

How to Fight the Blues

We all have those days when we're a little down. Maybe it's a sad, cloudy day, your team lost, or you just feel weary of the routine of the work week. Sometimes we experience an onslaught of hassles and problems. We call it the blues. A deep funk. The dismals. The mopes. Whatever you call it, what do you do when that mood sets in?

(This is different from a seemingly never-ending depressed state. If the blues come and never leave, talk to a medical doctor or a Christ-centered counselor. Clinical depression is something quite different from just being in an occasional funk.)

In a highly non-scientific study, I asked friends what they do when the blues set in. Here's what I discovered.

A change of scenery. Over half the group referred to walking outside—and if a dog was involved, all the better. Some mentioned yardwork as therapeutic. A medical doctor would point out this involves exercise, which is good for our disposition.



Surrounding ourselves with God's creation is a good thing. The beauty of God's creation draws us to awe, wonder, and worship.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands" (Ps. 19:1)

A change in the conversation. Talking with someone else is beneficial. I'm not referring to talking to a counselor (although for some, that might be helpful), but getting with a friend. Maybe it's talking about what has you down or it may be talking about how to keep squirrels out of your bird feeder. The point is that, instead of being by yourself and letting a depressing monologue play in your head, conversations with friends take the focus off just ourselves.

A conversation with a child or grandchild works too! Talk to them and live in their world for a moment, because seeing life through their eyes can really be uplifting.



"Anxiety in a person's heart weighs it down, but a good word cheers it up" (Prov. 12:25).

A change in actions. Many people fight the blues by serving someone else. I had a pastor friend who used service to others as his go-to therapy. Helping someone else—meeting a need—took their minds off their own need.

"In every way I've shown you that it is necessary to help the weak by laboring like this and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, because he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35).

"Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4).

A change in perspective. Reading Scripture made the list, and some mentioned specific passages they found helpful: Psalm 55:22; 91; Romans 8:38-39. Frankly, I think this weapon to fight the blues is the strongest. Yes, God ministers to our hearts through His creation, the friends He has brought our way, and the service we do for others, but there's something about God's Word that is especially powerful and therapeutic.

"The word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

Through Scripture, we discover the heart of God. We encounter His love, grace, and care. Perspective changes for the better as we soak in His Word and gain His perspective on the world and on life. If you're not in the habit of reading Scripture, start. Make it a habit—a daily habit. And in those moments when you feel down, read out loud the psalms. God's grace-filled perspective seeps in as you see it, speak it, and hear it.

There's a common element in all these ideas:

- By walking in God's creation, I'm taking my eyes off myself.
- By conversing with those He's brought into my life, I'm taking my attention off myself.
- By serving other in His name, I'm serving others rather than myself.
- By reading Scripture, I'm taking my focus off myself.

When I lose myself in Christ, I truly find myself—and there's nothing depressing about who I am in Christ.