

Suicide Prevention

“Hope When Life Seems Hopeless”



Pt 1

Sometimes Life Seems Hopeless

“I just want to die..”

- This aching admission has been spoken too many times—and with tragic results.
- These **five words** reveal a soul mired in the depths of despair. All hope is gone ... and all too soon, so is life itself.
- No group is exempt from wanting to walk down this dark path of “escape.” **Male and female ... young and old ... rich and poor** —all are found among these fatal statistics. Yet most people contemplating suicide don’t really want to die—*they just want the pain to stop*. Their burden seems too heavy to bear.
- If you’re **struggling** ... if you’re **desperate** ... if you’re contemplating taking your life, realize this: The Lord longs to heal your heart and restore your hope. In absolute honesty, go to God about your pain. Say to Him ...
- *“I am in pain and distress; may your salvation, O God, protect me.” -Ps 69:29*

Sometimes Life Seems

Hopeless

- Does life seem impossible? For over a 1 mill. people yearly who die of suicide, the answer is **yes!** And that figure is *more than all the casualties of homicide and war combined!*
- Think about this statistic—seriously: On average, one person dies by suicide every 40 seconds somewhere in the world, while up to 20 others are attempting the same act. That's an extraordinary number of people desperately choosing death!
- Have your desires been dashed by the pain of depression and despair? Have your hopes been smashed by hurt and heartache? Have you searched without success for a lasting solution?
- Honestly, are you struggling with thoughts of suicide? Have you begun to believe the lie that self-inflicted death would be better than God-given life?
- Realize, the Lord looks upon you with tender compassion/ genuine concern. He cares about your every need. You can learn how to experience the meaningful life He has planned for you. He has a perfect plan for you ... to free you from the shackles of suicidal thinking ... based on truth, not on lies. Jesus desires to free you from destructive thoughts and choices.
- *“You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” -John 8:32*

Suicide

Just to hear the word *suicide* evokes a myriad of feelings: shock, sadness, guilt, grief.

▪The initial response after suicide is often: *Oh no! Why would anyone resort to such an irreversible act?*

▪We feel a sense of tragic loss when we discover that suicide has snuffed out one more life ... forever. To help someone fight the persistent desire to “end it all” (a desire called suicidal ideation), there is much we need to understand about suicide. Since God is our Creator, we need to know God’s heart on life and death—and that means *our own life and death*. Throughout the Bible, life and death are presented in different contexts ... but never does God say we are to pursue death. ...

“I have set before you life and death Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.” -
Deuteronomy 30:19

The 5 Sides of

Suicide

•Suffering Suicide

- deliberate act of killing oneself in ext. state of despair. Latin, *sui*= oneself / *cide*= to kill.
- Suicidal sufferers* are afflicted with “tunnel vision”—the only option they see is death

Biblical Example: Judas hanged himself in remorse after betraying Jesus.

“When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse Then he went away and hanged himself ” -Matthew 27:3, 5

• Supported Suicide

- “assisted suicide” is a deliberate choice of killing oneself w- the assistance of another
- also “euthanasia” or “mercy killing” in an attempt to avoid a painful or undesirable future.

Biblical Example: The evil king Abimelech asked his soldier to kill him with a sword in order to avoid the humiliation of military defeat. This hurried request to his armor-bearer was for “assisted suicide.”

“Draw your sword and kill me, so that they can’t say, ‘A woman killed him.’ So his servant ran him through, and he died” -Judges 9:54

The 5 Sides of Suicide

- **Symbolic Suicide**

- a deliberate act of killing oneself influenced by ritualistic custom or sense of honor due to an excessive identification w- a certain person, family, or nation.
- types found in different cultures include **hara-kiri**, **suttee**, and **copycat suicides**.

- **Historical Examples:**

- *Hara-kiri* (*hara*= belly / *kiri*= cutting) is the Japanese ritual of “honorable suicide” by ripping open abdomen w- knife (disembowelment) in response to bringing dishonor.
- *Suttee* (also *Sati*) is the Hindu custom of a widow cremating herself on her husband’s funeral pyre to demonstrate her ultimate act of fidelity. (voluntary or compulsory)

- **Biblical Example:** After regaining his supernatural strength, Samson—one of Israel’s judges—pushed against the temple’s two central pillars ... knowing he would be killed. But he also knew the collapse would kill the Philistines—the enemy of God and His people. *“Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, Samson said, ‘Let me die with the Philistines!’ ”* -Judges 16:29–30

The 5 Sides of Suicide

•Shared Suicide

- the deliberate act of 2 or more who kill themselves based on a prior commitment
- Suicide pacts* are previously arranged deaths that typically take place at the same time, for the same cause, using the same method.

•**Historical Example:** In AD 70 after Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, the Jews were taken captive and many were dispersed to other nations. However, around 960 zealots escaped to Masada, a fortress situated on a massive isolated rock 900 feet high. In AD 73 the Jews of Masada knew their stronghold could not withstand the overpowering Roman siege. Rather than allow their wives and children to be tortured, abused, or sold as slaves, they chose to die of mass suicide. Knowing that these Jewish zealots were well acquainted with the Psalms, no doubt they could identify with these words. ...

“The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow” -Psalm 116:3

The 5 Sides

of Suicide

- **Slaughter Suicide**

- the deliberate act of killing one or more while committing suicide simultaneously or immediately following the act of murder.
- also called “homicidal suicide,” which includes killings committed by groups such as kamikaze pilots and suicide bombers.

- **Historical Examples:**

- *Jihad suicide bombers* seek to fulfill the Islamic directive in the Qur’an against all non-Islamic people: “*Fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war) ... Fight those who believe not in Allah.*” (Surah 9:5, 29) Those who die as jihadists are “guaranteed” their place in paradise (along with 70 of their relatives), bypassing the normally required time in hell, and they are given 72 virgins to enjoy.

The 5 Sides

of Suicide

- **Slaughter Suicide**

- **Historical Examples:**

- *Jihad suicide bombers*

- *Kamikaze* (“divine wind”) *pilots* in Japan carried out their suicide missions during World War II by flying their war planes into enemy targets such as ships and ammunition depots. These pilots believed they were guaranteed a place with their ancestors and believed their highest service was to die for the Emperor who was regarded as God. (In 1945, following the Japanese defeat, the Emperor pronounced on radio, “I am no longer to be considered a deity.”)

- **Cultural Example:** On Tuesday April 20, 1999—in celebration of Hitler’s birthday—two sadistic high school students in long, black trench coats killed 13 people at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. After the hate-filled massacre—especially targeting Christians—they both committed suicide. Known as cruel bullies, these two killers lived out this Scripture. ...

- *“Bloodthirsty men hate a man of integrity and seek to kill the upright”* ([Proverbs 29:10](#)).

A-Typical Suicide

Bully-cide

•refers to a person who dies of suicide because of the torment, fear/ humiliation associated with being bullied. Immature children are notorious for picking on one another. However, today's bullies are far more cruel than in previous generations because, in addition to bullying their victims at school and in other social settings, home provides no haven of refuge for those being bullied. These bullies use their cell phones and computers to attack their human targets at all hours of the day and night. It's virtually impossible for victims to find a sense of safety anywhere unless they isolate themselves and abandon the use of phones and computers. With no reprieve from the constant barrage of bullying, these victims feel so belittled and besieged that eventually they ...

- Lose their ability to function normally
- Experience mental and emotional symptoms similar to those who are being terrorized
- Suffer plummeted self-worth and impaired resilience
- Endure such degradation and scorn that some believe suicide is their only viable option
- Could opt for killing their bullies rather than themselves—or even both

A-Typical Suicide

Bully-cide

- Unless some observant, wise person recognizes their symptoms and intervenes in their lives in a powerful, caring way, there is little hope for these strugglers. Parents, educators, and coaches need to take action on behalf of those being bullied. This biblical passage could not be more relevant. ...

- *“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?”* -**Proverbs 24:11–12**

Copycat Suicides?

- People who imitate the behaviors of others, even to the realm of suicide. The intent of a copycat is to make the ultimate sacrifice—believing that one’s own self-imposed death will bring honor to another person’s life.

- Copycats most often commit suicide following the death of people in 3 categories: **friends, family, and famous** (spec friends/classmates, siblings/parents, heroes/idols).

- **Celebrity suicides** spawn multiple suicide attempts due to a strong sense of identification with the celebrity—even a part of the celebrity’s fame. After the celebrity’s death, copycat suicides tend to occur at specific intervals:

 - **W-in first 3 days -On the 1 week, 1 month, or 1 year anniversaries**

“**Cluster suicides**” involve a group of people who so identify with someone’s suicide feel compelled to identify with that person in death. These suicides take place together or separately at the same time.

- They may fantasize hovering over and watching their own funerals.
- They may idealize their deaths as “honoring” the one whom they are imitating.
- They may romanticize how much their own suicides would affect others ...the tears of those left behind, their words of guilt/ regret, how much they will be missed.

Copycat Suicides

•Tragically, copycats fail to realize that the far greater way to honor someone is through life, not death ... by living in a way that honors the memory of the one who has died, not by dying in a way that brings only a brief moment of fame. Be aware of those who are immature and impressionable ... those who don't have a secure sense of their own identity ... those who lack judgment by fantasizing about and romanticizing suicide. In general, the Bible addresses this basic tragedy. ...

"Fools die for lack of judgment." -**Proverbs 10:21**

A Dangerous Game

•**Question:** "Is Russian roulette based on a desire to commit suicide?"

•**Answer:** Sometimes *yes*, sometimes *no*. Russian roulette is a life-threatening game in which players spin the cylinder of a revolver loaded with just one bullet before placing the muzzle to their heads and pulling the trigger. Typically, this deadly game is presented as a dare to challenge the bravery of others (who are usually "loaded" with alcohol!). However, a despondent, suicidal person could go through the motions of Russian roulette in a foolish attempt to "tempt fate" ... or "test God." ...

"Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. They ... drew near the gates of death." -**Psalms 107:17–18**