



# TAKING ONE'S OWN LIFE

*By Carl McMurray*

We heard this past week of another young person, an acquaintance of some of our teens, who took their own life. I am always saddened by such news. Not just the tragedy of a young life gone, but by what they must have thought for them to reach the decision that dying was better than living. What a hopeless and faithless viewpoint they must have been living with. We continue to hear each year of similar tragedies and it gives us pause to wonder about this option for God's children.

In Judges 9, King Abimelech called for his armor bearer to kill him after his head was crushed with a stone thrown off a wall by a woman. But it is explained that this was his pride speaking, so that it would not be said he was slain by a woman.

In I Samuel 31, wounded King Saul likewise ordered his armor bearer to slay him, after losing a battle and his three sons. He did not want the Philistines to catch him alive and "make sport" of him. His armor bearer refused so Saul killed himself, followed in a last act of loyalty, by his armor bearer. Again, seeing oneself as losing everything and trying to avoid the ridicule of his enemies seemed to be the motive.

And of course, the dark example of Judas looms over the gospels as one who chose death to repentance. Certainly an act conceived in shame by one who misunderstood the forgiving nature of the one he betrayed.

On the other hand we have righteous Job. He also suffered mightily from losing family, possessions, loved ones, his health, and the support of friends. His wife even called upon him to curse God and die. But he continues through the ages as an example to us today of one who hoped for a better day because he had unwavering faith in the one who gives us each day.

It appears from a cursory reading of Scripture that sorrow and shame and hopelessness may indeed be reasons why people take their own lives. But they are not good reasons. Instead the declaration of the Christian is that we will trust our Captain. We trust that no situation is greater than the God we serve. If we must give our lives to be Christians, then so be it. But the child of God does not take his own life because it is not ours to take. We have given it up to God to be used for His glory. If being abased in some way, whether by loss or sickness, is where God leaves us (as he left Job sifting in the ashes scraping himself) then we shall sit patiently awaiting his use of that situation to His glory. God knows how many have heard the gospel from the edge of a hospital bed. We will not seek death as an escape, but bless the Lord in whom we have put our faith and trust Him to carry us through.

We are saddened by those of any age who can see no hope or light in their life. And we should be more determined than ever to share with men the hope that we have been given in Christ and the promise of what is to come.