

I. The Circumstances of Suicide Mentioned in the Bible

- A. Rebellious Saul and his armor bearer (1 Samuel 31:3-5) – The battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him, and he was badly wounded by the archers. Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, “Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and mistreat me.” But his armor-bearer would not, for he feared greatly. Therefore, Saul took his own sword and fell upon it. And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died with him.
- B. Proud Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23) – When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey and went off home to his own city. He set his house in order and hanged himself, and he died and was buried in the tomb of his father.
- C. Murderous Zimri (1 Kings 16:18) – And when Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house over him with fire and died.
- D. Judas Iscariot, betrayer of the sinless Son of God (Matthew 27:3-5) – Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” They said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself.
- E. Assisted suicide of blood-thirsty, proud Abimelech (Judges 9:53-54) – And a certain woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull. Then he called quickly to the young man his armor-bearer and said to him, “Draw your sword and kill me, lest they say of me, ‘A woman killed him.’” And his young man thrust him through, and he died.

II. The Categories and Core Issues of Suicide

- A. **Category #1: The External Pressures of Life** – One is seeking to escape the difficulties of life resulting in pursuing suicide. Suicides in which one flees the present and/or inevitable sorrows of life over which one has no control. One chooses to respond in a sinful manner to these present and/or inevitable sorrows in the form of suicide. The act

of suicide displays ingratitude, contempt of the Lord's gift of life, defiance, impatience, pride, rebellion against God's design and a lack of genuine hope. Here are some of the core issues that lead people to Category #1, *The External Pressures of Life Suicide*:

1. Facing mental or physical pain or disability (e.g. terminal disease or life-long crippling injury, resulting in choosing to take their own life)
2. Refusing to continue to live in a society which will not change to suit his/her political agenda, resulting in choosing to take their own life
3. Refusing to live with dishonor, resulting in choosing to take their own life
4. Refusing to live without the company of another, resulting in choosing to take their own life
5. Refusing to live in a less-than-ideal world that brings disappointments, denials, and devastations, resulting in choosing to take their own life
6. Rebellious Saul and his armor bearer, murderous Zimri, and blood-thirsty, proud Abimelech are all examples of suicides committed to flee present physical and mental issues, thereby demonstrating rebellion against God's design and a lack of genuine hope.

B. Category #2: *The Internal Pains of the Heart* – One is seeking to escape the heart pains of unrepentant sin resulting in pursuing suicide. In this category of suicide, one is seeking to flee a guilty conscience and other conditions in one's heart that are manifesting as a result of unaddressed sin in one's internal heart and external actions over which one has control. One chooses to respond in a sinful manner (suicide) to escape a noisy soul filled with a sense of guilt, the fear of condemnation, and the negative emotions and pains of the heart that manifest from present active sin that one is harboring via thought, word, deed, or desire. Here are some of the core issues that lead people to Category #2, *The Internal Pains of the Heart Suicide*:

1. One may be harboring sin via thought, word, deed, or desire towards others and is experiencing so much guilt and fear of condemnation from it that, instead of confession and repentance of the matter, one chooses to commit suicide.
2. One may be harboring sin via thought, word, deed, or desire towards their present situation (and ultimately God) and is experiencing so much guilt and fear of condemnation from it that, instead of confession and repentance of the matter, one chooses to commit suicide.
3. One may be so depressed as a result of unaddressed sin that they choose to commit suicide.
4. One may be so weighed down by symptoms of various mental disorders that are occurring due to unaddressed sin that they choose to commit suicide.
5. Judas Iscariot, betrayer of the sinless Son of God and proud Ahithophel are examples of suicides that were committed as a means of fleeing one's guilty conscience that resulted from unrepentant sin.

(Adapted from the book *The Heart of Man and The Mental Disorders* by Rich Thomson)

III. The Common Signs to Consider that One May Attempt Suicide

- A. Talking about suicide (for example, making statements such as "I'm going to kill myself," "I wish I were dead" or "I wish I hadn't been born")
- B. Getting the means to take their own life, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills
- C. Being preoccupied with death, dying or violence
- D. Doing risky or self-destructive things, such as using drugs or driving recklessly
- E. Giving away belongings or getting affairs in order when there's no other logical explanation for doing this
- F. Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again

“Warning signs aren't always obvious, and they may vary from person to person. Some people make their intentions clear, while others keep suicidal thoughts and feelings secret. Suicidal thoughts have many causes. Most often, suicidal thoughts are the result of feeling like you can't cope when you're faced with what seems to be an overwhelming life situation. If you don't have hope for the future, you may mistakenly think suicide is a solution. You may experience a sort of tunnel vision, where in the middle of a crisis you believe suicide is the only way out.”

(Signs and info taken directly from the Mayo Clinic website, Suicide and Suicidal Thoughts: Symptoms and Causes <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/suicide/symptoms-causes/syc-20378048>)

IV. The Counsel for Suicide

- A. Identify the category of suicide you are dealing with. This helps you determine if the core issue is 1) *The External Pressures of Life*— one is seeking to escape the difficulties of life resulting in considering suicide or 2) *The Internal Pains of the Heart*— one is seeking to escape the heart pains of unrepentant sin resulting in considering suicide.
- B. Consider the character, precepts, promises, and experiences of Jesus Christ our Lord and connect it to your present circumstances.
- C. Distinguish between what you can and cannot control.
- D. Identify the neutral, loving, and unloving actions and responses to people and circumstances.

- E. Trace the neutral, loving, and unloving responses back to the desires of your heart that are influencing your responses.
- F. Address the condition of your conscience in relation to your responses to people and circumstances, as well as the desires that are or have become sinful in your heart.
- G. Identify where you stand with Jesus Christ. Do you belong to Him or not?
- H. If you belong to Jesus Christ, then renounce, repent, renew, and replace unloving responses and desires with loving responses and desires, which would address the condition of your conscience and bring peace of mind.
- I. If you recognize you do not belong to Jesus Christ, acknowledge you are sinner in need of the Lord Jesus Christ to save you from your sin condition. Repent of your sin, accept and embrace the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ on behalf of your sin. Embrace your peace with God now that you have been reconciled to a right standing and right relationship with God as a result of repenting of your sin and accepting and embracing the person and work of Jesus Christ on your behalf.

V. The Conclusion for Suicide

- A. “God is the giver of life. He gives, and He takes away (Job 1:21). Suicide, the taking of one’s own life, is ungodly because it rejects God’s gift of life. No man or woman should presume to take God’s authority upon themselves to end his or her own life.”
(What Does the Bible Say about Suicide, <https://www.gotquestions.org/suicide-Bible-Christian.html>)
- B. “People don’t kill themselves when they are joyful and at peace but rather when there is conflict brewing within and they have no hope that it can be resolved.”
(Overcoming Depression and Suicide, <https://www.thechristianworldview.org/topic-overcoming-depression-suicide-rebroadcast/>)
- C. “In order to give a wise answer to someone contemplating suicide, we must understand how the Bible describes the human condition and how we respond to life in a fallen world. Suicide begins long before someone actually takes his own life. (Prov. 13:12) We often describe it like this: Disappointment leads to discontentment, discontentment leads to despair and despair leads to destructive choices.”
(A Christian Response to Suicide or Suicidal Thoughts Part 1, <https://biblicalcounselingcenter.org/christian-response-suicide/>)
- D. People who want to commit suicide have come to the right conclusions about life but the wrong the solution (Dr. Jim Berg). They have come to realize that life without God is not worth living given the condition of the world. However, the solution is not to take

their own lives but rather give their lives to our Lord and Savior and be guided by our Lord and Savior who can give them rest. God will give peace to both Unbeliever (peace with God through justification) and Believer (peace of God through sanctification) if they come to Him, learn of Him, and abide in Him accordingly in lieu of considering suicide.

“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” (Psalm 34:18-19)