hard for a promotion at work, and someone else got it. Or, you thought you’d be married by now, but there are no prospects in sight. Maybe you have a sickness or infirmity that immobilizes you, or infertility prevents your dream of having your own family.

Each of these are disappointing circumstances, to say the least. It would be easy to think, “Why do these things always happen to me?” You look at others who appear less deserving, and marvel at how easily they glide forward. They plot out their lives, and circumstances quickly and simply line up for them. It just isn’t fair.

You, of all people, understand the verse: *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick*. (Prov. 13:12a) That word *deferred* means “drawn out.”

Unfulfilled expectations easily lead to thoughts of doom. You doubt that God cares, and you fear your life will always be like this. You can’t get past “why?”

But the truth is that God has not disappeared. He is still over all, and He has His plans and purposes. It might encourage you to know that some of the most used-of-God people in the Bible had unfulfilled expectations.

Remember that the prophet Samuel anointed young David as king while Saul was still king. It was *years* before David actually became king, and before he did, he was forced by Saul into homelessness. When was this promise ever going to be fulfilled? It didn't look like it would ever happen. In fact, it looked like Saul was going to murder David before it *could* happen.

Consider the apostle Paul, the first great missionary, who had a crying need that he begged God to take care of. Remember that thorn in the flesh?

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. (2 Cor. 12:7-10)

Paul may have felt like he was hindered from being all that he could be by this physical malady. He may have dreamed of how much more he could do, and perhaps he felt a little side-lined. But God doesn't think like we do. We know because Paul finally received the "why" of his circumstance. It was so that he wouldn't get too proud. It was a Satan-induced, God-prescribed infirmity to keep him humble. Hmm. Humility is more important to God than hyper service.

God knows what you would become if you received what you expect. He also knows what you can become if you don't receive what you want. Remember that God is the center of the universe, not you. His goal for you is not to be happy, healthy, fulfilled and comfortable. What God desires is His own glory and that His strength be made perfect in

your weakness. Let God shine. Like John said, *He must increase, but I must decrease.* (John 3:30) Paul certainly got that. He got it so well, he was excited to have his physical ailment so God could become strong in his weakness.

Going deeper:

■ Read through Paul's account of his thorn in the flesh again in 2 Cor. 12 and ask God to show you what He wants you to learn. Ask Him to allow the lesson to stick and to help you through your challenges.

■ Memorize one of these verses:

—*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* (Jer. 29:11)

—*My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.* (Psa. 62:5)

Day 6: Doubt is Devilish

Doubt is one of the silent causes of depression for Christians. It seems like a small, harmless condition, but really, it's lethal. Why is that? Because doubt is a shield. Only instead of shielding against the enemy, it defends against God's grace.

Grace is only activated by faith. You know God can do anything, but He chooses not to when you doubt. You end up flailing around and eventually calling out to Him... more because you're in trouble than because you believe.

Remember when Peter saw Jesus walking on the water and had a sudden impulse to walk on water himself? Jesus encouraged him, and he jumped out of the boat and walked on water, until he looked around at the wind and waves and was afraid and started to sink. *And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* (Matt. 14:31)

Jesus had this to say about doubt in relation to faith: *Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.* (Matt. 21:21)

You may not be looking to move any mountains today. You would settle for a little peace and some hope. Fortunately, there's a remedy for doubt. It's faith. Believe God. Work on holding up that shield of faith to ward off the darts of the devil. By the way, Satan's darts are aimed at your mind. You may not realize it, but some of your negative self-talk is likely Satan whispering in your ear. And when it comes to spiritual things, he whispers, "God didn't really mean that." That's what he did to Eve. (Read Gen. 3:1-4.) He planted doubt in her mind about what God really said.

What if Eve would have held up the shield of faith—talked about in Eph. 6:16—and said, "Uh, let's look and see exactly what God said."? She wouldn't have sinned. Instead, she sent us all on the same path she took, doubting what God said and doubting that God meant what He said.

The key for you in getting over the malady of doubt is to find what God said that applies to your heart and your situation and believe it. Find a promise today before you go any further and pray it back to God. The Bible is full of promises. If you're in a hurry, maybe you can quickly hang on to the following verse: *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* (Phil. 4:19)

Going deeper:

■ Find your own promise from God in the Bible, ask Him to make it true on your behalf and tell Him you believe. Use these verses as your assurance that He will answer: *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And*

if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. (1 John 5:14-15)

■ On your own, study what the Bible has to say about doubt and its opposite—belief. Here are some verses to get you started: Luke 12:28-30; Mark 11:24; Eph. 1:17-20; 1 Thes. 2:13; Heb. 11:6. Write down the ones that are especially meaningful to you.

Day 7: Self-doubt is Sneaky

“I don’t doubt God, I just doubt myself.” Have you ever had that thought? God is great, but you’re not sure you can live up to the expectations required to be right with Him. You know you’ll fall, because you have so many times before. Down in the dumps you go.

In this case, fight failure with failure. By that I mean, don’t think too highly of yourself. Reduce your self-expectations. *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly.* (Rom. 12:3a)

Soberly means moderately. You’re not that good, and you’re not that bad. You are clay. Truly. You were taken from the dust, and to the dust you will go. But for the grace of God, that’s about all.

The fact that you don’t think too highly of your abilities to stay right with God is better than being proud of the abilities you do have. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him.* (Prov. 26:12)

If nothing else, this book will teach you that being down on yourself is the first step in looking up to a great big God who loves to lift up people like you. *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.* (James 4:6)

The difference is, you need to take your focus off your inabilities and instead turn your attention to God, who will catch you when you fall. He forgives. He moves on. Move on with Him by accepting and believing He forgave what you confessed and forsook. When you confess, He removes your sins as far away as the east is from west. (Ps. 103:12)

Resist the temptation to go deep within yourself to “figure yourself out.” *A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.* (Prov. 18:2) Contrary to pop-psychology, excessive self-analysis can hinder your emotional/spiritual growth by leading you to blame your feelings and circumstances on your upbringing. You open yourself up to self-pity for your regretful past and assume that you are doomed to a life of failure as a result.

What you need to know is, yes, you will likely fail. You may have already fallen greatly. The question is, have you asked for forgiveness and repented from whatever it was you did? If so, you are forgiven. There’s no need to keep beating yourself up over what God has already forgiven. His forgiveness is complete. He doesn’t bring it back up again.

Even the apostle Paul grappled with self-doubt. He knew the right thing to do, but he found something inside that didn’t want to do it. Instead, he found himself doing the very thing he knew was wrong. That bugged him. (Read Rom. 7)

Here’s Paul’s conclusion about his failings: *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* (Rom. 8:1-2)

You might be tempted to rally yourself and do great things for God to prove to yourself that you’re worthy of God’s grace. All that “doing” amounts to self-exercise. You may never have thought of this next verse in that light, but read this: *For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that*

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now is, and of that which is to come. (1 Tim. 4:7b-8) The only work you need to do is work on your communication with God. Start listening to Him in His word, and start talking to Him in prayer. Get close to Him and godliness will come, not from exercising yourself, but from quietly abiding in Him. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.* (John 15:5)

Going deeper:

Learn to think soberly about yourself, meaning don't think too highly or too lowly of yourself. Jesus died for you, which shows how valuable you are to Him. But He died for everyone else too. Somewhere in the middle is the balance. You really aren't any more special to God than anyone else. With that in mind, meditate on these verses: Phil. 2:3-8; Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:7&17.

Read more by ordering the book from Amazon.