

## “Restoring the Joy: Turning from Suicide”

*by Jim Burns, Ph.D.*

Life is a series of choices and consequences. From the first choice any of us ever make, consequences follow . . . leading to a new set of choices based on those consequences . . . followed by *another* set of consequences resulting from *those* choices . . . and so on . . . and so on.

In His infinite wisdom, God gave each of us the freewill to make our own choices. For example – though He offers salvation as a free gift, we must choose to accept it . . . He will never force it upon us.

Now, to every rule, there is an exception . . . and, when it comes to making choices, there are actually two: none of us gets to choose when we are born, and only God determines when our time here on earth is through.

Of course, that doesn’t keep our finite brains from trying to plan every instant of our fleeting lives with predetermined outcomes based upon our own preferences, experiences and comfort zones. But that’s not to say that having such thoughts can lead to suicide. On the contrary, the aforementioned thought pattern actually reflects a healthy understanding that, eventually, this life will come to an end.

Many people have fleeting thoughts of death . . . but there’s a big difference between imagining yourself “gone” and planning to end your own life. In fact, suicide plans are a very serious matter.

Now, while there are two choices in life that only God controls, there are also two facts about suicide that are always true –

- **Most people who attempt suicide really do not want to die.** They see suicide as a solution to a problem, a way to end their pain. People who seriously consider suicide feel hopeless, worthless, and helpless. They honestly believe that no one can help them, that they cannot solve their own problems, and they’re overwhelmed with a sense of personal failure . . . but they want to end those feelings – not their own lives.
- **Suicide can be prevented.** While some suicides occur without warning, most do not. Recognizing the warning signs is the first step in the prevention process. They include a history of suicide attempts; a history of depression or other mental illness; an

alcohol or drug problem; and a plan to accomplish the task complete with the means (eg a weapon or drugs).

If you or someone you know is feeling as though the pain is too much and that suicide is the only way to end it, there's help waiting for you. Call the Suicide Prevention Helpline toll-free at . . . **1 – 800 – 784 – 2433 (SUICIDE)**. You can also visit their website at . . . [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org).

I also recommend talking to a qualified Christian therapist or counselor about the way you're feeling. The New Life Treatment Centers are a good place to start. Reach them toll-free at . . . **1 – 800 – NEW LIFE**, or go to . . . **NEWLIFE.COM**.

Anytime anyone talks about suicide or wanting to die or just disappear – even in a joking manner – the conversation *must* be taken seriously. Don't be afraid to talk to someone you think might be considering suicide. There is no evidence that talking about suicide leads to death.

Remember – *pain* is the driving force between most thoughts of suicide. With God's help and the proper support, that pain can be eased and eventually eliminated!

*(Excerpted from [healthwise](#) at [msn.com](#). Click [here](#) to go to [WWW.NEWLIFE.COM](http://WWW.NEWLIFE.COM) or [here](#) to go to [WWW.SUICIDOLOGY.ORG](http://WWW.SUICIDOLOGY.ORG).)*