

Shattered

Saying No to Suicide and Yes to Hope

By
Bob Yandian

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Chapter 1

Can a Christian Commit Suicide?

A common question that has been asked over the years, particularly among believers is: *Do Christians commit suicide?* Although this seems like an oxymoron, sadly the answer is yes. What would drive a person with the very life of God dwelling inside to take their own life and leave this world prematurely? Is suicide found in the Bible? Where does a person who commits suicide go after they die? The answer to all of these questions can be found in God's Word.

Living by the Ups and Downs of Life

The children of Israel wanted a king to rule them so they would be like the other nations of the world. Saul was the first king of Israel. He was tall in stature and very handsome. He *looked* like a king and because of his appearance the people thought he would be an excellent king. But what a person looks like outwardly is insignificant. What really matters is what is in a person's heart. In 1 Samuel 16:7, God addressing Samuel said, *"...for the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* You may not think of yourself as kingly material, but you are! God made you a king! Aren't you glad He looks past the outward appearance and looks at the heart?

It is important to note that Saul was a believer. In the Old Testament, believers weren't called *Christians* because they didn't know about the name of Christ, but their faith and trust was in the Lord. Saul was not just a king; he was a prophet. The gift of prophesy would operate through him, but there were many occasions in Saul's life when he was carnal. He seemed to live in a cycle. He would become carnal, would recognize his carnality, ask God to forgive him, and finally get back in fellowship with God again. But then, a challenging situation would arise and instead of running to God or dealing with mistakes or sin in his own life, he would blame others and would end up in carnality once again.

Maybe that's where you are. Or maybe you used to be that way, one day you were carnal and the next you were spiritual, the next you were carnal again and you just bounced back and forth in your life. You would ask God to forgive you for what you had done, make a "vow" you would never do it again, and then find yourself once again doing what you "vowed" you would never do! But the day finally arrived when you embraced God's Word and began to grow up. Saul was missing the power of God's Word in his life. He was living by his emotions, by his feelings.

The Suicide of Saul

"Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers. Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised

men come and thrust me through and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore, Saul took a sword and fell on it. And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him. So Saul, his three sons, his armorbearer, and all his men died together that same day." (1 Samuel 31:1-6)

This passage describes the suicide of King Saul. He first asked his armor bearer to kill him and when he refused, Saul committed suicide by falling on his own sword. What would drive Saul, the first king of Israel, to prematurely end his life? Saul took his eyes off God and put them on the circumstances he was facing. His three sons had been killed by the Philistines, the battle against Saul became "fierce," and he was severely wounded. What Saul spoke to his armor bearer reveals the root of what drove him to kill himself. In verse 4 Saul says, *"Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me."* Saul was in great FEAR of what the enemy would do to him when they found him. As was Saul's pattern of behavior, rather than looking to the Lord for his deliverance, Saul looked to a man, and finally to himself.

David's Response to Pressure

By contrast, David faced similar circumstances before he became king of Israel.

"So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. (1 Samuel 30:3-4)

David and his army had just returned from battle, had traveled for days without food and as a result, were physically weak, only to return home to find their city burned to the ground, their wives and children taken captive by the enemy, and all of their possessions taken as spoils of war. Imagine these mighty men—warriors—being so discouraged they wept until they had no more strength to weep! David was in great distress because his men were so angry and grieved they were going to turn all of their emotion against David and stone him to death! It wasn't even his enemies that wanted to kill him; it was his own men! In such a discouraging situation David may have been tempted to think, *Fine, just stone me to death and this mess will all be over. God can find someone else to take Saul's place on the throne. I'm sure Heaven will be a lot better than this place!* But instead, David chose to strengthen himself in the Lord. Unlike Saul, David took his eyes *off* the circumstances surrounding him and put them *on* God, the Faithful One, who had delivered David so many times before!

God Never Condones Suicide

Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. However, oftentimes people begin to think there is no way out of their situation. Rather than “*casting down imaginations*,” filling their mind with the Word, and looking to God, they buy the lies Satan is whispering in their ear and receive the ultimate lie that the only way out of their problem is to commit suicide.

I want you to notice something important about Saul’s suicide: His suicide led to the suicide of his armor bearer. Had Saul looked to God for his deliverance, he would have seen the fulfillment of God’s plan for his life and for the nation of Israel. *God’s plan was not for Saul to commit suicide!* You may be thinking, *Yes, but he was surrounded by the enemy!* Haven’t we all been surrounded at one time or another? *He was outnumbered.* Haven’t we all been? *Yes, but the odds were against him.* Welcome to everyday Christian life. Think about Moses. Think about Abraham. Think about Joshua. We can go down the list of those that were greatly outnumbered by the enemy, but God delivered them—every one of them!

Ahithophel

Can a Christian commit suicide? Yes. Nearly every account of suicide mentioned in the Bible involves a Christian—a believer.

First, as detailed, there was Saul and his armor bearer. In 2 Samuel 17:23 we have Ahithophel. Ahithophel was David’s right-hand man. He was his war counselor and happened to be Bathsheba’s father. Ahithophel worked right beside David—worked in his kingdom, worked in his government. Later, he became involved in the rebellion of Absalom against David, Absalom’s father, and one day realized he was fighting on the wrong side, went home, put his house in order, and hung himself.

“Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father’s tomb.” (2 Samuel 17:23)

Samson

Then we have Samson in Judges 16:29-30. Samson had been called by God from before His birth to begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. But Samson always lived on the edge of his calling. He flirted with the world, lived by physical impulses and emotions, and eventually married Delilah, an ungodly woman who betrayed his trust and caused him to be taken captive by the Philistines. The Philistines gouged out Samson’s eyes—he was completely blind. One day, the Philistines gathered together to offer a sacrifice to Dagon, their god, and to rejoice over the fact that Samson, their enemy, had been delivered into their hands. They brought Samson out from prison into the coliseum to make a mockery of him. Samson decided to take revenge on the Philistines for blinding him by committing suicide and taking as many Philistines with him as he could.

“And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. Then Samson said, “Let me

die with the Philistines!” And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.” (Judges 16:29-30)

Did Samson fulfill his call to destroy the Philistines? Yes, but not in the way God had intended.

Zimri

“And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king’s house, and burnt the king’s house over him with fire, and died, For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin.” (1 Kings 16:18-19)

Zimri was the fifth king of the divided kingdom of Israel. He took the throne by murdering his predecessor, King Elah. Like Saul, Zimri was in fear for his life. He didn’t want to be taken by the enemy. He chose instead to commit suicide by burning the house down around him and dying in the fire he had set. Could Zimri have repented? Yes. Could this have changed the outcome of his life? Yes.

Judas

Matthew 27:3-5 records the suicide of an unbeliever, Judas.

“Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”

And they said, “What is that to us? You see to it!”

Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.” (Matthew 27:3-5)

Judas had walked with Jesus, talked with Jesus, and had been taught by Jesus for three years! Yet, he betrayed the Son of God. He hanged himself because he saw himself as he was *without* Jesus Christ, never having accepted Him as his Savior, and realized the hopelessness of his true condition without Him. Out of fear and guilt Judas hung himself. Would it have been possible for Judas, even after his betrayal of the Son of God, to receive Jesus and repent of his sin of rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? Yes. But *he did not*, and life without Jesus is truly hopeless.

The Philippian Jailer

"But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:25-31)

Imagine having the responsibility of the oversight of an entire prison and waking one night from a dead sleep to find every prison door wide open and the chains of every prisoner loosed. Just imagine what could have been going through this jailer's mind: *Every prisoner has fled! They were my responsibility and they are all gone and I didn't even wake up to hear them leaving! What will my superiors say? My career is ruined! My reputation is ruined and the reputation of my entire household! I have no future!* I'm sure this man was filled with fear and hopelessness about his future and the only solution he could see was to end his life. But just as he was about to put his sword through himself, Paul cried out to him and shouted, "Don't kill yourself. We're all here!" There is always hope in God! The jailer asked, "What must I do to be spared—to be saved?" The answer was simple: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.* Whether or not you are a Christian, Jesus is the One who can turn around the situation in your life that seems so hopeless. The devil may be whispering, "It's hopeless," other people may be telling you, "It's hopeless. There is no solution." TAKING YOUR LIFE IS NOT THE ANSWER. Jesus is the answer! He is your hope!

Chapter 2

Saul

I want to go back to Saul and dig deeper into what led him to commit suicide. We are given more insight in 1 Samuel 28 into what led up to Saul's suicide on Mt. Gilboa.

"When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly."
(1 Samuel 28:5)

Saul was terrified. He was looking at the number of the enemy troops, their mass, and their size. There had been times in his life when he had depended on the Lord and instances when he had seen God bring him through, but more often, Saul focused on circumstances surrounding him. He reminds me so much of his ancestors, the children of Israel. They traveled through the wilderness for forty years. One minute they would be shouting, "Praise God! Hallelujah! God will deliver!" And a few minutes later, they would be lamenting, "What are we going to do?" One minute they would be dancing, playing the tambourine, and rejoicing that God had cast the enemy into the sea. The next minute they would be complaining about no water and wishing they had died back in the land of Egypt.

They were up and down, back and forth, and Saul was the same way. In the wilderness, the children of Israel kept looking to Moses as their strength. Saul kept looking to others for his strength. I hope you attend church, but your pastor is not the strength of your life. Do you understand that? GOD IS THE STRENGTH OF YOUR LIFE. Saul was surrounded by men who put their trust in God and were constantly encouraging him to put his trust in God.

There are times we need each other. There are times we all fail and are helped by the encouragement of others, but we should not allow others to become a constant support for us. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be our Helper. The Word of God will strengthen us. I once had a woman say to me, "Pastor, if you could just come home with me and help me live the Christian life." I responded, "I've got to go home with *me* and help *me* live the Christian life!" But the good news is the same Holy Spirit that goes home with me goes home with you! We should lean on the Holy Spirit. Some things can be delegated to others, but you cannot delegate your relationship with Jesus Christ! You cannot delegate your walk with God to somebody else, constantly picking up the phone and begging, "Please, help me!" Saul had depended on Samuel. He had depended on David. But he had never really personally depended on God. Saul was now at a point in his life where he needed help. So often, Samuel the prophet had told Saul where to walk and what to do, but Samuel died. David was no longer around to play the harp to chase the evil spirits away from Saul. In fact, David was running from Saul because his life had been threatened. Saul no longer had anyone to run to and he was in a dilemma about what to do.

And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim (by lots) or by the prophets. (1 Samuel 28:6)

Ears Closed to God's Voice

This verse says *Saul inquired of the Lord*, but he did not receive a reply. What was the problem? The Bible says, *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"* (Psalm 66:18). Even if Saul had received a reply, he would not have listened to what God had to say to him. His ears were closed. His mind was made up. But this didn't mean others around Saul weren't hearing from God. There were many people in Saul's life that had been concerned about him. Samuel had been concerned about Saul. David had been concerned about Saul. His son, Jonathan, had been concerned about him. He had other family and friends who were concerned about him. They were praying and *they were hearing from God*. They were giving Saul wise counsel, but *Saul refused to listen*. Eventually, Saul began to blame God for his inability to hear.

The Witch of Endor

"Then Saul said to his servants, 'Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.'"

And his servants said to him, 'In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor.'"

So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, 'Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you.' (1 Samuel 28:7-8)

Saul convinced himself that he was justified in consulting with a witch because he believed God wasn't listening to him. Saul blamed God. Instead of saying, "It's my fault" he was saying "God, it's *Your* fault."

Although God's mercy endures forever and He is ever ready to listen to your cries, there are certain choices we can make that prevent Him from responding. The road to victory begins when we start looking at ourselves and begin to acknowledge, "You know what, God's not the problem. I'm going to examine myself and see what is blocking me from hearing from God in my life." But no matter what the problem, it is not a problem God can't fix! It is not a problem prayer can't turn around! It's not a problem that forgiveness cannot solve. It's not a problem that pulling your fingers out of your ears to listen can't remedy!

"Then the woman said to him, 'Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?'"

And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, 'As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.'"

Then the woman said, 'Whom shall I bring up for you?'"

And he said, 'Bring up Samuel for me.'"

When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!"

And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?"

And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth."

So he said to her, "What is his form?"

And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle." And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down." (1 Samuel 28:9-14)

Isn't it interesting this woman screamed when she saw Samuel? Why did she scream? Why did she cry out? Why did she suddenly recognize Saul? The reason the woman was so startled was because prior to this time she had seen familiar spirits manifest and wasn't bothered by them in any way. She screamed because this was the first time someone's actual human spirit had appeared. When she saw Samuel rise from the dead, it was so overwhelming she screamed out. I personally believe, God *allowed* Samuel to come up from Paradise on this day. There was nothing the witch had done to bring him up because she really didn't expect Samuel to appear.

Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore, I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do." (1 Samuel 28:15)

Samuel had returned from Paradise—a place of quiet, a place of peace—and asked, "Why have you disturbed me from this place of quiet to bring me back here?" Aren't you glad we're going to go to heaven one day? Aren't you glad it's a place of peace and quiet? *"And Saul answered, I am deeply distressed"* (verse 15). Saul said, "I am very distressed." When we are troubled and overwhelmed, where does the Bible say we are to go? Psalm 62:1 says, *"Truly my soul silently waits for God; from Him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved."* But where did Saul go? He went looking for Samuel.

Saul's Insecurities

As I mentioned earlier, Saul committed suicide because of fear. What led up to his suicide? First, Saul was *small in his own eyes*. When Samuel approached Saul about being king, Saul's response was, *"Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?" (1 Samuel 9:21)*

The reason the people chose Saul to be king was because he was tall. In 1 Samuel 9:2 we are told, *"...from his shoulders and upward he was taller than any of the people."* When the people looked across the crowd, Saul's head could be seen above everyone else's! But just because Saul was tall didn't mean he *thought* "tall." Saul was insecure, regardless of his stature.

I once read an article about the fifty most beautiful people chosen by a particular magazine. The interesting thing was in every case when asked, "Do you think there is anything wrong with your appearance?" The answer would inevitably be "Yes." These "beautiful people" would mention a mole they didn't like, or that their ears weren't even, or their nose was crooked. The list went on and on. Everyone else had voted them as the "most beautiful," but because they had grown up looking at themselves in the mirror, they were able to see their imperfections.

That is exactly what happened with Saul. He began to look at himself, focus on his imperfections, which everyone has, and thought to himself, "Well, I'm just small. I'm a nobody." The Bible says Saul was small in his own eyes, but it never says he was small in God's eye. You're never small in God's eyes. The question is: Whose eyes are you looking through—yours or God's?

Saul's Fear

Saul also feared the people. In fact, he feared what people would think more than he feared God. Many of the decisions Saul made were because he feared what people would think of him. We live in a nation like that. Many decisions are made out of Washington, DC based on what people think—not on what's right or wrong. Which way is the wind of public opinion blowing at the moment? What does the latest census say? That's the kind of leader Saul was, and it got him into a mess! It doesn't really matter what people think; it matters what *God* thinks.

Saul's Jealousy

Next, Saul was jealous of those around him who, in his estimation, seemed better than he, and David was one of them. The people of Israel liked David. During his time with Saul, David suddenly became a hero, because he depended on God. Saul resented the women singing, *"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands!"* (1 Samuel 18:7) Rather than rejoicing with the people over the victory, Saul began to compare himself with David. He became so jealous he began to try to murder David. He wanted David dead! Rather than gaining wisdom about what made David great and then applying it to his own life, he became more and more jealous. Saul was easily threatened by the greatness of others around him. He never developed a close, personal relationship with God and greatly depended on others to obtain what he should have obtained for himself. Saul depended on Samuel for guidance and he depended on David for deliverance from demons. Beneath Saul's strong and handsome exterior beat a heart of great insecurity. Saul struggled with insecurity all of his life and Samuel was constantly encouraging Saul to look to the Lord and learn to listen to His voice for himself.

"Then Samuel said: 'So why do you ask me, seeing the Lord has departed from you and has become your enemy? And the Lord has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the Lord has

torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day. Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.” (1 Samuel 28:16-19)

Our Dependence Should Be on the Lord

God does not want you to depend on others for everything. He wants you to depend on Him. Every child of God needs to develop his or her own spiritual walk with the Lord. Saul failed to develop his own intimate relationship with God and, as a result, depended on others to hear from God for him. Saul eventually became an enemy of God. In 1 Samuel 28:16, Samuel questioned Saul, *"Why are you asking me what to do since God has departed from you and has become your enemy?"* You mean a Christian can become an enemy of God? Yes. James tells us friendship with the world makes us the enemy of God. He didn't say we are no longer a child of God; he says we become an enemy of God. God doesn't want us to be friends with the world. He wants us to be friends with Him. What did Jesus say about friends? "I know you're my friends because you listen to what I have to say. I listen to what you have to say." Friends talk with each other and listen to one another. God wants to be that friend that sticks closer than a brother. In fact, He promised He would be! But how often do we run to the world for advice? We'll listen to some famous television celebrity or doctor because *"Surely, with the success they've had, they know!"* When God is saying, *"I'm wiser and greater than that TV celeb!"* God wasn't opposed to people in the Old Testament being treated by physicians, but He was upset when they consulted with doctors *before* they went to Him! God has placed doctors in this earth. God has placed counselors in this earth. But He desires that we would consult Him *FIRST*, before we consult any man or woman, even if they are qualified.

Saul turned to witchcraft for his answers. Again, he blamed God. *God doesn't hear me. God won't answer my prayers so I'm going to go to a witch.*

There are many reasons given in the Word of God for us blocking God from hearing our prayers, but none of them are irreversible. We can all admit there have been times in our lives when we have turned from God, but the moment we got back on course and repented, God heard and responded our prayers. Saul reached a place in his life where he was filled with fear, but instead of turning to God, he turned away from Him and toward the world.

Chapter 3

Common Myths Surrounding Suicide

1. Suicide is an Unpardonable Sin

There is nothing in the Word of God that teaches suicide is an unpardonable sin. If a sinner commits suicide, they will go to hell because they have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, *not* because they committed suicide. However, if a Christian commits suicide, they will go to heaven because they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Christians often become very upset when I mention that a Christian who commits suicide goes to heaven. The most common remark is "You're just giving people a license to commit suicide." No, I'm not. Many years ago, Kenneth Hagin Senior said something I will never forget. He said, "Many people that commit suicide are sick in their mind. You can be sick in your body and go to heaven. Why can't you be sick in your mind and go to heaven?" Sickness does not keep you out of the kingdom of God. Whether a person is suffering from mental illness or they have become so overwhelmed they can see no other way out of their circumstances than ending their own life, if they have accepted Jesus, they will go to heaven.

Often, family members who have been left behind suffer guilt and torment because they believe their born again loved one has gone to hell because of committing suicide. Is it likely Jesus is correcting them for cutting off God's plan for their life? Yes. Is God pleased that one of His children ended their life prematurely? No. But I want to assure you father, mother, brother, sister, friend—your loved one is in heaven and one day you will be reunited for all eternity!

Jesus prophesied of a day when men's hearts would fail them for fear of what's coming. We are living in that day. You and I know we can turn on the news and there's very little good news left to report. The media leans toward reporting the negative because that seems to draw people in and attract more attention. One thing that is *not* being reported is the number of young people today who are committing suicide. But anyone who works with young people knows suicide is a problem.

I recently watched a preview for a new weekly television show that is supposed to be airing. The preview simply showed a girl standing on a bridge and then diving off the bridge to commit suicide. It seemed to depict that since others have committed suicide, suicide might be a viable option for solving life's problems. But according to the Word of God, **SUICIDE IS NOT A VIABLE OPTION.**

God always had an answer for anything we may be facing in our lives. It just comes back to a choice. We need to get our eyes off ourselves and our problems and get them back on to the Lord. We need to realize God has a plan for our life and it is a plan for good and not evil.

In 1 Samuel 28:19, Samuel told Saul, "*Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And **tomorrow you and your sons will be with me.** The Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.*" (1 Samuel 28:19). Did you catch that? Samuel said, "*You and your sons will be with me.*" Where was Samuel? He was in paradise and he knew what was going to happen. God knew what was going to happen. Saul's sons

would be killed by the Philistines, and Saul himself would commit suicide. He said, "*You and your sons will be with me.*"

After his death, Saul went to the place where Samuel was even though he committed suicide. This should bring comfort to those who have lost someone who was born again to suicide. If you have lost a loved one to suicide who had accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they are in the presence of God. But just because a believer who commits suicide goes to heaven, THIS IS NOT A LICENSE NOR AM I SAYING IT IS ACCEPTABLE TO TAKE YOUR OWN LIFE.

2. Suicide is Inherited

This is *not* true. The tendency to commit suicide is *not* inherited. You may inherit personality traits—good and bad. There may be areas in your life that you think, *Oh, my God! My dad did this. My mom acted just like this.* Perhaps certain traits you thought you had avoided suddenly popped up in your life. There are even certain diseases that may be associated with the past. But since you've been redeemed, you have authority over sickness and disease. You have authority over those things that you may have been born into. The good news is, once you are born again, you have been created by Jesus Christ and God has given you authority through the name of Jesus Christ to overcome.

There have been teachings in the past on the subject of generational curses. My personal opinion is that too much has been attributed to generational curses. Once you are born again, you become a member of God's family! I can't find any sickness in God's family. I can't find any depression in God's family. I can't find sickness in God's family. I can't find any of these things people oftentimes say are generational curses. However, there are certain behaviors we learned as we grew up. Suicide may be a learned behavior passed down from those before you who have responded to problems and pressures in life by taking their own life. But let me pose a question: Just because divorce has been in your family, does that mean you have to get a divorce? The answer is no. Divorce, like suicide, is a decision. Just as you can decide divorce is not an option for solving problems in your marriage, you can also decide you will never consider suicide as an option for solving problems you face in life. You can say to yourself, "God always has a plan and it is a good plan. I can come through this and God will show me exactly what to do!"

There are certain things we can inherit in life, but suicide is not inherited. Suicide is a sin, and Christians do not inherit sin. Suicide can be a learned behavior, much like divorce. But like divorce, suicide is a choice. Sin is a choice.

3. Everyone Who Commits Suicide is Mentally Ill

Although this may be true in some cases, it is not true in every case. Suicide is usually a wrong reaction to fear and/or depression. We've had a number of people in the church commit suicide during my years as pastor and I'm just going to be as blunt as possible on this in love. SUICIDE IS SELFISH. SUICIDE IS SELF-CENTERED. When a person commits suicide, they are not thinking about the friends, family, spouse, or children they are leaving behind. God did not put us in this earth without an answer and without hope. The Christian person who commits

suicide has turned from the answer and turned from hope. Hope resides on the inside of every child of God if we'll just give it place. Again, there is no problem so great God does not have a solution available to us. God always has the way of escape! He *is* the way of escape!

4. People Who Talk About Committing Suicide Never Do

This is truly a myth. Eighty percent of people who have committed suicide gave others around them warnings about what they were going to do. They were reaching out for help. If they felt God wouldn't hear them, they were reaching out to friends or family for help. I encourage you, be sensitive to those who mention thoughts of suicide to you. Do what you can to direct them to the Word or to someone who can help them.

5. Never Talk About Suicide to a Deeply Depressed Person

This is another fallacy. Talking with someone can bring a powerful healing, especially when you talk to them about the things of God, the scripture, the power of the name of Jesus, and the hope we have in Him. These things can be a great deterrent to committing suicide. When we are in contact with people that are depressed who can't seem to overcome their depression, we need to tell them about Jesus who came anointed with the Holy Spirit to bring healing to the captive. Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted and we have many brokenhearted people around us today.

Did Jesus have broken hearted people in His day? Yes. I love His opening greeting to so many people he encountered. The first thing Jesus would often say is, "*Fear not.*" Did you catch that? *Fear is a choice.* In nearly every case found in the Word of God where a person committed suicide, it all stemmed from fear, and *fear is a choice.*

Joy is also a choice. "*Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning*" (Psalms 30:5). I *choose* today to have the joy of the Lord. I exchange the garment of heaviness for the garment of praise. The spirit of heaviness will be gone from me. I *choose* to put on the garment of praise. Ephesians and Colossians tells us to *put off* the old man and *put on* the new. The *putting off* and *putting on* is a comparison to clothing. We take off old clothing and put on new clothing. It is a conscious choice to do so.

The Word of God tells us that what we think about is what we are. A person who commits suicide is wrapped up in the thinking, *This person doesn't like me. These circumstances are wrong. I'm so overwhelmed.* You need to focus your attention back on the Lord and meditate on "*The Lord is the strength of my life... Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear*" (Psalms 27:1 & 3) These are words David spoke to himself, words found in the Word of God that we also speak.

6. A Deeply Committed Christian Would Never Commit Suicide

Another myth is that a deeply committed Christian would never commit suicide. I want to look at a deeply committed believer named Jeremiah.

"Sing to the Lord! Praise the Lord! For He has delivered the life of the poor from the hand of evildoers.

Cursed be the day in which I was born! Let the day not be blessed in which my mother bore me!

Let the man be cursed who brought news to my father, saying, "A male child has been born to you!" Making him very glad. And let that man be like the cities which the Lord overthrew and did not relent; let him hear the cry in the morning and the shouting at noon, because he did not kill me from the womb, that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb always enlarged with me.

Why did I come forth from the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" (Jeremiah 20:13-18)

What Jeremiah is simply saying is there have been times he's praised the Lord, but there have also been times when circumstances got so bad he regretted the day he was ever born. We've all been there at times. We've all looked around and said, "You know, it would have been better if I had never been born!" Or, "It would be so wonderful if Jesus would come today and get me out of this big mess!" Then you fervently pray for the rapture. And ten minutes later, "Well, praise the Lord. I love you, Jesus." We've all been there, haven't we? We've all been swinging one way and then another—up and down in our emotions. But it all comes back to this: Where do you live? Do you live in the depression, or do you live in the joy? Do you live in the sorrow, or do you live in the rejoicing?

Jeremiah had to make that decision. We have all come to that place where the pressures of life have come against us, and we are feeling depressed, but we must make the decision not to stay there. Even the most difficult situation can come against the most devout believer, and he can become overcome with despair. We need each other. These are the times we need each other. These are the times when one member suffers, we all suffer together.

Chapter Four

Winning the Battle Over Thoughts

Think on These

Things! I cannot emphasize enough the importance of battling the lies and negative thoughts of the enemy with God's Word—speaking the Word and meditating the Word. The Bible gives us excellent instruction on what we are to think on.

*“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things.**”* (Philippians 4:8 KJV)

*“And now, dear brothers and sisters, let me say one more thing as I close this letter. **Fix your thoughts** on what is true and honorable and right. **Think about** things that are pure and lovely and admirable. **Think about** things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”* (Philippians 4:8 NLT)

*“Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by **filling your minds and meditating on** things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious - the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse.”* (Philippians 4:8 MSG)

When depression is trying to overwhelm your mind and emotions (your soul), you need to make the choice to speak to your soul. Three times in Psalms 42 and 43 the psalmist does just that. In verses 5 and 11 of Psalm 42 and in verse 5 of Psalm 43 he writes:

“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.”

The writer of these Psalms is speaking to his soul and asking, “Why are you depressed? Why are you so sad and disturbed? Soul, hope in God! Praise God! The joy of the Lord is my strength. I command depression and oppression to leave in the name of Jesus!” If you will do as the psalmist did, your countenance will change from that of sadness to joy!

Casting Down Imaginations

“...Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

“With these weapons we break down every proud argument that keeps people from knowing God. With these weapons we conquer their rebellious ideas, and we teach them to obey Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:5 NLT)

“We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:5 MSG)

How do we cast down the imaginations that try to loom larger than God’s Word, His thoughts in our mind? We speak God’s truth and not the lies the devil is trying to plant in our mind. We can speak to thoughts that are contrary to God’s Word and command them to line up with God’s Word.

If the devil is whispering, “You’ll never amount to anything,” you can truthfully say, “God has a plan for my life and it is a good plan. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I am Your workmanship created for good works!”

You can also use the weapon of praise and worship when the devil is bombarding your mind with thoughts. As you choose to praise and worship God, your mind will begin to focus on God and not on the lies the enemy is speaking or on incorrect thoughts that may be flooding your mind.

God’s Word is the answer to changing our wrong thinking to God’s thoughts and dispelling every lie of the enemy.

Chapter Five

The God of Hope

Common Reasons for an Uncommon Response

We all experience pressure and attacks in our lives, but there are certain experiences in life that Satan has used to drive people to end their lives prematurely. We need to be sensitive to those around us and be aware of these weapons of the enemy. Following are some common reasons people have ended their lives prematurely:

1. Great Loss

The devastating loss of a spouse or romantic interest, a child, friend or family member, the breakup of a family, financial ruin, or the guilt and despair over a loved one who had committed suicide. People have been known to end their lives over these situations.

2. Social Isolation

The lack of meaningful relationships with other people can cause people to commit suicide. Also, feeling unloved, abandoned or the lack of acceptance by those around a person can cause them to take their own life. Or like Saul, some may feel insignificant, like their life doesn't really matter.

3. Critical Illness, Chronic Pain, Depression

A person may have gone through major surgery, been diagnosed with a terminal illness or have had chronic pain and they begin contemplating suicide as a solution or a way out of these situations.

4. An Abusive Background

A person may have been sexually, mentally, physically, or verbally abused during their lifetime. This could have resulted in excessive guilt, remorse over sin, unnatural sexual activity, or failure to meet unrealistic expectations they have placed on their own life. These things may cause depression and eventually drive a person to suicide.

The most important thing to remember today is that **God is the God of hope**. If you are experiencing depression, you've lost hope in some area of your life. I like what the Bible says about Abraham, "*Who against hope, believed in hope...*"(Romans 4:18) Oh, there may be situations in your life that look hopeless. What you need to say to yourself is, "You know what? It may look like there is no hope, but I have hope in God. I can't see the end of this thing, but

God can see the end and its victory. I may be outnumbered, but you know what? God is never outnumbered!"

God didn't desert Saul. Saul deserted God. God never deserts us. Perhaps God is not answering your prayer because you are not following Him; you've become a friend of the world. God simply says, "When you're following after Me, I listen to you and I'll answer you. But when you become a friend of the world, I don't listen to your prayers. I don't respond. I respond to My friends. And it's so easy to become My friend." How do we become a friend of God? Jesus said, "You're My friends when you simply obey My commands." God is saying, "Do what I ask you to do and we can become friends. I'll commune with you. I will talk with you."

The Bible says return to the Lord and He will *abundantly pardon*. (Isaiah 55:7) *Abundantly pardon*. I don't care what you've come through, and I don't care what others have done to you. God will *abundantly pardon*. God wants to be your friend—let Him. Don't desert the church. Don't desert fellowship with Christians. You need other believers in your life.

You may have run across a bad Christian. Yes, they're out there. But I want to tell you, there's a mass of Christians that love you, care for you, and will work with you. Don't turn from everyone because of what a few have done. Your heavenly Father is not an abusive father. The friend who deserted you, the fiancée who left you, the boss who fired you, the cause of your terminal illness—God is not the author of those things. He's a friend that sticks closer than a brother. He's a boss that will never let you down. He's someone that will never make you sick. God will bring healing into your life.

Seek Godly Counsel

We need to have counselors and ministers we can turn to in this life. Saul had people around him who wanted to help and tried to help him. He had the Samuels around him. He had the Davids around him. He had his own son, Jonathan, but he wouldn't listen. If you know you are in a place where you need help from a pastor or counselor, seek help and then listen to their counsel. Open up your heart. Be willing to listen. God is speaking. He's speaking through those around you trying to get your attention. God is concerned about you. God had a plan for Saul.

God Will Deliver

Moses led the children of Israel right up to the Red Sea, a seemingly impossible situation. The Red Sea was in front of them, mountains on each side of them, and behind them was the army of Egypt. But Moses didn't turn and say to those following him, "This is an impossible situation. There's no solution. There's no way out. Let's just all kill ourselves." What an easy plan that would have been! They were outnumbered. If Moses had directed the children of Israel in this way, I'm sure they would have agreed, "Yes! It looks impossible. We might as well end it here!" Fear was rampant among them. But instead Moses said, "Stop! Stand still and watch God deliver us!"

If you are in a place where you don't know what to do, just stop. Turn to God and say, "God, I'm going to watch you deliver me. I don't know how You're going to do it. It seems like I'm

outnumbered on all sides. I'm caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, and I don't know what I'm going to do, but I trust you." God will bring you through.

I believe after Saul heard from Samuel, he could have repented. The Bible records King Hezekiah was going to die, but he turned his face toward the wall and repented. As a result, God added fifteen years to his life. In Saul's case, he was outnumbered by the enemy. If Saul had repented, even with the small army he had with his armorbearer at his side he could have said, "We're going to stand still and watch the deliverance of the Lord!" I believe God would have defeated the Philistines.

SUICIDE IS NOT A WAY OUT. Faced with the impossible, Moses said, "Stand still and watch the deliverance of the Lord." David told Goliath, "This day I'm going to cut your head off and feed it to the birds." Talk about looking like he was outnumbered. David declared the plan of God and came at a mighty warrior wearing armor and wielding a sword, with only a slingshot and a rock. Can you imagine Goliath saying, "Is that all I've got?" Every promise of God is that rock that will defeat the enemy. Are you outnumbered? Join Abraham. Join Joshua. Join Gideon. Join Elisha. Ask the Lord to open your eyes to realize there's more that be with you than the circumstances surrounding you. Fear is contagious, but so is bravery. When, in the face of opposition you say, "We're going to stand still and watch the deliverance of the Lord," people will join with you, "Yeah. Yeah. We're going to see deliverance." God has a plan for your life. Stand on God's promises and watch God's plan come to pass. You may not see it immediately, but that won't stop God from bringing it to pass in your life.

Don't Give Up

In Jeremiah 29:11 God says, *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."* God is thinking about you. His thoughts are of peace and of good and not evil. Notice too, God has an *expected end* for your life. Do you know what suicide is? *Suicide is terminating the plan of God* and saying, "I know better than God. I can do better than God."

Perhaps you haven't seen God's plan come to pass in a certain area. The Bible says don't give up for in due season you will reap if you faint not. Don't give up! Hang in there another day! Get your attention back on God and realize even though you haven't been thinking much about God, He's been thinking about you every single day and His thoughts are for good—not for evil. *His thoughts are to bring you through. His thoughts are for your success.*

You may be thinking, *Well, you just don't understand. I was born with these problems. If you knew the problems my parents had. If you knew the problems my grandparents had.*

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)

This passage tells us there are great works ahead for you to do! Even if you haven't reached that place yet, you have been *ordained* to accomplish them! What is the good plan that God has for you? His plan is for the good works you'll produce in your life for Him. Listen to me. God *created* you and God *made* you. Your spirit was *created* in God's own image and your body was *made* in God's own likeness. If your spirit and body were both made by God, you are of great

value and very precious to Him! God made you His righteousness. When God made you, He had a plan. That plan doesn't begin when you die; it begins the moment you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Let him accomplish His plan in your life.

You may say, "Well, you don't know what a mess my life is." God is in the business of taking messes and making something great out of them. But you have to allow the Potter do His work. It's not up to the clay to say, "Why did you make me this way?" It's up to the clay to say, "Thank You for making me this way. I am Your creation made in Christ Jesus."

God's Formula for Success

"I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth." (Psalms 34:1)

Here's your formula for success: *Start blessing the Lord at all times.* Notice, this verse doesn't say to bless the Lord in the good times; it says *at all times*. We are to bless the Lord in the good times, in the mediocre times, and in the bad times. We are to bless Him when things are happening and when things aren't happening. This is the way out of your situation. Start getting your attention focused on God. Praise Him and bless Him in all situations realizing, *I may be in a mess right now. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy's going to come in the morning. All these oppressions are just for the moment, but God has a plan to bring me out of this. And the good times are going to start outnumbering the bad times because I serve a God who cares for me. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all! Thank you, Jesus, for delivering me out of this. I am not just a conqueror; I am more than a conqueror through Jesus Christ who loves me!*

Praise is contagious. Bravery is contagious. Praising God in the midst of bad circumstances is contagious.

"My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." (Psalms 34:2-4)

There's nothing like turning fear around with praise and worship and getting a multitude around you to start praising God and worshipping Him.

I'm here to let you know God loves you. God has a plan for your life—a plan for good, not for evil. God has an expected end for your life, and that expected end is you're going to turn the world upside down for Jesus. Good works. There are people out there that need you. There are nations out there that need you. There's a group of people in your town or city that need you. There are friends that need you. God will use your deliverance, turn it around, and cause it be a blessing and a testimony to others.

Prayer:

Father, we bless your name. Thank you for the Word sown in our hearts. Father, I ask right now that those who may be reading this book who are depressed, down, and surrounded by

circumstances, will realize "God cares for me. God has a plan for my life. I am going to come out of this through His power. In Jesus' Name."

Pray from Your Heart:

Lord, I'm returning to You today. Forgive me for being self-centered, focused on the circumstances and trials of life. Today I choose to come back to You and Your forgiving power. Thank you, Jesus, for forgiving me and cleansing me by Your precious blood. Father, I need a miracle, but You're the God that split the Red Sea. You're the God that brought down the walls of Jericho. You're the God that saw Goliath slain, and David had the victory. Father, I don't know how you're going to do it, but those "giants" of circumstances are going to fall at my feet. To God be the glory!

Prayer for Salvation

Dear Heavenly Father,

You said in Your Word, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, YOU WILL BE SAVED" (Romans 10:9).

I believe in my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe He died on the cross for my sins, and He was raised from the dead. I now confess Jesus as my Lord, so I know, Father, according to Your Word, I am now saved!

Thank you, Father, for forgiving me, and for giving me the gift of the new birth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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