



## GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Release date: June 20, 2016

Subject: Suicide

# SUICIDE--THE CRY OF THE DESPERATE

*Is your steadfast love declared in the grave or your faithfulness in Abaddon? Are your wonders known in the darkness or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? Psalm 88:11-12*

"Dear Dr. Sala," begins a letter from a very discouraged friend of Guidelines, who neither gave his full name nor an address. Jason tells about a broken home and the heartache he has experienced as his dreams and hopes fell apart. He says, "Many times before I left, I cried to God and begged him to save my marriage. What happened? Where was He? Why didn't he knock some sense into us?" He described his ordeal as a long valley through which he was walking and then, thinking about taking his life, asked, "How long are valleys supposed to last? Would you address the subject of suicide?"

For many today like Jason, suicide seems to be the trap door that delivers you from the dark valley of depression and difficulty, but is it really? Is suicide a problem-solving technique that puts an end to a bad marriage, or to suffering, or loneliness; or is it only the means of inflicting greater suffering on those who are part of the network of our lives--people we often don't think really care, but who may care, far more than we know?

One 18-year-old penned a note to his girlfriend before taking his life saying, "Karen, it [meaning suicide] may not be a good answer, but it's the only one I have...."

What a tragedy that somehow, somehow the message has never reached many desperate people: there is a way out of your problem. God is bigger than your pain and more caring than you have any idea.

God, however, doesn't "knock some sense into us," using Jason's expression. He works through people, and that's where the breakdown often comes. Sometimes those of us who are part of a family or a network of friends are just too busy, too indifferent to pick up on the distress signals, too occupied with our own set of problems to realize we may be the only thing in the world that stands between someone and destruction.

Whenever a celebrity takes his life, there is a flurry of articles and discussions about the subject. Then the whole issue of desperation sinks into the dark sea of oblivion and the problem goes on.

I have heard people say, "Somebody really has to be desperate to get attention when he or she does something like that." Attention is not the issue, but having someone listen is. Individuals who give up on life are dying for someone who cares to just listen to their frustration, to their heartache, to their anguish.

They don't really care how much you know, but they intensely want to know how much you care. The renowned psychiatrist Dr. William Glasser worked for several decades with juvenile offenders, youth at risk. Glasser believed that if there was just one person in the life of a youth--a person who would listen, care, who could be trusted--that one individual might be the anchor that saves the person from either a life of irresponsibility which could send him to prison or from suicide which could send the person to a premature grave.

You--no matter who you are--can be that person. One of the very sad things about the generation growing to young adulthood today is that we have given them everything technology has to offer but we have failed to give them the most important gifts of all--that of ourselves and an understanding of spiritual values. May God help us to overcome this gross failure and be present for them while we yet can.

Resource reading: Psalm 88