

An aerial photograph of a surfer riding a wave. The surfer is positioned at the bottom center of the frame, riding a yellow and red surfboard. The wave is a deep blue color with white foam at the top. The sky is a lighter blue with some white clouds. The overall mood is one of challenge and triumph.

FACING LIFE'S  
**HURDLES**

[DEPRESSION • ANGER • PERFECTIONISM • SHAME]

GUIDE BOOK



# FACING LIFE'S HURDLES

"Man is born to trouble, as surely as sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). Well, there's a cheery thought! But you can forgive Job, with all that he was going through, for feeling that way. And he's not wrong that one of the certainties of life is challenges. It's the reality of living in a world that groans, as we look forward to the Day when God redeems all things in Christ (Rom. 8:19-23).

Some of the problems we face come from outside of ourselves – a friend responds to you in a cruel way. But other challenges come from inside of us – depression, anger, shame, perfectionism. And these are often the greater challenges.

So, how do we face those hurdles? Back in 2024, in the first part of this series, we looked at four topics (the talks are on our website). Now we're picking another four:

- Depression
- Anger
- Shame
- Perfectionism

We want to ask: what does it look like to face these challenges well? Our goal isn't to find pat answers, as if we can make our problems vanish. But we want to face these challenges in a way that relies on Christ and looks to the real hope and help that we find in Him.



STUDY 1

# [DEPRESSION]

PSALM 130 • MATTHEW 26:36-46



## STARTER

When life feels heavy or overwhelming, what do you tend to do first—withdraw, distract yourself, reach out, or something else? Why do you think that is?

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## INVESTIGATE

### Read Psalm 130

1. What words or images stand out to you to describe the psalmists emotional state? (See also: Psalm 13:1-2; Psalm 88:3-6)

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2. What does the psalmist do in response to his distress? How would you describe his posture toward God?

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### Read Matthew 26:36-46

**3.** How is Jesus described in this moment? What does he do when he is "overwhelmed with sorrow"?

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## **APPLY**

### **4. Seeking the Lord**

Both passages show people crying out to God in distress. What might it look like practically for you to "cry out to the Lord" in a difficult season, especially when you don't feel like it?

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### **5. Speaking truth vs believing lies**

In Psalm 130, the psalmist moves toward hope by fixing himself on God's word ("in his word I hope"). What are some common lies people believe when they feel depressed? What are some lies we may believe when we are depressed?

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### **6. Waiting on God**

The psalmist speaks about waiting for the Lord "more than watchmen wait for the morning." What do you find difficult about waiting on God? What might help you to wait with hope instead of despair?

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## 7. Purpose in the midst of struggle

In both passages, turning to God remains central—even in deep anguish. Psalm 130 moves toward trusting and hoping in God, and Jesus continues to submit to the Father's will.

What might it look like in everyday life for us to continue to pursue our purpose (to trust and serve God) even in depression?

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## 8. Helping others

If a friend were going through depression, what might it look like to help them in light of what we have seen?

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## TAKE AWAY

9. Write down one big takeaway for you as you seek to deal with, or help someone with, depression.

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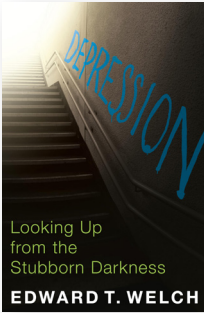


## PRAY

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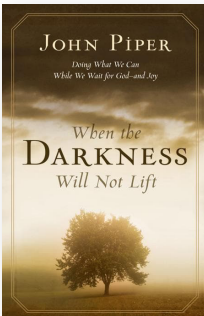


## HELPFUL RESOURCE: DEPRESSION

### Looking Up From the Stubborn Darkness

by Edward Welch

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## HELPFUL RESOURCE: DEPRESSION

### When the Darkness Will Not Lift

by John Piper

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## PETRIE WORKING BEE

Saturday 9 May | Starts 830am



STUDY 2

# [ ANGER ]

EPHESIANS 4:25-32



## STARTER

When it comes to dealing with anger, we are often 'internalisers' or 'venters'. What are unhealthy expressions of internalising anger? What are unhealthy expressions of venting anger?

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## INVESTIGATE

**Read Ephesians 4:25-32**

**1. Look at verses 26-27**

What does Paul say about anger? What warnings does he give about how it can develop?

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**2. Look at verses 29-30**

How does Paul describe the kind of speech that should (and shouldn't) come from us? How might this connect to anger?

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### 3. Look at verses 31–32

What are we told to get rid of? What are we told to put on instead? What motivation is given for this?

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## **APPLY**

### 4. Recognising anger

Verse 31 lists attitudes like bitterness, rage, and malice. Which of these are easiest to excuse or overlook in ourselves? What might that reveal about our hearts?

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### 5. The danger of anger

Verse 27 warns about giving the devil a foothold. What might it look like, in real life, for anger to “take hold” if it is not dealt with quickly?

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### 6. Speaking in anger

Verses 29–30 call us to use words that build others up. How can anger affect the way we speak? What would it look like to handle conflict in a way that is both honest and self-controlled?

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## 7. Forgiveness and the gospel

Verse 32 calls us to forgive "just as in Christ God forgave you." Why is remembering God's forgiveness so crucial in dealing with anger? What makes forgiveness difficult in practice?

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## 8. Helping others

If a friend were going through depression, what might it look like to help them in light of what we have seen?

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## TAKE AWAY

9. Write down one big takeaway for you as you seek to deal with Anger.

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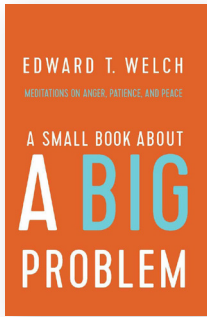


## PRAY

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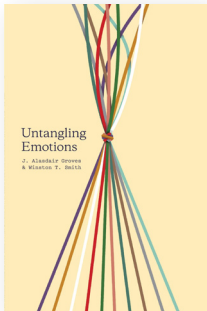


## HELPFUL RESOURCE: ANGER

**A Small Book About a Big Problem**

by Edward Welch

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## GENERAL RESOURCE

**Untangling Emotions**

by Alisdair Groves & Winston Smith

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## STUDY 3

# [PERFECTIONISM]

ROMANS 7:14–8:4 • 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7–10



## STARTER

Do you tend to place higher expectations on yourself or on others? How do you respond when those expectations aren't met?

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## INVESTIGATE

### Read Romans 7:14–8:4

#### 1. Look at 7:14–24

How does Paul describe his struggle with sin? What does this show about the reality of the Christian life?

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#### 2. Look at 7:25–8:4

Where does Paul point for hope?

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### Read 2 Corinthians 12:6–10

3. How does Paul respond to his own weakness, and why?

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# ➔ APPLY

## 4. Recognising perfectionism

Talk about any or all of the following. How can perfectionism be connected into this?

- Overwork
- Inability to cope with failure
- Procrastination
- Tortured decision making
- Controlling others
- A hyper critical attitude
- People pleasing

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## 5. Unrealistic expectations

Compare the master's praise for the first two servants in Matthew 25:14–30. Why would the master's rewards be identical regardless of the total amount? How does that help you set more realistic expectations for yourself and others?

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## 6. Responding to failure

It is right to seek God's help to meet his standards (Rom 8:4). But we'll still struggle with sin (Rom 7:15) and need the gospel (Rom 8:1) every day. What might it look like to hold together a serious desire for obedience with a gospel-shaped response to failure? (Contrast this with an unhealthy response to failure.)

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## 7. Embracing weakness

In 2 Corinthians 12:6-10, Paul rejoices in his weakness, because he realises that God likes to show his strength against the backdrop of our weakness. Look back to Q.4 – are there instances there where it helps to know that God works through weakness? What would it look like, in a godly way, to embrace weakness, without excusing laziness?

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## 8. Helping others

Are there practical ways that we can help one another as we face perfectionism?

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## TAKE AWAY

9. Write down one big takeaway for you as you seek to deal with Perfectionism.

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## PRAY

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### Acknowledgement

*These studies have been written by Kirk Zylstra, with AI assisting in the shaping of questions.*



## STUDY 4

# [SHAME]

GENESIS 3:6-10 • LUKE 15:11-24 • MATTHEW 27:27-31



## STARTER

Guilt and Shame overlap but are not the same. Look at the chart below. What stands out to you as helpful? Where are you still unsure?

### HOW ARE GUILT AND SHAME DIFFERENT?

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#### OUR PROBLEM

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##### GUILT

In Court

I did something wrong

Law is broken

I deserve judgment

##### SHAME

In Community

Something wrong with me  
(Feel unclean)

I am exposed

I fear rejection

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#### WHAT IS NEEDED

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##### GUILT

Forgiveness

Justification

Acquittal

##### SHAME

Cleansing

Covering

Acceptance

Honour

# INVESTIGATE

## Read Genesis 3:6–10

1. Where can you see shame showing itself in this passage??

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## Read Luke 15:11-24

2. Where do you see the son's shame in this story? And how do you see the Father giving him what he needs? (You may want to connect this back to the chart at the beginning.)

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## Read Matthew 27:27-31

3. What kinds of shame is Jesus bearing in this passage—and why is it significant that he is willing to endure this?

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# APPLY

## 4. Recognising shame

Shame can be experienced from things done to us, who we are associated with, or what we have done. Where do we see the instinct in our lives to withdraw or pull back because of shame?

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## 5. The instinct to cover

In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve try to cover themselves. What are some ways we try to manage, mask or compensate for our shame?

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## 6. Turning toward God

Psalm 34:4-5 says: *"I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame."* What might it look like, in practice, for us to turn toward God when we feel ashamed? Why is this hard?

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## 7. Jesus and our shame

How does knowing that Jesus entered into shame—and dealt with it—begin to reshape how we respond to our own?

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## 8. Moving toward others

Shame often isolates us. What might it look like for us to move toward trusted Christian community instead of withdrawing? And how can we help our brother or sister when they want to hide?

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## TAKE AWAY

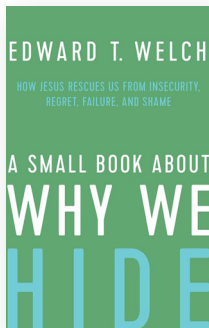
9. Write down one big takeaway for you as you seek to deal with shame.

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## PRAY

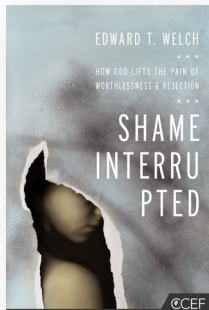
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### HELPFUL RESOURCE: SHAME

**A Small Book About a Why We Hide**

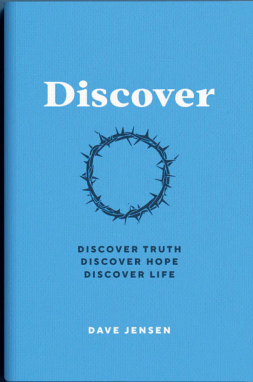
by Edward Welch



### HELPFUL RESOURCE: SHAME

**Shame Interrupted: How God Lifts the Pain of Worthlessness and Rejection**

by Edward Welch



# Discover

## PREVIEW NIGHTS

Wednesday Nights  
10 or 17 June



**CHRISTCENTRAL**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH