

Songs of Joy Even When Anxious and Depressed

Paul H. VanValin, PhD

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- Preacher's Kid
- Married 40 years with 3 grown sons
- Licensed Clinical Psychologist in Virginia - 40 years of Training and Practice
- Founder and President of Eden Counseling and Consulting and Eden Leaders Institute

Depression in the Bible

- King Saul soothed by the songs of David.
- King David - Psalmist
 - My bed is wet from my tears...
 - My bones ache...

Heroes with Depression

- John Bunyan wrote Pilgrim's Progress
- John Wesley founded Methodism
- Billy Graham struggled with anxiety

World Leaders

- Abraham Lincoln
- Winston Churchill

Mental Health

- Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul and mind and your neighbor as yourself.
- Depression and anxiety affect the Heart: feelings, passion, drive, spirituality
- Soul: thinking becomes negative, pessimistic, and worrisome.
- Strength: Sleep, energy, appetite, drive diminished. Anxiety creates physical sensations, tension, increased heart rate and blood pressure.
- Neighbor Love: Isolation, lack of joy in human contact, negative expectations, struggling in social contexts.

Paul's Story

- Ancestors were perfectionist and anxious. Often negative and critical in their thoughts and words.
- Grew up in a good home with good people, but lacking in warmth and affirmation.
- Very anxious and introverted child.
- Drawn to leadership roles, particularly at church.
- Subject to mild Seasonal Affective Disorder: SAD
 - Reduced exposure to sunlight usually during winter months.
 - Treated with increased exposure to light.

1996 - 1999

- Business stress led to severe anxiety.
 - Insomnia - 6 weeks on 5 to 45 minutes of sleep.
 - Chronic tension, increased heart rate, tinnitus, loss of appetite with weight loss, worry, fear of failure.
- Never missed work and built Eden Counseling. Most people didn't know.
- I was miserable

Treatment

- Medication of little help to me. Got a little relief and a little sleep. Many people receive significant help from meds.
- Social Support very important. “When you feel better...”
“You are the same guy I have known all of my life.”
- Had to fix some problems and then it took a year for my brain to readjust.

Lessons Learned

- Anchor verses: All things work together for good.
 - In much wisdom is sorrow and he who increases wisdom increases suffering.
- Gratitude: “Call it good.”
- Discipline your mind. Limit negative thinking. Rubber band therapy.

2008 - 2011

- Multiple losses
 - Health losses
 - Closed a business
 - Fired a long time manager
 - Stopped sleeping
 - Anxiety returned

Depression

- Fixed the problems
- Adjusted to new diet
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