

Moral Issues: Suicide

(Job 3:11-26)

Introduction: 1. Robert Ingersoll, a 19th century infidel was once asked what he thought about suicide. Here in part, is his answer:

a. "In civilized life, there is a great struggle, great competition, and many fail...Death becomes his only friend. Death promises release from want, from hunger and pain, so the poor wretch lays down his burden, dashes it from his shoulders and falls asleep. To me, all this seems so very natural. The wonder is that so many endure and suffer to the natural end. That so many nurse the spark of life in huts and prisons, keep it and guard it through years of misery and want, support it by beggary, by eating the crust found in the gutter, and to whom it only gives days of weariness and nights of fear and dread. Why should the man, sitting amid the wreck of all he had, the loved ones dead, friends lost, seek to lengthen, to preserve his life? What can the future have for him?...Undoubtedly, there are many cases of perfectly justifiable suicide. Cases in which not to end life would be a mistake, sometimes almost a crime." (New York World, 1894).

2. In society, there are some matters we are not very comfortable talking about, thus we often don't, and simply hope the problem goes away.
3. I believe that suicide is one such issue.
4. Suicide is shocking. It leaves us speechless. It leaves us helpless. It leaves us embarrassed. And we often don't have the slightest idea of how to deal with it.
5. I'm convinced that suicide is closer to us than many may think.
 - a. In an assembly of this size, I'm sure that some of you have known someone who committed suicide.
 - b. And while the thought of suicide may never cross the minds of some of you here, chances are someone you know has entertained such thoughts.
6. So do we ignore it because it makes us uncomfortable, or do we equip ourselves to discuss it in light of what God's word teaches?

I. **Some Facts About Suicide** (*World Health Organization & Center For Disease Control*)

- A. In the year 2000, approximately one million people committed suicide.
- B. In the last 45 years, suicide rates have increased 45%.
- C. Suicide is the 8th leading cause of death for all Americans.
- D. Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among young people in the U.S.

I. **Some Reasons Why People Attempt Suicide**

- A. Some attempt suicide to fail.
 1. Often times a person will endanger their life, not really to lose it, but as a cry for help.
 2. Such desperate actions hopefully cause others to see the seriousness

- 3. of that person's distress.
- 3. Statistically, most suicide attempts fail. For every suicide, there are 20 attempted failures.
- B. To Escape Problems.
 - 1. Many see death as the only other option to a life full of problems.
 - 2. To them, death cannot be worse than the life they are living.
- C. Some Don't Feel They Belong.
 - 1. Regardless of how loved or how popular they are, some still don't feel like they belong.
 - 2. They feel their death will affect no one, and everything will be the same without them.
 - 3. They feel that no one will miss them.
- D. They Have No Hope Or Vision For A Brighter Future.
 - 1. Their attitude is, "What's the use? It will never get better."
 - 2. All they see is misery and so no reason to live.

III. Identifying Emotions Associated With Suicide

- A. Depression.
 - 1. (Job 5:7) Life is indeed full of problems.
 - 2. The reason depression leads some to suicide and not others, is some deal with their depression in positive ways while others feed it.
 - 3. Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-18).
 - a. Note how Elijah feeds his depression.
 - 1. He isolated himself (19:3-4,9).
 - 2. He forgot about God's deliverance (18:17-40).
 - 3. He indulged in self-pity (19:10,14).
 - 4. He became pessimistic (19:10,14).
 - b. Note how God tells him to relieve his depression.
 - 1. Get busy and do the Lord's work (19:15-16).
 - 2. His perception was wrong (19:18).
 - 4. Because of depression, many people have taken their own lives. They, like Elijah, incorrectly assessed their situation and failed to explore all the alternatives.
- B. Escape.
 - 1. To many who are suffering, death seems to be a welcome relief from life's pain.
 - 2. The uncertainties of death are chosen over the very real pains of life.
 - 3. Job (Job 3:11-26).
 - 4. Paul (Philippians 1:21-24).
- C. Pride.
 - 1. Suicide is sometimes a solution to people who have been humiliated or who in some way just cannot cope with their hurt pride.
 - 2. King Saul (1 Samuel 31:3-5).
 - 3. Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23).

IV. What Is The Answer To Suicide?

- A. While some may say this sounds trite, Jesus is the answer!
1. Notice how Jesus addresses the reasons people commit suicide.
 - a. Attention - You have God's attention (John 3:16).
 - b. Escape - God will bear your burdens (1 Peter 5:7).
 - c. Don't belong - God will adopt you as a son (Galatians 4:5).
 - d. No future - God has an inheritance for you (1 Peter 1:4).

- Conclusion:
1. Your life is precious.
 2. You were made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26).
 3. Consequently, God disapproves of any who would destroy the life he gave (Exodus 20:13; Matthew 5:21-22).
 4. Because of the many complexities involved in suicide, about which we are unequipped to assess (i.e. mental illness, chemical imbalance, etc.), we need to leave judgment to God.
 5. Rather than passing judgment on one's eternity, I believe we would do better to affirm the value of life and help people to better understand the preciousness of the gift God has given them.