Lesson 4 – The Elephant in the Room (45 min.)

Resource:  Demystifying Depression for Christians, Dr. Greg Knopf
Web site:  http://depressionoutreach.com/

1. Stop telling people they can cure mental illness with only prayer and perhaps reading the Bible. Mental illness is not simply a spiritual problem.

2. A balanced approach. See depression as a warning signal.

3. Tools for diagnosing depression available on web site.

4. All possible reasons for depression are interconnected and complex therefore needs a multifaceted solution. Medication plus counseling are better together than either one alone.

5. Spiritual counsel and guidance is an important part of the solution.

6. Thoughts on prayer.
   a. We recognize the power of prayer.
   b. Prayer itself is a complex experience – James 1 – “Be joyful…”
   c. God does not create adversity; he uses it to grow us.
   d. Ask God for the strength to remain under the difficulty and give endurance until he has completed his good work.
   e. Jesus said, “I came to give you peace”, not an easy life.
   f. Disciples recognized Jesus prayed differently than the Rabbis.
   g. Jesus model prayer, Jesus deals very little on petitions
   h. We can come boldly into God’s presence. We can be assertive.
   i. Ask, seek, knock; I will open. Prayer is a relationship.

7. Spiritual stereotypes about depression:
   a. Depression is sin. Emotional states are always neutral (i.e. anger). Sin, however can have emotional consequence
b. Depression is a lack of faith. Many Biblical illustrations would deny that: Jonah, Moses

c. Depression is God’s punishment. No Biblical evidence of this. Jer. 29:11-12.

d. Depression is demon possession. Matt. 4 distinguishes between demon possession and emotional disorder.

8. Don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater by rejecting all psychological principles.

   a. Valuing who you are as a person created in the image of God.
   b. As a person we are inherently loveable even though our behavior may not be.
   c. We discipline bad behavior but we still love the child.
   d. We are to value what God values. God values you; so should you. Rom. 7
   e. Denying self is different than self-denial.