

A Spirit of Suicide

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A Christian world view recognises conflict at a personal as well as global level. The forces of darkness strive to negate the purposes of God. It is about capturing the hearts and minds of those destined to be children of God. Sadly, even though God desires that none perish, many will choose darkness over light as it provides a cover for their evil designs.

Hordes of demonic beings are released over the earth for this is Satan's domain. Their work is to trick and torment, to test the steadfastness of even the godliest. Their goal is to harden people's hearts to the ways of God. Their method is concealment. Working undercover, they manufacture confusion, supporting compromise and encouraging filtered disclosure. They argue that nothing will be gained by telling the truth. They are adept at amassing evidence that keeps people in bondage to wrong choices, misleading comments, and questionable actions.

Within the ranks of evil spirits there are those with particular responsibilities. A spirit of suicide is assigned to vulnerable people with the objective of undermining their resolve and generating circumstances where death is perceived to be preferable to life. The spirits believe that death by suicide is synonymous with defeat and disqualifies a person from participating in God's kingdom.

The role of the Church is to expose the works of Satan, to bring into the light that which has been hidden. Victory over evil requires an understanding of the strategies employed to bring people into bondage. As it is written in the sacred text, 'The truth will set you free.'

Ken Tada is married to Joni Eareckson, Christian artist, writer and international speaker. Prior to their marriage both Ken and Joni had an encounter with a spirit of suicide. Ken says that over a two year period there was not a day went by that he didn't think about suicide. It was never an overwhelming compulsion; it was more like an extra shadow that followed him everywhere he went. The

thoughts played in his head like the proverbial broken record. What's the purpose of life? What's the reason for going on? What could I hope to accomplish? Why not just end the charade? It would be so easy. Maybe his dad had been right. He was a disappointment. Maybe he lacked the drive to make something of himself. Maybe he wouldn't achieve anything. The empty years seemed to stretch out before him. Ken knew nothing of spiritual warfare. (Ken & Joni Eareckson Tada with Larry Libby. *Joni and Ken: The Untold Love Story*)

It is warfare and I will endeavour, with God's help, to cast a light on the spirit of suicide. We are facing a global epidemic. Over a million people take their lives each year. The spirit of suicide seemingly advances unchecked. But what of the methods employed? What guarantees unmitigated success?

The spirit of suicide utilises a variety of strategies. Here is ten ways the spirit of suicide works to achieve his end.

- (1) The spirit of suicide normalises death suggesting that death is the natural outcome for those who have given up on life.
- (2) The spirit of suicide exonerates those who contemplate taking their life. 'There is no cause for apprehension or guilt. Your life is your own and you can dispense with it as you wish.'
- (3) The spirit of suicide monopolises the thought processes and promotes the negatives to the exclusion of all that is good.
- (4) The spirit of suicide filters the advice and counsel of others ensuring that any truth is counterbalanced by arguments that cast doubt and confusion.
- (5) The spirit of suicide reduces quality of life draining it of its vitality by challenging eating habits and denying sleep.
- (6) The spirit of suicide erodes any sense of purpose undermining its value and belittling every praiseworthy action.
- (7) The spirit of suicide alienates by causing a breakdown in communication and convincing the person at risk that they are a burden to others.
- (8) The spirit of suicide reinforces a self deprecating mindset that sees nothing good in oneself and expresses negative statements about one's appearance or abilities.
- (9) The spirit of suicide introduces the means of completing the act through exposure to the media, internet, literature and song.

(10) The spirit of suicide uses a death by suicide as a catalyst to challenge the resolve of others and cause them to think about taking their life.

The Christian church has an important role to play in praying against the spirit of suicide. This is not to say other suicide prevention strategies aren't beneficial. What powerful intercessory prayer accomplishes is nullifying the influence of the spirit of suicide thus allowing the person at risk the freedom to respond to other effective interventions.

The following prayer can be offered to God with or without the person present.

A Prayer of Protection:

Father, we pray against the spirit of suicide which is influencing people of all ages and from different backgrounds to take their lives.

Father, our authority rests in what your Son accomplished on the cross. Satan is defeated but his influence is still felt as he works to bring people into bondage.

Father, your Son came to break the chains that bind, to release the captives and to set free those who are oppressed.

Father, we bind the spirit of suicide that is harassing We know that the spirit of suicide works to create a situation that is untenable where death is seen as a logical outcome.

Father, we pray for your protection. We pray that won't alienate themselves but will recognise and value the support of family and friends. We pray that won't see themselves as a burden to others but will honestly seek help when they need it.

Father, we pray for clarity of thought based on the wisdom you bring. We know that the spirit of suicide creates confusion and promotes guilt and shame.

Father, we pray that might discover a reason to live and a renewed hope.

Father, we say 'NO!' to Satan, we say 'NO!' to his schemes, we say 'NO!' to his relentless attack on the vulnerable and those at risk. We create a wall of faith around and we will not be moved.

Father, we celebrate your victory, your power and authority that is freely available to those who walk in obedience to your commands. Amen