

Ray Comfort Condemns the 'Horrible Mistake' Fascinating Teens Across the Country

The wildly popular Netflix program called *13 Reasons Why* has started a massive controversy. It not only details why the main character took her own life, garnering sympathy, but it shows her committing suicide. She doesn't jump off a bridge, leaving what happened to her to the imagination. Rather, she sits in a bathtub fully clothed, takes a razor blade and slits her wrists.

Ray Comfort, whose movies have been seen by millions, said, "I forced myself to watch the scene, and even though I know it's only acting, with special effects, I found it horrific. It brought me to tears."

The controversy is over whether this scene will deter young people from committing suicide or will stir up copycat suicides because the character seen taking her life is a celebrity in their eyes.

Comfort added, "I believe it was a horrible mistake. This is because I greatly value my life, and the thought [of suicide] ... sends me into a shudder of horror. I had a similar feeling as I interviewed a suicidal girl for our new movie, *EXIT: The Appeal of Suicide*. She said that she wanted to end her life and explained to me that very few are able to kill themselves by overdosing with pills because of complications. She then described why other means of suicide were very difficult. We left that part of the interview out of the film for fear of giving ideas to vulnerable people."

Comfort then explained that when he asked her if it was scary

to be continually contemplating suicide, she said, "You get used to it."

"And there is my concern with the death scene in *13 Reasons Why*. It seems that the series producers didn't take into account the thousands of young people known as 'cutters.' These people regularly cut their skin and draw blood, and in doing so repeatedly, they get used to it. It loses its intuitive horror. Studies show that 40 percent of cutters have thought of suicide. In essence, many cutters may be actually rehearsing their own deaths. Someone slitting their wrists is not as horrific to them as it would be to you and me. Couple that mentality with a celebrity hero who slits her wrists, and you have potential copycats."

The parents of two teenage girls in San Francisco, who committed suicide in separate incidents, are blaming their deaths on *13 Reasons Why*. Both girls had viewed the series two days before they took their lives.

Newsweek said, "Decades of research prove that a startling range of emotions and behaviors can be contagious—from moodiness to yawning. Young people are especially susceptible; they obsess over fads and fashion trends and copy illicit behaviors from peers, such as smoking, drinking or speeding. Or suicide."

The award-winning producer also said, "Although *EXIT* includes clips of two suicide jumpers leaping from the Golden Gate Bridge, we have left their hitting the icy waters of the San Francisco Bay to the imagination. There are big differences between the two films. The people shown in *EXIT* are not actors; nor are they celebrities. And most importantly, the film offers the solution to the tragic problem of suicide. It doesn't leave viewers hopeless in the face of the horror of death, as *13 Reasons Why* does. *EXIT* gives people a reason to live and explains that we all have great worth because we are made in the image of God." {eo}