

What Does The Bible Teach About Suicide?

By Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

A. Where life is cheap and living is expensive, death is not just an option; it is treated by some as an obligation. In the long view of human behavior, we find that an ordinary range of human personalities have, in a supporting poor culture, accepted genocide, slavery, killing of unproductive slaves, killing of unproductive elderly, and killing of unwanted babies and children. Abortion and euthanasia are the evils of our immoral, declining nation. Many believe man should have the legal right to dispose of unwanted babies. Others believe that the aged who are no longer productive should be disposed of. And there are those who contend man should have the legal right to dispose of himself, suicide.

B. Is it any wonder in a world that considers death to be a solution to life's problems, that those in despair would be influenced to use the same solution for their own problems?

1. Almost four times as many men than women commit suicide.
 - a. Seventh leading cause of death among men
 - b. Fifteenth leading cause of death among women
 - c. Third leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24

C. Research shows that risk factors for suicide include: (More than 90 percent of people who die by suicide have these risk factors)

1. Depression and other mental/emotional disorders, or substance abuse
2. Prior suicide attempt
3. Family history of mental disorder or substance abuse
4. Family history of suicide
5. Family violence, including physical or sexual abuse
6. Firearms in the home, the method used in more than half of suicides
7. Incarceration
8. Exposure to the suicidal behavior of others, such as family members, peers, or media figures

I. GOD'S WORD

A. Ex. 20:13 - "You shall not murder."

1. What does this commandment say about terminating human life?
2. This commandment, in principle, includes suicide, self-murder.
3. Burden of proof falls to the one who disagrees with Divine implication

B. Ez. 18:4 - "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine"

1. We hold our lives in stewardship; life belongs to God
2. 1Cor. 6:19-20

C. Gen. 1:26-27 - "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to our likeness...'"

1. God's image is not overcome with despair and desperation

D. Matt. 5:21-22 - Is acceptable to treat yourself this way?

E. Acts 16:27 - "Do yourself no harm"

II. BIBLE CHARACTERS WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE

- A. 1Sam. 31:4-5 - Saul's act of despair
- B. 2Sam. 17:23 - Ahithophel - His advice was disregarded and he did not want to face justice for working with a traitor
- C. 1Kings 16:18-19 - Zimri faced justice for treason
- D. Matt. 27:5 - Judas did not want to live with his betrayal of Jesus
- E. Judges 16:28-30 - Samson's base desire for revenge
- F. What seems to be a common theme?
 - 1. It isn't fearing that God won't forgive, but it's having to face those hurt or other consequences
 - 2. Most suicides recorded in the Bible were carried out in response to severe loss, sorrow, fear, and hopelessness.
 - 3. "One thing appears to be clear. Persons who attempt to end themselves view themselves to be in some sort of extreme circumstance. For many with suicidal thoughts, whether adolescents or adults, 'circumstances' or 'situations' are at the heart of their desire to put an end to their lives."
- G. Suicide has much to do with hopelessness. The circumstances of one's personal predicament can seem overwhelming. The pain can seem unrelenting. Since God has commanded us not to take our own lives, how does He expect us to handle the circumstances and feelings that lead some to consider suicide?

III. WHAT GOD OFFERS TO THOSE IN DESPAIR

- A. Jer. 33:8; 1John 1:8-9; Psalm 107:10-21; Heb. 13:5; John 3:16; 1John 4:16
- B. How despised was Jesus? - Isa. 53:3
- C. How was He able to endure? - Heb. 12:2-3
- D. Will He offer comfort and aid to those so suffering? - Heb. 2:10, 18; 4:15-16
- E. Will He take care of you? - 1Peter 5:7; Matt. 10:29-31; Mark 14:36
- F. Will He give you what you need to face life? - Phil. 4:13; 1Cor. 10:13
- G. What is waiting for you if you persevere? - 1Cor. 2:9; Rev. 21:4

Conclusion:

Suicide doesn't solve one's difficulties. It actually compounds them. In the next split second of your thoughts, you will once again be aware as was the rich man and Lazarus. You will be the same person with the same thoughts, but now you will also have to deal with your own murder. In addition, suicide inflicts tremendous, permanent pain on the surviving family and friends.

There are much better options. Choose to fight the battle and seek out others who can help you fight when you are not strong. Many people do care and will help you through these low points. It may be hard to ask for help, but it is harder to ask them to deal with your suicide.