



SUICIDE

This "PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET" was developed by Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church, Reno, NV • jtaylor@southreno.com
Scriptures are printed verbatim with references noted but highlights and underlines are added. Quotes and all primary sources are footnoted.

A. DEFINITION

Suicide is a *deliberate act* of killing oneself in an extreme state of despair.¹

Suicide is the premature and permanent ending of one's life. This decision to end or consider ending one's life is typically brought about because of intense personal circumstances. These circumstances, however extreme, lead the person to falsely conclude that the only way out is to end their own life.

**"SUICIDE IS A PERMANENT SOLUTION
TO TEMPORARY PROBLEMS."**

"TEMPORARY" MAY EVEN BE LIFELONG BUT NO PROBLEM IS ETERNAL FOR THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST.

B. TO THOSE CONSIDERING SUICIDE

1. AT THIS CRITICAL TIME, USE YOUR "HEAD" AND NOT YOUR "HEART" TO MAKE DECISIONS.

Your heart is "heavy" with feelings right now. The feelings you have are real; it seems the hurt you have will never go away. The depression and the helplessness in your life are overwhelming currently. The circumstances that brought these extreme feelings about are real but even if they are life-long, they are still temporary. You can find help to deal with your feelings and circumstances. **If you make decisions based on feelings (that will come and go), you have made a critical mistake.**

2. CALL SOMEONE NOW!

Call a friend, a family member, a pastor, or a co-worker—call someone now! Don't let pride get in the way. Much of Satan's power to convince those who feel unloved and hopeless is found in his ability to keep them isolated and removed from those who can lift them up. **You do have people that would help you if they only knew what you were going through.** The complexity of your life seems most overwhelming when you are alone. Don't be alone in this; call somebody now!

"He chose to die rather than to get help ... I'll never get over that--Why didn't he call me! Pastor, beg them to call somebody—anybody! Death cannot be the answer! ... My heart is forever broken."

- Mother of a son who committed suicide (in a letter)

¹ John H. Hewett, *After Suicide*, Christian Care Books, ed. Wayne E. Oates (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1980), 30; H. Norman Wright, *Crisis Counseling: What to Do and Say During the First 72 Hours*, Updated and expanded ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1993), 97.

3. THERE IS ALWAYS A BETTER ALTERNATIVE TO SUICIDE—ALWAYS!

You have a God that wants to help you and you will soon have friends and other helpers to get you through this present crisis. There are many people—*many*—who will be willing and able to help you through anything you are going through. **Don't end your life; develop a plan to end your problems.** The storms in your life are probably not your fault; they are your problems—let's resolve *them*. The best alternative to suicide is finding healthy solutions to your problems.

4. SUICIDE MAY APPEAR TO BE THE OBVIOUS "OUT" FOR YOU, BUT YOU'LL BRING AGONY ON YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND LOVED-ONES FOR YEARS TO COME.

It's been said that "If you kill yourself, it will take all the firefighters in this town to clean up the mess you'll leave behind and it will take all the clergy and counselors to clean up all the lives you'll leave behind." Please, please know that suicide is the ultimate in selfish acts, because it confirms that you're only thinking of yourself. Romans 14:7, NIV says, "*For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone.*" **In the life of those who care about you, you will leave a great grief, much agony, and many unanswered questions.** There is ALWAYS a better way than suicide.

5. REMEMBER, WHATEVER YOU ARE GOING THROUGH IS NOT PERMANENT!

Whatever storm, trial, hardship, disappointment, or situation you may be going through will not last forever. It may seem that it will last but it will not. Psalm 30:5b NIV says, "*Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.*" If you have a medical or physical disfigurement it may be lifelong but it will not be eternal; nothing is permanent this side of Heaven.

6. DECIDE NOW: I WILL NOT KILL MYSELF! SAY, "I'LL GET HELP, I'LL CALL SOMEONE, I'LL DO SOMETHING BUT I WILL NOT TAKE MY LIFE."

To kill yourself is to usurp God's role in your own life. **God—and God alone—sets the number of days a person shall live.** Job 14:5, NIV says, "*Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.*" **Please, make the right decision: Do not kill yourself!** Fix you ... fix your problems ... find someone who can fix you or your problems but don't kill yourself. Let someone help you process all the stress in your life but don't end your life. Be assured that it is easier to work it out than to give it up. Please, by the mercies of God, do not kill yourself. Decide once and for all to find any other option.

7. DON'T DRINK ALCOHOL OR SELF-MEDICATE DURING THIS TIME.

There is plenty of research that shows that people who drink and do drugs are 80% (by some surveys) more likely to terminate their lives. You don't need that now. Stay away from them. You will get better; substances like alcohol and drugs won't help.

8. CRY OUT TO GOD—IN PRAYER—RIGHT NOW!

You have struggled with the meaning of life, are experiencing overwhelming pain (physical, emotional, mental), and have reached a place where you have even considered taking your own life. It's time to call out to the God who loves you and is waiting to rescue you. **As soon as you call out to God in prayer, call a friend and get started on the road to healing and a better you!** The Psalmist says,

The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. ¹⁸ The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. ¹⁹ A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all; ²⁰ he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.

- Psalm 34:17-20, NIV

✠ AN OPEN LETTER TO THOSE CONTEMPLATING SUICIDE ✠

Dear Friend:

The fact that you are reading this material points to the reality that you're one of the thousands who have struggled with end-it-all thoughts. I beg you to slow down and consider a different course of action. God wants to rescue you and so do I; I will bet there are others, also. If you kill yourself, you will drastically change the lives of others who do love you. You will not only dramatically and selfishly end your life but you will ruin their lives forever. The saddest thing about suicide is that a person's potential is lost forever. Kill yourself and you'll say "no" to what God wants to do in your life—suicide is NOT His plan for you. Your storm seems so dark right now—I acknowledge that. Though it seems like this storm will never end—it will. The rain *will* stop and the sky *will* lighten. In time—with God's help—the sunshine *will* reappear! There is no problem you are enduring that is worth killing yourself over—not one! Those who have lost hope finally come to the conclusion that death is the only logical solution to their problems. This is a lie. Satan is the father of lies and the author of such futile thinking. Ultimately, suicide is a deliberate choice to believe Satan's twisted reasoning that taking your own life is the most reasonable way out. Listen, there is hope! There are people who care for you and I am one of them. Turn to God, me, and others who do (or will) care. Talk to someone you can trust and who can give you assistance. It's okay to need a little help. I have needed it and have asked for it in the past. It made the difference for me; it will make a difference for you. You may ask, "Why not suicide?" You are the answer to that. Your life is too valuable, too meaningful, and too promising. Your greatest days are ahead and I (or others) will help you find them. Again, I beg you; choose life—your life! Allow God to rescue you. Contact me or someone right now. Your reason for living never came from a relationship, money, prestige, your looks, your talents, or anything else. The value you place on your life can only be set by the God who created you. God so loved you that He died for you. Suicide is the wrong response to Christ's immense love for you. He died so that you could live. Live, my friend. Suicide is never the right decision. I am sure that if I could hear your story, I would sympathize with your hurt. I also know if you could truly hear of the hope that God offers you, you would sympathize with His great love and hope for you. God will sustain you through all things. Please let Him be God in you. Suicide is not the answer to your pain whether it is physical, mental, or emotional. Christ is your answer and in Him—*alone*—will you find the healing and solutions to the issues you face. Will you call me? Please? Will you call someone now? Please? Do the right thing; you can get through this with God's help! He offers you a permanent peace through a life-changing relationship with Christ. Only He can offer you the hope and purpose you seek. I am praying for you!

- Pastor Joe
Church: 775.827.3227 ext. 23
Email: Joe@southreno.com

God will keep in perfect peace, those who keep their minds on Him. – Isaiah 26.3

C. SEVEN SCRIPTURAL REASONS TO SAY "NO" TO SUICIDE.²

Reason #1: Suicide rejects God's offer of inner peace.

Philippians 4:6-7, NLT - ⁶Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Reason #2: Suicide rejects God's sovereignty over the length of your life.

Psalms 139:13, TLB - ¹³You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit them together in my mother's womb ... ¹⁶You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book!

Reason #3: Suicide rejects God's right to be Lord over your life.

1 Corinthians 6:19, TLB - ¹⁹Haven't you yet learned that your body is the home of the Holy Spirit God gave you, and that he lives within you? Your own body does not belong to you.

Reason #4: Suicide rejects God's commandment not to murder.

Deuteronomy 5:17, NKJV - ¹⁷You shall not murder [even yourself].

Reason #5: Suicide rejects God's ability to heal your hurts.

Jeremiah 17:14, TLB - ¹⁴Lord, you alone can heal me, you alone can save, and my praises are for you alone.

Reason #6: Suicide rejects God's plan to give you hope.

Jeremiah 29:11, TLB - ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Reason #7: Suicide rejects God's power already in you to make you godly.

2 Peter 1:3-4, NLT - ³By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. ⁴And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

² Loosely summarized from Russ Walton, *Biblical Solutions to Contemporary Problems* (Bentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1988), 305-307.

D. SOME Q & A ON SUICIDE

<p>“Is suicide an unforgivable sin?”</p>	<p>No. If a person has ever made Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior of their lives, nothing can alter the reality of eternal forgiveness for them. Romans 8:1, (NIV) says, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...” The fact that God’s grace is sufficient should never be taken as permission to end one’s life. Suicide is wrong but the blood of Jesus does cover it. Does God forgive suicide? Yes, He does!</p>
<p>“It just seems to me that I would be better off dead. Isn’t suicide better than living in some circumstances?”</p>	<p>No. Never. A person must decide “how they are going to decide.” If one does some <i>relational math</i> and decides that they can never be happy but their circumstances can never change, it may seem suicide is best. The problem is how they decided. They made that decision based on emotions (that are real) and made conclusions (that are not right). The only proper way to answer the question, “Is suicide okay in some circumstances” is to look to scriptures. If you are His children and He is our Lord, we must seek His plan—not our plan—for our lives.</p>
<p>“I am facing a debilitating illness and unrelenting pain. Why can’t I end my own life if death is inevitable?”</p>	<p>The suffering in many terminal illnesses and the ravages of old age has pushed the topic of <i>euthanasia</i> to the forefront. It may seem “right” but the real question is, “is it biblical?” The Bible teaches that God—and God alone—is the giver and taker of life. (cf. Psalm 139:16; Job 14:5, Job 21:21, just to name a few). Death is inevitable for everyone. Don’t take God out of your dying process. For you to take you own life, prematurely, is tantamount to saying you know more than God about your own personal welfare. Again, how are you going to decide? Stay with the Scriptures. “Death” is a “God-thing!”</p>

E. AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THOSE WHO ARE SUICIDAL

1. Recognize the clues of someone who may be suicidal.

- The symptoms may include but are not limited to the following:

Depression	Hopelessness	Lethargy	A recent loss (spouse/employment/love)
Societal factors	Feeling abandoned		A sense that the person has ‘given up’
Any threats or discussions about suicide	Being withdrawn	Being isolated from others	
Extreme financial problems	Extreme medical issues	Giving things away	
Guilt about the past	Significant history of sexual abuse, emotional issues, etc		
Previous suicide attempt	Feeling insignificant/hopelessness	Helplessness about the future	
A feeling that “God is dead”	Chemical dependency	Neurosis/getting attention	

- Watch for “escape statements” that may include but are not limited to the following:

“The world would be better off without me.” *“There is nothing left in life I care about.”*
“It is pointless to go on living.” *“I can’t face the future. The only thing to do is escape.”*
“Things will never change.” *“Death would be better than this.”*
“My life is completely out of control. I have to get the upper hand.”
“It won’t really hurt anyone else. Actually, I’ll be doing everyone a favor.”
“I’ve done all that can be done. There is only one thing left to do.”
“Soon it will be all over, and then I will have peace!” *“Nobody really cares about me.”*

2. Trust your judgment.

If you even think a person might be considering suicide, go with your instincts and do something. Don't wait and don't let anybody dissuade you from a loving intervention.

3. Say the right things.

"I have you on my heart and I want to talk to you and I want to listen to you. How are you really doing?"

"Are you considering suicide?" "I didn't know how serious things had gotten. Let talk about it."

"I don't want you to do anything to hurt yourself." "What are we going to do about all of this?"

"I want to hear everything that's been happening. I've got time."

"Will you give me your word that you will not hurt yourself?"

4. Get help!

Call family, friends, pastors, counselors, medical doctors, even the police and any other helpers available. Urge professional help.

5. Stay with the person and take appropriate actions to keep them safe until "help arrives".

Listen, care, feed, take walks, give plenty of water (no alcohol), remove all "instruments" of suicide (pills, guns, knives, etc.), monitor medications, pray, pray, pray and pray. It is important that you do nothing that communicates you have given up on them. Keep in constant contact with them.

"The cardinal rule of suicide prevention: DO SOMETHING and do it now!"

E. SCRIPTURES TO ENCOURAGE YOU

Psalm 6:4-9, NIV - ⁴Turn, O Lord, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love. ⁵No one remembers you when he is dead. Who praises you from the grave? ⁶I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. ⁷My eyes grow weak with sorrow; they fail because of all my foes. ⁸Away from me, all you who do evil, for the Lord has heard my weeping. ⁹The Lord has heard my cry for mercy; the Lord accepts my prayer.

Psalm 13:2-6, NIV - ²How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? ³Look on me and answer, O Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; ⁴my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall. ⁵But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. ⁶I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.

Psalm 34:18, NIV - ¹⁸The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psalm 73:28, NIV - ²⁸But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

Psalm 143:7-11, NIV - ⁷Answer me quickly, O Lord; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me or I will be like those who go down to the pit. ⁸Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. ⁹Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord, for I hide myself in you. ¹⁰Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground. ¹¹For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life; in your righteousness, bring me out of trouble.

Hebrews 13:5, NIV - ⁵... God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Matthew 11:28-30, NIV - ²⁸"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

1 Peter 5:7-11, NIV - ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. ⁸Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. ¹⁰And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. ¹¹To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

2 Corinthians 4:7-11, NIV - ⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

Also consider Psalms 18, 25, 27, 71, 91, 130, 139 and Romans 8.

✂ The bottom of this sheet can be torn or cut away and kept with you or given away to someone you care about. ✂

**NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE
1 (800) SUICIDE (784-2433)**

Students Against Suicide: 1 (714) 361-9401

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE: 1 (414) 442-4638

NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE FOR THE DEAF: 1 (800) 799-4TTY (4889)