



Being a Christian Does Not Make You Immune to Depression, Hopelessness, or Suicide

This article is written by Jay Lowder and provided by ChurchLeaders.com.

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Being a Christian does not make you immune to depression, hopelessness, or suicide. At 21 years of age, I was so depressed and desperate for a way out that I found myself crouched on the couch, my white-knuckled hand holding a gun to my head. By God's grace, my roommate happened to come home early from work that day, and I put down my weapon when I heard his car pull up. Several weeks would go by before I finally talked to my roommate about my depression and what his early arrival that day circumvented.

Depression, hopelessness, and suicide are not an uncommon story.

Friends, my story is not an uncommon one. But when I relay these events to my Christian friends, they often react as if it is. As I share about how mentally unstable I was during that time of life, they reason that I must have not known the Lord, and they rejoice that I do now.

I, too, rejoice that I have God in my life; without Him, I literally wouldn't be here. However, even after I met Christ, there was a season when I drifted far away from God where I was again plagued with thoughts of suicide. Even though I did not make another attempt, I did battle with thoughts of escapism and self-violence. Although it is unthinkable to many Christians, being a disciple of Jesus does not make you immune from depression, hopelessness, and yes, even suicide.

In today's world, the church has normalized most "struggles" humans go through. If someone has a porn or lust addiction, we are quick to extend our compassionate prayers, help them get connected in a support group, and offer computer software that will block seducing images. For those who are ready to



quit their marriage or walk out of a family, there are workshops and counseling services. Temptation, gluttony, debt, gossiping, pride—the “acceptable” list of problems the church is willing to address goes on and on. Personal issues like these are met with a warm and extended hand; they are the types of downfalls people feel comfortable going to the pastor, support group, or even the altar for.



But suicidal thoughts? Crippling self-loathing? Deep depression?

Many Christians misunderstand these as tell-tale signs that someone is not truly engaged with their faith, trusting God, committed to prayer, or understanding God’s great love for them. The sad reality is that our closed-door, judgmental reaction to those in a similar state as my 21-year-old self makes everything worse. Depression leaves us feeling isolated and hopeless, and when our own brothers and sisters in Christ alienate us or downplay what we’re going through, it only serves to accentuate the reach of darkness in our souls. Equally deserting is when those struggling feel unable to voice their desperation out of fear of being judged, leaving them even more susceptible to despair and to the danger of not having a sounding board.



God knew what He was doing when He urged us to confess our sins to one another. In secret is where Satan does his most devastating work. If people know, people can pray, advocate, and intercede, all of which are antidotes to the devil’s sinister plans.

The church must talk about depression, hopelessness, and suicide

September one marked the beginning of **Suicide Prevention Month**. What would happen if the church were to use this opportunity to talk about depression, hopelessness, and suicide from the pulpit? I suspect that hurting individuals might realize they are not the only ones suffering, they are loved and not judged and can get the help they need to press on instead of turning to a gun to end it all as I almost did.

God has called us to shed light on that which is dark instead of burying the darkness under our discomfort, misconceptions, and lack of authenticity.

