

### **The recent surge in self-inflicted death**

Within the last several months I have read of the suicidal deaths of two famous actors, and a sixteen-year-old athlete. Undoubtedly there have been more, but these are the ones that caught the media's attention. I have known personally someone who has taken his own life, and know the pain and guilt it leaves behind to friends and family. Suicide is absolutely preventable, but it happens repeatedly in spite of that fact. Most often it is caused by prolonged depression without considering the eternal consequences.

I believe the greatest deterrent to suicide is the belief that it is wrong before God our Creator to take one's own life because that is God's prerogative. Its prohibition is included in the command "You shall not murder" (Rom. 13:9) because suicide is simply self-murder. How many people would have been spared this fate had they remembered in their hour of mental anguish that they would stand before a just God and give answer for this unforgiven act?! This knowledge will not prevent all suicide, but I think it would be the greatest deterrent.

Suicide can be the act of a mentally disabled person, but most often it is the somewhat rational choice of a person who is trying to avoid suffering, humiliation, or shame. In the Old Testament, we see the suicidal deaths of Abimelech (Judges 9:51-57), King Saul (1 Sam. 31:4), King Saul's armorbearer (1 Sam. 31:5), Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17:23), and Zimri (1 Kings 16:18-19). Each of these cases was the rational act of a man trying to avoid suffering. Yes, in each case it was under great duress, but it was a rational choice just the same. But notice also that each case was the act of a wicked or sinful person! There are no cases of approved suicide in the Bible.

In the New Testament, we are all familiar with the suicide of Judas Iscariot. Of him Jesus said it would have been good had he not been born (Matt. 26:24)!

If one has any hope of eternal life and bliss, then arm yourself with this faith. It will sustain you in your darkest hour and help you endure until the God-appointed end. Let God be the Judge!

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