

What Every Christian Ought to Know About Dealing With Suicide

Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

On Monday evenings I lead a small group of men in a Bible study. It's really more of a mentoring session for those who are new or young in the faith or just want to get together for some open discussion among men and encouragement from the Word.

The young man who started the group is a barber and we meet in his shop.

This last Monday he told us he had a friend who had mysteriously disappeared leaving behind some disturbing clues that he had nefarious intentions of doing himself in.

Two weeks earlier his wife's cousin had committed suicide by jumping off the Monroe Street bridge.

We prayed for him and hoped for the best. Last night at Wednesday night Bible study I heard they had found the body of the man who disappeared.

He had indeed killed himself.

I worked as a Chaplain for the Clearview Fire Department for 14 years. During that time, I was called to many suicides. I've sat with family members as they attempt to process the grief of losing a loved one in such a way.

It's never easy.

So many unanswered and unanswerable questions arise when someone commits suicide.

Loved ones often blame themselves for not knowing in advance what was about to happen, feeling that somehow it may have been in their power to prevent it. That is rarely the case. Often those who have decided to commit suicide may show no signs at all that they are about to take their life. Some, who may have been going through depression, may begin to appear as if they are coming out of it because once they have made up their minds they are going to do something, like take matters into their own hands, they feel better.

What drives a person to commit suicide?

The answers are as individual and personal as the people who do it. But it comes down to a feeling of hopelessness, despair and loss of control of their own lives.

Dreams, hopes, ambitions that once seemed attainable now seem out of reach.

According the CDC, suicide rates are on the rise in the United States. Why? I suspect it's due to many factors, including loss of meaningful employment, the economic challenges we face here and people becoming more and more out of touch with real live human beings as we become more and more transfixed with social media.

However, there is a deeper and much more concerning reason why too many people are choosing to end their lives prematurely.

They don't know Jesus.

That's not to say that no one who professes to be a Christian ever commits suicide. One of my son's best friends killed himself just over a year ago. He came from a strong Christian family and professed to know the Lord himself.

No one saw it coming.

Christians and non-Christians alike can feel despair, depression and hopelessness.

Even the great Charles Spurgeon experienced bouts of depression in his life. Yet he wrote powerfully of Christ's love and sustaining power.

In his devotional "Morning and Evening" Spurgeon writes:

With God as thy portion thou art rich indeed, for He will supply thy need, comfort thy heart, assuage thy grief, guide thy steps, be with thee in the dark valley, and then take thee home.

If Christians can lose hope in this life how much more must the unbeliever be susceptible to fiery darts of despair from the enemy of their souls?

For the Christians the answer lies in getting serious about your relationship with the Lord.

Never let a day pass without being in His Word.

Memorize, meditate, pray.

Walk closely with God.

We all experience desert times but those deserts don't have to last forever. I'm convinced the closer I walk with God the longer distance between desert times and the shorter those times last. We cannot have a perfunctory relationship with God and expect His power to dwell within us.

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Now, what about the unbeliever?

How can they have hope in whom they know not of?

How do they find the hope of God?

Isn't it our responsibility to take the Word of God outside the walls of church buildings and into the streets? Isn't it our call of duty as Christians to "go into all the world?"

When I read statistics that say 97% of Christians never share their faith with an unbeliever I shudder. What would this world look like if only 50% of Christians actively shared their faith?

Most people who ever hear anything about the Lord get their information from Christian TV or secondhand information from the uninformed.

Tragic!

You and I are the ones who are to equip ourselves, encourage ourselves in the Lord and go forth with the message of hope!

What's it going to take, Christian?

How long shall you slumber while your neighbor wallows in despair and hopelessness?

When is the last time you shared your faith with another?

People are dying, some by their own hands, because they don't know how to cope with life. They don't know the giver of life. You and I contain the message of eternal hope. Don't keep it to yourself. Share it. You'll be glad you did.

September is suicide prevention awareness month; and what better way to prevent suicide than to offer those who are hopeless the true hope of the gospel and healing found in salvation in Jesus Christ?

*Reprinted from A Little R and R. **Craig Swanby** has served in ministry for over 30 years as a singer/songwriter, worship leader/pastor, lead pastor, chaplain, and evangelist. He is involved in seed planting and harvest ministry through evangelism. He has a desire to start a work in Spokane of*

training and leading evangelism teams to do street ministry in the downtown area and in the parks. At this late date on the prophetic calendar he believes it is of utmost importance for the church to double her efforts in the cause of evangelism.