

## Questions about Suicide

Written by Bob Stone

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Here's a summary of your questions and comments:

**"Is suicide the ultimate sin? I know of a few people who have committed suicide and I wonder, can those who have committed suicide find a heavenly home? This troubles me as I hate to imagine anyone in hell. I am so glad I have my Jesus."**

First of all, I want you to know I am sorry for your pain. The pain of losing a friend/acquaintance to suicide is very traumatic. I want to remind you, Jesus made it a priority to befriend people who felt the kind of pain you're feeling, and to help them find healing. They included a prostitute abused by men, a leper outcast by society, and countless others who suffered from loneliness, fear, and rejection. Jesus was a friend they could count on when no one else seemed to care. He was someone who loved and understood them—just like He loves and understands you.

Jesus also encouraged his followers to lean on one another. You too need someone to lean on. It's important for you to talk to your pastor or a Christian counselor about any deep pain you might be experiencing. With help, you can work through this difficult time and find hope and healing.

Every person I have ever talked to about suicide brings up this same question. "Can those who have committed suicide find a heavenly home...is suicide the ultimate sin?"

Before I answer the question, remember:

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***"Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. For some people, suicide seems like the easiest way to get rid of their deep pain. But when they truly look at the problems causing these intense feelings, there is always a better answer than suicide."***

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There are no easy answers to this important question, but I will give you some beginning responses.

**"Is suicide always wrong?"** My point blank answer is, "Yes." Ending one's own life is never

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the right solution to problems. There are much better solutions. I recently read about a person who once contemplated suicide. Today she is very happy and making a difference in the lives of many people. She's glad she didn't kill herself, and so am I. There were better solutions to her pain!

**You asked: "Can those who have committed suicide find a heavenly home? This troubles me as I hate to imagine anyone in hell. I am so glad I have my Jesus."**

You have really asked two questions: Will anyone go to hell for any reason? ("I hate to imagine anyone in hell"), and, Will those who commit suicide go to hell?

The question is difficult to respond to—because it could sound as if I personally am the one making some kind of judgement about who will and who will not make it into eternity with God.

If the Bible were written to describe a politically correct god, one who met the present demand of our culture to disallow any moral absolutes, then of course the answer would be easy. ("No one has to worry; believe what you want, it doesn't matter; if there is a heaven, we all go—no discrimination allowed. It's our right to have equal treatment under the law.")

Of course, however, that isn't what the Bible teaches about truth—except for the part about equal treatment. The real question isn't how you or I *feel* about the teaching of Scripture concerning eternity, but what the Bible *says*

. Long before our politically correct society, the God of the universe is on record as saying that "

*He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance"*

—I Peter 3:9. In other words, God doesn't want to see anyone go to hell or perish. Jesus said in John 10:10—

*"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

It is clear, the God of the Bible wants all to have life and to have it abundantly. To assure that everyone has a chance to experience that full life, Jesus came to take our place and made a way for all who believe and come to repentance through His death and resurrection. Thus, we can be assured of eternal life with God. John 3:16—"

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

17]

*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."*

**God doesn't want anyone to go to hell, but He leaves the choice of eternal life or eternal death to us. We can choose our own eternal destiny by choosing to repent of our sins and to believe in Jesus, or we can choose to perish. It seems like a**

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**no-brainer to me!**

### Why not choose life through Jesus?

In answer to your question, "Can those who have committed suicide find a heavenly home?": In order to answer that question, we must first ask, "Has the person committing suicide chosen to believe, repent of his/her sins and follow Jesus with his/her whole heart? If that person has, then the question is: **"What happens to a genuine believer who chooses to commit suicide—will he find a heavenly home?"** What will be that person's eternal destiny?

Well, I think you can understand your question is one only God will answer. I will try to give you the perspective I have from the Scripture, but it isn't easy. A simple yes or no will not be sufficient. I'm not sure who will read this, and I certainly don't want any believer to think it is okay to end his/her life because eternity is taken care of.

Here's my response in several points:

1) **"Is suicide the ultimate sin?"** Because of what the Scriptures say, suicide is a sin, but as I have said, it isn't the unpardonable sin. Ending one's own life violates the commandment that very specifically states, *"You shall not murder"*—Exodus 20:13. There is only one unpardonable sin, however, and that is a refusal to accept the gift of life Jesus offers. If we die without making that decision, then tragically we will get what we want—eternity without God.

2) A follow-up or related question that follows the above point is: **"If a Christian commits any sin and does not have a chance to repent of that sin before he dies** (e.g., tells a lie, walks across the street and before repenting gets hit by a car and is killed), **will that send him to hell?"**

The answer has to be no! (You should know there are many believers who disagree with my answer. They believe if you commit any sin, you lose your salvation and must repent before you are a Christian again.) I don't think anyone will be able to live a perfect life—one which has its accounts with God perfectly settled at all times. But I do believe the Bible calls us to walk an obedient life with short accounts with God.

Here's a passage written to Christians: 1 John 1:7-2:1—*"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all [or 'every'] sin. 8] If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and*

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*purify us from all unrighteousness. 10] If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. 2:1] My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."*

God knew we would sin and are sinners, but He has provided a way for us to be forgiven and cleansed. Even with that provision, however, we are still human; we will not be perfect in our confession to God. I believe the grace of God will be evidenced at death as well as at the moment we become Christians. But having said that, let me quickly say there will be consequences for unconfessed sin and inappropriate action/works in eternity as well as on earth.

For example,

3) **Suicide is also a sin against those who are left.** It might seem to the one who commits suicide like a solution to end the pain, but in the process it has left people behind who will feel greater pain, maybe even suffering, for the rest of their lives.

4) **In addition, all believers will have to face God some day and give an account for their lives as Christians.** Many Christians don't understand that though they make it into heaven, at the Judgment seat of Christ they will have to stand and give an account for the works they have done. 2 Cor. 5:10— *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."*

Couple those verses with those in I Cor 3:12-15.

*12] If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13] his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14] If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15] If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames."*

From those verses we begin to see the impact of lost opportunity and works from the suicide of a Christian. He will have to give an account for

- the will of God that was not accomplished
- those he would have influenced for the good
- the children not born to him because of a premature ending to his life
- the life that did not finish giving praise to God because of its good deeds.

There will also be the loss of rewards that God has for those who are faithful in serving him. (See II Cor. 5:10; I Cor. 3:15.)

5) **Beyond that reward, there are the positive things a person committing suicide will miss:**

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- the unselfish love of other human beings
- the potential for being a parent and/or raising a child
- the joy of being a grandparent
- the thrill of doing the will of God
- the joy of leading someone to Christ
- the fulfillment of living a full life and looking back on it with the sense of accomplishment and joy for what God has given to and done through him.

6) **For many other reasons, it is a tragic and selfish decision to commit suicide.** I have in my files an article, "45 Reasons to Say No to Suicide."

I think you get the idea that even though a sincere believer in Christ will make it into eternity with Him, he and others will face consequences because of his sin.

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**How can something good come out of something so awful?** One of the ways you can bring some healing to yourself and certainly to others is to prepare yourself to answer, counsel, and refer those you know who might be contemplating suicide.

I have included an article on our web site under "Ministry Central," entitled "Highway to Nowhere." It tells the story of an attempted suicide and concludes with some help on how to recognize signs of suicidal intention and help a suicidal friend recognize the signs.

I sure do pray I have helped in my response. If there is a need for any further clarification, I would appreciate hearing from you.