

What About Suicide?

The thoughts, feelings, and emotions of a person contemplating suicide are difficult to understand. So many different circumstances can be involved. Many people with suicidal thoughts are struggling with despair, hopelessness, and depression, and they reach the point where the struggle becomes too unbearable. With others, something has altered their normal thought patterns. Perhaps a chemical imbalance progresses into emotional and mental instability. Or the mind is altered by alcohol or drugs, which could result in an 'impulse' act of suicide. It is not out of the question that perhaps a combination of these circumstances exists. And sadly, even those who are very close to someone with suicidal thoughts may never know that person's thoughts and feelings.

What about a child of God? Can a child of God commit suicide and still go to Heaven? For some, this question causes serious struggles of the mind and tests our faith and belief systems. But in all honesty, there is a very clear answer to the question. And that answer is – yes. If a child of God commits suicide, that person will still go to Heaven. Many people would say that it's just not that easy of an answer. Well, let's ask and try to answer some questions, and after reading this short article, turn your Bible to the Scriptures listed at the end. I believe you will find much comfort and peace in knowing that God will take care of his own, regardless of what we may go through in this life or what manner of death we may endure.

"Isn't suicide a sin?" Yes, it is. Suicide is murder, and murder is sin.

"Don't we have to repent and ask forgiveness for our sins?" Of course we do, if we want to enjoy God's blessings in our lives.

"Well, a person who commits suicide can't repent of that sin. And even if the person tried to ask forgiveness before he took his own life, is it really genuine if he goes through with it?" It is certainly true that a person cannot repent, that is, stop doing something wrong, when it comes to the sin of suicide. Only God could know the sincerity of the person's heart who might ask to be forgiven before he commits the sin. But the major stumblingblock that so many have regarding this issue really goes back to their understanding of salvation in the first place.

When God saves a sinner, he is born again. In the new birth, the redemption that Jesus obtained on the cross is actually applied to us. Redemption is the forgiveness of sins. When a person is born again, he is forgiven of all his sins: past, present, and future. God didn't just forgive us of our past sins when we were saved, and then require that we ask forgiveness for every sin we commit in the future in order to stay saved. We all know that we commit sin at times and don't even realize it. Whether we are aware of every sin we commit or not, sin is still sin, and anything short of complete perfection is sin – perfect thoughts, perfect words, and perfect actions.

Now, we are certainly supposed to ask for forgiveness. If we have unconfessed sin in our life, or have knowingly failed to repent of a sin, we will not enjoy the peace, comfort, and joy that God has promised to His obedient children. And, perhaps the most serious consequence, we will not enjoy the precious assurance of our salvation if we have not confessed and repented of something we know to be sin. Our salvation will not be taken away, but we won't have the assurance we desire and we may even begin to question whether we ever belonged to the Lord or not. That can lead to a miserable 'hell on earth' for a child of God. In fact, the most miserable person in all the world is the child of God who has turned in rebellion and who is following after the flesh. So, the lack

What About Suicide?

of repentance or the failure to ask forgiveness is a serious thing for the child of God and can destroy the enjoyment of our salvation, but it does not cause us to lose our salvation.

Did we do anything to earn our salvation? If we did, then every time we sinned and failed to confess and repent, we would lose it again. If we received eternal life by our works, then our works could be the cause of us losing our eternal life. And if we were constantly receiving it and losing it and receiving it again, well...that's not eternal life. That's only a conditional promise of eternal life. That would be like a promissory note as though God was telling us if we did good enough, we could redeem the note after we die and finally be given eternal life. But the Bible says we are saved by grace, not by works. And Jesus said he would give us eternal life and we would never perish.

Someone might say, "*well, I don't know if he was a Christian or not. He never got baptized, or came down the aisle, or joined the church, or prayed at the altar.*" Again, this thinking shows some misunderstanding of how God saves sinners. Did our baptism save us? No, baptism is an act of obedience and a sign to those around us that we have a desire to follow Jesus. Did a prayer save us? Prayer is something we do. We're not saved by what we do, not even by the "sinner's prayer".

You see, we were born into the world dead in sin. We were spiritually dead from the time we were conceived in our mother's womb. A dead person in a coffin cannot respond naturally speaking – he cannot talk, he cannot rise up, he cannot hear, he cannot see, he can't even think – he is dead. The same principle applies to us spiritually – we cannot respond to the spiritual message of the gospel, we cannot pray a spiritual prayer, we can't think spiritual thoughts, we cannot do spiritual works, and in fact, we are not the least bit interested in doing anything of a spiritual nature. This is what the Bible refers to as being "dead in trespasses and in sin."

If a person prays from a sincere heart, if a person responds to the gospel, if a person believes in Jesus, if a person has a desire to obey the Lord, if a person loves God...it is all because that person is already born of the Spirit; he is already saved! You see, if we are dead in sin, then before we can do anything of a spiritual nature, we have to be given life. And everything we do of a spiritual nature after that is the evidence of life, not the cause. Life must come before action. The Bible tells us about many spiritual gifts from God that are called fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, gentleness, meekness, and faith. And this spiritual fruit is the evidence that a person has already been born of the Spirit of God.

Someone might say, "*well, it's not just being good that gets us to Heaven.*" And this is certainly true. But it's not anything that we do that gets us to Heaven! What gets us to Heaven is what Christ did with nothing else added to it. Salvation is by the grace and mercy of God. Spiritual life leads us to confession, repentance, belief, love, and obedience. These things are never the cause of eternal life, but rather the evidence. Faith in Christ is indeed the greatest assurance we can have, but considering our nature (dead in sin), a person who shows genuine love for others is also giving evidence that he has been born again. A person who demonstrates goodness, gentleness, and kindness toward others is a person who is also showing evidence of a work of grace in his heart. That person is already born again but he needs to hear the gospel, place his faith in Christ, glorify God in his life, and enjoy the assurance that comes in knowing who the Savior is.

It should be clear that our works, our good deeds, or acts of obedience are not the reason God gives us eternal life. It should be just as clear that what we fail to do cannot

What About Suicide?

take away that eternal life. The child of God who commits suicide has failed to trust God to take care of his problems but that doesn't stop that person from being His child.

1Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Ephesians 2:1, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins"

Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Romans 9:16, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

Titus 3:5-6, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

John 6:47, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

John 10:27-28, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

Romans 8:38-39, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

1John 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

Galatians 5:22, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Also consider:

Judges 16:25-31; Samson was a man of God who failed to control his own desires. He took his life while killing many of the enemy. However noble this final act may appear, he may have committed it with a spirit of revenge to some degree.

1Samuel 31:4-5; Saul was anointed by God to rule as the first king over Israel but allowed jealousy, anger, and revenge to take control of his life. He took his life out of fear and in shame. His armor-bearer also took his life out of fear of the enemy but perhaps also out of a sense of loyalty to Saul.

2Samuel 17:23; Ahithophel had been King David's trusted counselor but became caught up in a conspiracy against the king along with Absalom, the king's son. He saw that the counsel he gave had been thwarted and took his life in fear and shame.

What About Suicide?

1Kings 16:15-20; Zimri led a conspiracy against the king. He was soon found out and faced certain death. He went into his palace and set the house on fire and died in the fire. He took his own life “for the sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord.”

Another noted case of suicide is of course Judas, who betrayed Jesus. We know that Judas was called the son of perdition and most people reject the idea that he was a child of God. There is no question that Samson and Saul belonged to the Lord. It is very likely that Ahithophel was also God’s child. It would be hard to speculate about Zimri.

The comfort we have when dealing with heart-wrenching situations such as suicide comes in knowing that God is faithful, God is merciful, and He will never stop loving His own. The peace of mind we desire comes in having known someone in a close and personal way; knowing who they truly were at heart, and knowing that the goodness we saw in their heart could have only come from God. And as surely as they had been given that heart from the Lord, so they shall be at peace with Him in Heaven.