



D is for Depression


Spiritual, Psychological and Medical
Resources for Healing Depression

Michael Lawson



CHRISTIAN
FOCUS





Michael Lawson is an experienced counsellor, who lectures and trains in Christian Counselling across the world. He has written 2 other books from Christian Focus. *Living by God's Master Plan* (ISBN 978-1-85792-541-8) and *Conflict: How it Starts/ How to Stop it* (ISBN 978-1-85792-528-9). Michael is Archdeacon of Hampstead in the Diocese of London.

Copyright © Michael Lawson 2006

ISBN 1-84550-151-9
ISBN 978-1-84550-151-8

Published in 2006
Reprinted 2008

by
Christian Focus Publications Ltd.,
Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire,
IV20 1TW, Scotland

www.christianfocus.com

Cover Design by Alister MacInnes
(info@moose77.com)

Printed and bound by
Norhaven A/S Paperback, Denmark

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher or a license permitting restricted copying. In the U.K. such licences are issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby Street, London, EC1 8TS www.cla.co.uk.




FOREWORD

Rarely does one find a Christian book that tackles the spiritual, psychological and medical aspects of depression and provides from so balanced a perspective real practical in-depth help to tackle this distressing disorder.

Depression is common, with nearly one in five people experiencing a major depressive episode at some stage in their lives. It is one of the hardest illnesses to endure, as its very nature undermines hope of recovery. For the Christian, like any other form of suffering, depression challenges us to depend more closely on God and potentially deepens our relationship with him. However, unlike other forms of suffering, many who face depression find it can block their experience of God's love and our sense of his presence in a way that nothing else besides anger can do.

Depression is exceptional. Of all life's most painful experiences, nothing is more disturbing. Depression can be one of the great trials of faith. There is a great need for a





relevant guide through the 'tunnel', both for the sufferer and for others who can come alongside. Those who are depressed need the kind of understanding, insight and support that contrasts with that provided by the so-called comforters of Job. In our culture, unfortunately, there are still many less balanced approaches. *D for depression* provides a welcome alternative.

As a psychiatrist, I have seen many books and articles on depression, but few that cover so effectively the broad ground of the spiritual, psychological and medical perspectives drawn here. Michael Lawson has drawn from his considerable experience and wisdom as an experienced counsellor. In this highly readable work, he provides an invaluable key to progress, not only for the person having to face depression in their own life, but to those willing to draw sufficiently near to share some of the pain and engage in the task of unravelling the situation. Then there is a possibility of moving forward and achieving real healing.

May the help and encouragement herein provide the means by which God's grace can be applied to ease a heavy load and enlighten a dark place, thus strengthening and deepening the faith of any suffering from depression and those around them.

Dr Rosalind Furlong

Dr Rosalind C S Furlong, MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, Guy's Hospital, London University); FRCPsych (Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists) is Medical Director of a London NHS Mental Health Trust, and practises in General Adult Psychiatry in North London.



AUTHOR'S NOTE

D is for Depression is substantially based on my earlier book *Facing Depression*, which has been translated and read across the world. *Facing Depression* has regularly appeared on university and theological college reading lists and has been widely used by individuals and churches, and in the training of those who seek to develop professional skills in helping others. I believe it has been of value because of the way it is conceived: as a self-help book about getting better, a resource for those who suffer depression or who are close to someone who does.

It is my intention that this completely revised and updated version with a new title and new material will be of use both to sufferers and helpers alike. There are not many books which deal with depression both from a biblical point of view, and take from the best that medical science and the insights of psychology and counselling have to offer. I hope this approach will continue to fill that gap.





D is for Depression

If you are picking this book up for the first time and wondering whether it can help you, a friend or a member of the family, my suggestion is this. Use the book to help you understand better what depression is. Then be prepared to move on to do some of the practical exercises. This makes the true difference, whether or not medical help is needed as a back-up. Then, most of all, try to recognise that the real help for our lives comes from God himself. In the realm of depression this book will suggest how that help can be known in the widest setting of what we and others can do to face up to depression and win through. The vast majority of sufferers from depression do get better. If you are a sufferer or a helper of others in any way, informal or professional, my prayer is that the insights offered here will significantly help you in that process towards complete healing.

