

The RICHES

OF GRACE

"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Robert W. Reed

March 2005

Suicide

*“But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying,
Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.”*

Acts 16:28

+ SELF - MURDER +

Suicide is indeed self-murder and is a very serious and grievous sin. Even though the word suicide is not in the Bible, the issue is definitely addressed. It is condemned by God, for it is a violation of the Holy Scripture. Self-murder has become an epidemic not only in the United States, but also around the world. More Americans die by their own hands than are murdered by someone else. This tragic problem in our society can only be solved from a Biblical standpoint. The alternative to suicide is to put our trust and confidence in the Lord and seek Him with our whole heart.

“It is a virtue to despise death. Not that we seek death, or of our own accord inflict it upon ourselves...For this would be a wicked and ungodly thing.” **Lactantius** (304-313). Quote taken from a dictionary of early Christian beliefs by David W. Bercot.

In the context of **Acts 16:28**, God stopped a suicide when He told the Philippian jailor through the apostle Paul, *“Do thyself no harm.”* We have the developing story in **verses 25-34** and the setting is about AD 50. Paul and Silas had been cast into prison. Around midnight as they prayed and sang praises to God, an earthquake opened the prison door. When the jailor awoke out of his sleep and thought the prisoners had escaped, he drew his sword to kill himself, for he knew he would be in trouble with the Roman authorities. But, God had other plans, for by the preaching of the Word of God through His ministers, the jailor found hope and was gloriously saved by the grace of God, receiving the peace of the Lord, **Acts 16:30-31**, *“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”* This suicide was stopped by God through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that brings hope, joy, peace, and the Holy Ghost.

Suicide Is A Sin Against God

Suicide is a violation of the sixth commandment in **Exodus 20:13**, thereby a sin against God, *“Thou shalt not kill.”* This commandment prohibits murder. It is just as wrong to kill oneself, as it is to kill another. Suicide is the intentional killing of oneself; homicide is the killing of another. The commandment, *“Thou shalt not kill”*, is based on the sanctity of life because man is created in the image of God (**Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 9:6, Acts 17:28-29, James 3:9**). It is the Lord that has given us physical life as well as eternal life (**John 10:10**). The issues of life and death are determined by the Lord (**Job 14:5**). Man’s birth, life and death are in the hands of the Lord (**Psalms 139:19**). It is the Lord that has established our life and the number of our years (**Psalms 90:10-12**); even the hairs of our head are numbered by God (**Matthew 10:30**).

Suicide actually usurps the sovereignty and providence of God and robs Him of His glory (**I Corinthians 10:13**). It shows a lack of trust in His salvation and deliverance (**Isaiah 40:28-31, 41:10-11, 26:3-4**). It also shows that one has no fear of God which is a result of unbelief (**Hebrews 3:12-19**). It shows a lack of thanksgiving to one's Creator. No one on earth has gone through more trials and tribulations than Job and he said, "*Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him*" (**Job 13:15**). This man lost everything and yet he trusted the Lord. Without any doubt, suicide is a sin against God and a violation of His commandments.

Suicide Is A Sin Against Self

According to **Acts 16:28**, suicide is doing harm to one's self. In **I Corinthians 6:19-20**, we clearly see that our physical body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, "*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*" We are commanded in **Romans 12:1-2**, to present our bodies as a living sacrifice (not a dead sacrifice). When someone takes their life, they are destroying God's property, for our body belongs to Him (**I Corinthians 3:16-17**). We have not the right to take our own life, for we are bought with a price, the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Physical life is a precious and valuable gift from God. We are stewards not only of our possessions, but also of our physical life (**I Corinthians 4:1-2, Luke 16:1-12**).

In **Matthew 22:39**, we are commanded by the Lord Jesus to love thy neighbor as thyself, "*And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" Suicide violates the principle of this commandment. If we are to love our neighbor as ourself, then it is obvious that we are to love ourselves. God has placed inside every person a desire for self-preservation, that is a love for one's self. This love is to

be extended to our neighbor. It is as wrong to take our own life, as it is to take the life of our neighbor. The commandment to love thy neighbor as thyself is seen in the story of the Good Samaritan in **Luke 10:25-37**. This man loved his neighbor by doing for him what he would do for himself.

Suicide Is A Sin Against Others

The Bible is clear that we are to love one another, consider one another, and be kind to one another. Suicide is a sin against our family, friends, and community. It devastates those who are affected by it. It causes pain, guilt, shame, anguish and even financial burdens. It also leaves a lot of unanswered questions with the survivors. Suicide is selfish in that the individual is only thinking of himself and ignoring others.

Please consider a list of those who committed suicide that is recorded in the Bible. All those listed were in rebellion against God, and those who commit suicide today are in bad company.

In **Judges 9:54**, Abimelech was motivated by pride in his suicide.

In **Judges 16:30**, Samson was motivated by revenge as he took his own life.

In **I Samuel 31:4**, Saul was motivated by fear in his suicide.

In **I Samuel 31:5**, Saul's armourbearer was motivated by loyalty and also took his own life.

In **II Samuel 17:23**, Ahithophel was motivated by failure when he hung himself.

In **I Kings 16:18-20**, Zimri was motivated by hopelessness in his suicide.

In **Matthew 27:5**, Judas Iscariot was motivated by guilt when he betrayed the Lord and went and hung himself.

Questions

1. Can a Christian commit suicide?

We cannot give anyone hope or assurance of heaven if they commit suicide, and at the same time, suicide is not the unpardonable sin. It is hard to overlook many years of service just because of one act of disobedience. Even though suicide leaves no room for repentance we know according to Scriptures that God is just in judgment. I do know of a believer who took his life because of being prescribed the wrong medication from the doctor. This medicine distorted his thinking ability. We also must remember that Satan is a liar and deceiver and desires to destroy each of us, **I Peter 5:8**, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*

2. Why do people commit suicide?

There are a number of reasons why people commit suicide. For example, alcoholism, drugs, bankruptcy, debt, bad health, guilt, mental disorder, hopelessness, depression, shame, crisis, humanistic teaching, demonic possession, rock music, etc. There are websites to show you how to kill yourself and in our society we hear a lot about assisted suicide. Satan has lied and deceived many on this issue over the years.

3. What is the solution to suicide?

The solution is to trust the Lord with all our heart at all times, **Isaiah 26:3-4**, *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.”* There have been many of God’s saints who have been discouraged, disappointed or depressed, and even expressed the desire to die, but turned to their Savior for help (**I Kings 19:4, Job 7:15-16, Jeremiah 20: 14-18,**

Psalm 13:1-4). They never let their circumstances bring them to self-murder. The Word of God is filled with joy, peace, hope, strength, salvation, and deliverance. We must not succumb to our circumstances, but come to the Lord, *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”* (Matthew 11:28-30)

Suicide Statistics

- Suicide was the eighth leading cause of death in 1997, with about 30,000 people taking their lives. This is compared to fewer than 19,000 homicides the same year. More Americans die by their own hands than are murdered by someone else.
- About 500,000 Americans are treated in emergency rooms each year for attempted suicide.
- Every 15 minutes there is a suicide in America, every minute of every day someone attempts suicide in the United States (one in 15 succeeds), that is over 30,000 a year.
- Over 5 million living Americans have attempted suicide.
- Women attempt suicide more often than men, but men are more successful because they usually use more effective ways like shooting or hanging. Women normally use less aggressive ways, like sleeping pills, etc.
- Women who have had an abortion are three times more likely to commit suicide than the general population.
- The suicide rate among young people is continually on the rise.

- In Russia, the suicide rate is among the highest in the world. It is 3 times higher than in the United States. (Alcohol is a major factor for all suicides in Russia).
- In China, suicide is the number one leading cause of death among young people ages 15-24. In the United States there are about 30,000 suicides a year, but in China there is 300,000 per-year, which is 10 times as many.
- In Japan, 1 in 1,000 commit suicide. They have had a very high rate of suicide for many years.
- Worldwide, the number one way of suicide is by hanging.

In conclusion, as children of God we must learn to listen to the Lord and ignore the flesh, world, and the Devil, **John 10:27**, “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*” The Holy Spirit must be our comforter (**John 14:16**) and the Scriptures must be our guide (**II Timothy 3:16**). For example, the book of Philippians is called by many, the psychology book of the Bible because it deals with right thinking and the joy of the Lord. I leave with you the text of **Proverbs 3:5-6**, “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*” **Amen.**



Victory Baptist Church
Pastor Robert W. Reed
14473 Bellingrath Road
P.O. Box 257
Coden, AL 36523

***“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”***