

SUICIDE

[Your Editor: My prayer list is a rather large one. Each name, ministry, and place represents a diversity of need. Two such requests represent the pain from suicide. Across the country and around the world, family members grieve and often suffer deeply from not only the loss of a loved one, but also the extreme grief due to suicide. I was shocked when I heard that Jim (the name has been changed) had committed suicide. I had the privilege to teach Jim one semester in his Christian High School. Never were there the indications that such an action would be even considered by this young man. Jesus said, "...I am the resurrection, and the life..." John 11:25 (There is hope!) keep in mind the following concerning suicide:

I. The Seriousness

Life is precious and entrusted to the child of God, and suicide must be viewed as a breach of that trust. Call suicide "self-murder" or a sin against God is to understand the seriousness of this act.

II. The Selfishness

The devastating effects upon family and friends are beyond description. The hurt and shame that love ones of a suicide victim experience run the gamut. From the spiritual and emotional to even financial, the grief and pain is incredible.

III. The Signs

Often significant behavioral changes may be an indication. Note

the following:

- A. Anxiety and unusual or sudden outbursts.
- B. Expressions of hopelessness or even talk of suicide.
- C. Change in personal appearance. Withdrawal from family and friends.
- D. Careless or reckless actions that almost exhibit a death wish. Preoccupation with death.
- E. Drugs and alcohol.

IV. The Solution

- A. The Savior – Friends and family must bring this individual to Jesus. Salvation and scripture, we would all agree, are critical to the peace and healing needed. This must be done with understanding, love, wisdom, and patience. Much prayer must go before as we tenderly present the hope we have in Jesus!
- B. Please be available to listen to the cry for help. Suicide is serious, and if we are too busy, too occupied to stop and listen, the opportunity to intervene may be lost. Be available and be a friend.
- C. Keep in mind that disease and chemical imbalances can have devastating effects on individuals who would never consider suicide. Christian doctors and qualified pastors will understand this and should be sought for help. Doctors may order a physical examine, glucose-tolerance and blood work up.
- D. Sin or demonic oppression may be the cause. Again, a dedicated pastor needs to be closely involved

as everyone prays for spiritual discernment. Keep hope a live for the individual.] -RLW

[Jim's best friend Philip Buck writes the following article.]

Suicide is a subject that most people do not like to talk about or know much about. However, I wish that I would have known more about it sooner. I had never felt its affects until I lost someone very close to me due to suicide. [Jim] was my best friend in high school [a Christian School]. He had been the salutatorian of our senior class. Not only was he smart, but also he was athletic, funny, very musically inclined, and had a great personality to top it all off. [Jim] was always the life of the party when we had class fellowships. Outwardly, [Jim] had everything going for him. He held a 4.0 at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, a local university with high academic standards. What made him take his own life at the age of nineteen? What was he thinking? This is a question that many of us asked ourselves. After a loved one takes their life, there is guilt of what maybe could have been done to prevent the suicide from happening in the first place. This is something that I faced as soon as I received the phone call from my father telling me that [Jim's] mother had found him in the back seat of his car earlier that

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

morning. Despite my feelings of guilt, Jim had made his own choice to do what he did, and he will one day stand before the Lord for taking his life.

Many of today's teens seem to be greatly influenced by the humanistic thought of the times that we now live in. Our society today is very hedonistic in its thinking. The thinking is, "If it makes you feel good do it." Despite the many ways that man tries to gratify his longing for pleasure, he does not nor ever will find true happiness in what this world has to offer. The next logical thing to do if he is not finding happiness is to end it all. It is not shocking then that suicide is the second leading cause of death among adolescents today, not far behind accidents. (Santrock, 93) Adolescence today, whether high school or college students, are searching for their happiness in drugs, sex, alcohol, friends, clothes, and entertainment. The list could go on and on. Where can man find true happiness? The answer is found in God and in God alone. With prayer being taken out of the public schools and humanistic philosophy infiltrating our schools in its place, it is no wonder that our society is the way it is.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the national suicide rate is 11.31 (1998) per 100,000. Nevada has the highest rate of suicide with 20.18 per 100,000; almost double that of the national average. One can safely say that in the case of Nevada, this is a reflection of the gambling, which is strongly endorsed and participated in especially in Las Vegas. The adult suicide rate in urban areas of America in 1995 was 14.91 per

100,000; in rural areas it was 17.94 per 100,000. ("Suicide Rates in Rural America") The chance that males will attempt suicide is three times more likely than the chances of females. (Evans and Farberow) also, studies show that 6 percent of death between the ages of 10 and 14 are due to suicide. Between the ages of 15 and 19 the percentage goes up to 12 percent of deaths. Studies also show that the suicide rate of adolescents has tripled since the 1950's. (Santrock, 93)

The methods of suicide vary according to sex. Females tend to use less aggressive forms such as taking sleeping pills; males use more aggressive means such as shooting. Also, women attempt suicide more often than males, but are less successful than their counterparts. (Santrock, 480)

The media has proven to consistently devalue the human life. Television and movies often glorify the taking of one's own life. I believe that the Internet plays a huge role in all of this as well. It is very difficult to ignore this reality after the death of my friend, [Jim]. The private detective investigating the case searched his computer for some clues. What he found was amazing. [Jim] had used the Google search engine to access websites that actually went step by step in describing how one could commit suicide. Looking through the history of his Internet site visits, the detective found the exact website where he had received his information. [Jim] had followed the directions exactly as he had been advised to do. Of course, we were all outraged at this finding. One of our friends wrote the website, expressing his disgust for their vile

website. Whether they ever replied, I do not know.

One's view of God is reflected in the way that he treats his own life. Those who do not view God as being in control and the One that can give true pleasure are prime candidates for suicide. In Psalm 73:25 Asaph was able to say, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire beside you." Asaph's happiness was found in God alone. If [Jim] had found his happiness in God alone, He never would have made the awful decision to take his life. He did not view God as good enough. He was a Christian. He had given testimony of his salvation on many occasions. [Jim] might have had many burdens on him, but he never claimed Philippians 4:6-7 (If he did claim it, it never became reality) these two verses say, "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." No matter what he was going through, God could have taken care of it. Obviously, [Jim] and many others like him do not believe that God is big enough to take care of their problems. The Bible is replete with verses dealing with God's love, strength, hope, and peace. If someone truly believed that God was who the Bible says He is, the thought of suicide would never cross his or her mind.

Many adolescents do not know what God offers them in terms of a solution for their problems. It is our job as Christians to show the love of

(Continued on page 14)

Suicide

(Continued from page 13)

Christ and tell them the hope that God offers. Christ is the answer to the problem of suicide in America.

-Philip Buck

Bibliography

Evans, Glen and Norman Farberow. *The Encyclopedia of Suicide*. New York:

FactsOnFile, 1988.

Santrock, John. *Adolescence*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2001.

“Suicide Rates in Rural America.”
www.highplainsmentalhealth.com/news

