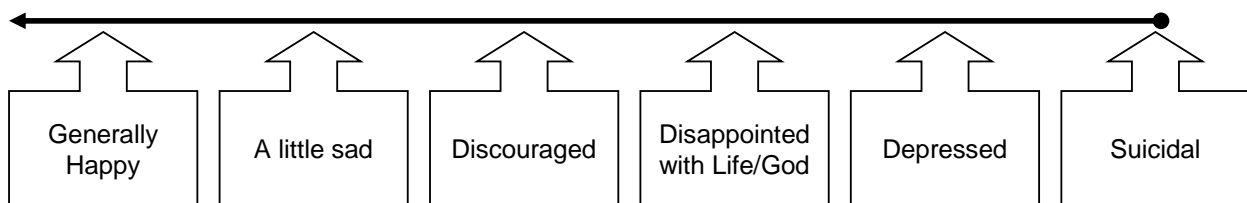


## DISCUSSION GUIDE for INTERVENTION Series #1: “Hopelessness / Depression”

1. If you were to guess how many of your (FRIENDS) were struggling with depression right now, what percentage would you pick?
  - ...coworkers...
  - ...neighbors...
  - ...people at church... (Would it surprise you if you discovered people in this room struggling with depression right now?)

2. Read the following statistics. What are some observations from these statistics? Is there anything that surprises you? *(You can pick & choose stats to read. Fact sheet these items taken from is attached for your reference, or in case of questions.)*
  - a. **Depressive disorders affect approximately 18.8 million American adults of the U.S. population age 18 and older in a given year. This includes major depressive disorder, dysthymic disorder, and bipolar disorder.** [1]
  - b. **Everyone, will at some time in their life be affected by depression** -- their own or someone else's, according to Australian Government statistics. (Depression statistics in Australia are comparable to those of the US and UK.) [2]
  - c. **Pre-schoolers are the fastest-growing market for antidepressants.** At least four percent of preschoolers -- over a million -- are clinically depressed. [3]
  - d. **The rate of increase of depression among children is an astounding 23%** p.a. [4]
  - e. **15% of the population of most developed countries suffers severe depression.** [5]
  - f. **30% of women are depressed.** Men's figures were previously thought to be half that of women, but new estimates are higher. [6]
  - g. **54% of people believe depression is a personal weakness.** [7]
  - h. **41% of depressed women are too embarrassed to seek help.** [8]
  - i. **80% of depressed people are not currently having any treatment.** [9]
  - j. 92% of depressed African-American males do not seek treatment. [10]
  - k. **15% of depressed people will commit suicide.** [11]
  - l. Depression will be the second largest killer after heart disease by 2020 -- and studies show depression is a contributory factor to fatal coronary disease. [12]
  - m. **Depression results in more absenteeism than almost any other physical disorder and costs employers more than US\$51 billion per year in absenteeism and lost productivity, not including high medical and pharmaceutical bills.** [13]

3. Jeff talked Sunday about different levels or depths of hopelessness. Where would you put yourself on this line today?



4. What area of life do you feel causes you the most disappointment or discouragement?
  - a. Home life / family / children / spouse
  - b. Other Relationships – boyfriend/girlfriend / friends (bad choices or lack of friends)
  - c. Work / employment / lack of employment
  - d. Finances / goals / station in life / unfulfilled dreams
  - e. Personal abilities & talents / looks & body image
  - f. Change – too much or too little
  - g. Education – lack of or overwhelmed by current schooling
  - h. Spiritual Life – my own sins and shortcomings
  
5. How long have you been feeling discouraged about that area of your life?
  - a. How often do you feel discouragement about that area of your life?
  - b. Are the feelings of discouragement in this area of your life due to an individual event, past trials that haunts you, a long term circumstance that lingers and you can't seem to escape or change?
  - c. Do you think there are physical things that could causing or triggering your discouragement? (lack of sleep, unrelieved long term stress, illness, physical body change)
  
6. What are some things said by people that have hurt you when you're feeling discouraged or depressed? *\*No gossip or stories, just specific things that have been said to you.*
7. When you look back at comments you've made to other people, do you recall anything you may have said that was insensitive or hurtful to someone else struggling with discouragement? Do you think this was because you didn't understand their situation, lacked compassion for their situation, or was just spoken in the wrong manner or wrong time?

8. Who are some of the biblical examples of people who struggled with strong discouragement / depression?
  - a. David - Read Psalm 55:1-8
    - What are some words that jump out at you in these verses? Does this sound like someone who's struggling with discouragement?
  - b. Jonah
    - Read Jonah 4:1-3
    - How angry was Jonah? With whom was he angry?
  - c. Elijah
    - Read 1 Kings 19:1-5
    - Why was he on the run? Was it legitimate?
  - d. What was the cause of each of their discouragement? A result of their own actions or of their circumstances or of their attitude...?
    - David –
    - Jonah –
    - Elijah –
  - e. How did each respond to their discouragement? How did God respond to them?
    - David – Psalm 55:16-18, 22-23
    - Jonah – Jonah 4:5-11
    - Elijah – 1 Kings 19:5-9
  - f. Why do you think God responded differently to each one?
  
9. How did Jesus respond to Peter when Peter fell into the water while walking to Jesus? (Matthew 14:22-33)
  
10. When you think of the discouraging experiences you have IN THE PAST, how has God responded to you?
  - a. As time has passed since that experience, do you see that God was responding in the way you needed at the time? OR does it still feel to you like He didn't care or help in any way?
  
11. When you think of the CURRENT experiences you have that may feel like a storm raging all around you...
  - a. If you could pick how God would resolve the situation, how would you tell Him to go about it?
  - b. What are some other ways God could respond in your situation because He sees a bigger picture or purpose than you might?