

VII. Suicide

A. It is wrong to murder any human being, including yourself.

Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder."

B. The Bible never views suicide positively. It is several times seen as a last act of despair when a person has turned against God and his purposes

1. Saul: 1 Samuel 31:3 The battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him, and he was badly wounded by the archers. 4 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.

2. 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.

3. Judas: Matthew 27:5 And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself.

4. However, Samson's death should not be understood as suicide but as a last act of self-sacrifice for the sake of his people (a sort of foreshadowing of Christ)

Judges 16:28 Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "O Lord GOD, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once, O God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes." 29 And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. 30 And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." Then he bowed with all his strength, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life.

- similar to soldiers in combat who give their lives heroically to save the lives of others
Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends
(John 15:13)

C. The goal of Satan is to destroy human beings made in the image of God, however he can. He will try to persuade people to commit suicide if he can.

John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
(examples of people who "hear voices" telling them to kill themselves)

D. Suicide also injures others deeply (family and friends)

1. Great sorrow, pain, suffering – with no hope for changing the outcome, or for getting answers in this lifetime

2. Thus contrary to love of others, even rightful love of self:
Matthew 22:39 You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

3. One suicide can lead to others following that example, and therefore lead to the destruction of other lives.

4. It is the opposite of trust in God to work in one's circumstances

Philippians 4:6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

E. Can people who commit suicide be forgiven? Can they go to heaven?

1. Yes, certainly, if they were believers in Christ

John 6:39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

Romans 8:38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (They died while committing a sin, but that does not mean they are not forgiven.)

2. I think (but could not document) that the Roman Catholic Church in the past taught that suicide is a "mortal sin" and therefore cannot be forgiven.

3. The present *Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church* (1994) does not teach this:

"We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives" (paragraph 2283, p. 550).

F. If someone asks you, "If I commit suicide, will I go to heaven?" what should you answer?

1. You do not want to say anything that would encourage someone to commit suicide, or appear to give permission

2. It would be better to ask about what circumstances are leading the person to ask this.

3. Try to address the question of whether the person has genuine saving faith