

PAIN, WORRY, GRIEF, DEPRESSION, SUICIDE: DOES ANYBODY CARE?!

Pain, worry, grief, depression, suicide: does anybody care? If you are facing any of these struggles— or all of them—I know somebody who does care. Take time to listen. You won't be sorry.

INTRODUCTION

Suicide is an epidemic among young people who feel life is hopeless. The same is true for many of the old. Even the rich and famous kill themselves rather than face the future. Pain, worry, grief, and depression. We've all been on this road that causes desperate people to want to scream "Does anybody care?" Can anyone help me with more than talk? You are going to meet that person in the next 30 minutes. The One millions have found can be counted not just to care but to take your hopelessness and give you peace.

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Someone You Can't Avoid

"Everyone knows me. No one likes me. My name is 'Pain', and that's enough to make you want to turn me off. But don't do that. Listen to me and you'll learn that I'm not all bad. After all, if it wasn't for me, you would touch that hot stove and not have enough sense to yell 'ouch' and let go.

"I've been around a long time. In fact, I've given my pain treatments to you humans since Adam and Eve first embraced. That's where I came in and why I'm on the way out—at least as far as those who love God are concerned. The only way I got started was when the devil—ok he was a real charmer—seduced Eve into a debate. You humans were told to resist Satan, not debate him. She lost the debate, they lost their innocence, and I, Pain, came on the scene. First was their head pain of a guilty conscience and God's eviction notice. No more garden. I struck again when she had her first baby. And I've been attacking you humans ever since. Pain—and lots of it.

"It's what you do with me that determines my effect on you. Take your ancestor, David. He was headed in Satan's direction—wandering astray from God like a lost sheep. Then God used me—pain—to affect him, and David went running back to His Creator, closer than ever.

"Then there was old Judas. When you think about it, he wasn't much worse than Pater—at least what he did. They both sold out the Savior. That's when I struck again. Pain. The worst kind. In the head and in the heart with fear, foreboding and failure. Judas chose suicide. That meant no chance at a better alternative. Peter? He wept bitterly, found forgiveness and lived to experience God's presence and plan for his life.

"You can't avoid pain, my friend. Neither could God the Father and Jesus Christ. That's because they had you in mind—and your sins that made you blind. God's love was more than to talk—that's why He allowed sinful men to kill His beloved Son. Talk about heart pain! And Jesus accepted the curses, spit, thorns and nails to save you from hell!

"That's why you have someone very important who cares about the pain you feel—Yes, somebody does care. The God who made you, and the Savior who died for you. Christ's resurrection shattered my power over Him. No more pain. Now it's your turn. You can't avoid me. My name is Pain—and that's what I inflict. All kinds of pain. Pain of not feeling loved. Pain from being bullied or pushed aside by your peers. Pain caused by an unfaithful mate—parents who don't care—a child who won't listen—an empty chair where death has silenced a voice you cry to hear again. Pain from cancer and a hundred other diseases that stretch your endurance to the breaking point.

“That’s how I work. My name is Pain. My cousins Grief, Worry and Depression now wait to take their best shot at you. The devil knows how to use us. He even keeps the ugliest of us all—Suicide—well concealed in order to strike down the ones his lies convince face a hopeless future.

“But then there is the awesome God who holds the future in His hand. As soon as someone I strike with pain cries out ‘Help, Lord!’ He’s there. With his mercy, grace, strength, touch and, at times, a miracle of healing. But it’s always the presence of Jesus that makes the human spirit able to tolerate anything, I pain throw at them.

“Sometimes it takes time. You may even have to go through three other valleys where my cousins Grief, Worry and Depression are waiting. But even I, Pain, knows God intends to win you, now or later. Because He loves you. Because Jesus cares. And His Cross will be like a guardrail to keep you from falling off the cliff into the pit where lurks the monster himself, Suicide!”

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Worry: The Subtle Killer

“I work closely with my cousin, Pain. People find it impossible to ignore him—and pain most often opens the door for me. Then I—Worry—go to work on my human subject. Cousin Pain has access to every part of you—at least your body and mind. I’m limited to your mind, but when I finish with my victims, I have affected—even killed—many of their bodies.

“I admit that the Word of God—the Bible—exposes me, and your dictionary describes how I operate. I try to annoy, bother and harass you. To make you feel distressed in the mind—you know, anxious, troubled, or uneasy.

“I don’t have to look far for victims. Cousin Pain provides most of them. Take those with cancer or heart attacks. I’m so subtle. Most of you don’t know how the devil takes me—Worry—and uses me to torment you. Like ‘will my cancer come back?’ ‘Will it be fatal?’ ‘What will happen to my wife/husband/kids if I die?’ ‘Will the next heart attack kill me?’ ‘Am I getting Alzheimer’s disease? Dementia?’ ‘Will I always be a victim of bullies?’ ‘Am I just a loser?’ ‘Does anyone really care whether I live or die?’

“Yes, my name is Worry. And those are just a few of the 10,000 questions that God’s adversary uses to turn me loose to shake, rattle and scare you half to death.

“See we work in stages. There’s Pain—and me, Worry. Then there are the other two cousins. Grief and Depression. You’ll meet them later. And, of course, there’s the real monster in the family—you might accurately call him a devil himself—Suicide. With four of us, you just might escape our clutches and control by reaching out to that awesome Jesus who is always reaching out to you. That’s why the one Jesus defeated is so desperate to seduce any victims with his biggest lie of all—that suicide is the only way out. Satan! What a liar!

“But back to me, Worry. I can operate only as long as Satan can divert your gaze from Jesus. You’re the reason God sent Him. And I admit—Jesus is more than talk. He has the power to blow me—Worry—out of your life in a moment of time. In fact, it happens again and again. He even turns every negative thing that Pain and I, Worry, throw at you into a positive. ‘Does anyone really care whether I live or die?’ one worrywart asked. And Jesus showed him His nail-pierced hands and answered, ‘I do! Enough to have died for you!’ That guy’s worry vanished in a hurry.

“Then there were two other of you humans that I was killing with worry. God’s Holy Spirit broke through, they cried out to Jesus to save them and, wham, they were born again.

And then Jesus Christ told them He could heal them. But even if they died, He guaranteed them eternal life in a pain-free, glorious Kingdom of heaven. Another door that I, Worry, had closed in my face.

“On and on it goes. Even that old couple I tried to worry to their graves. ‘Alzheimer’s! Dementia! Old age problems!’ I kept repeating. Then they took hands in prayer and told God that since He cared for the birds and the flowers, they trusted He would care for them. And they committed the rest of their days to loving Christ and His Word. Another eviction notice for me—no more worries about tomorrow.

“And those young people. Like the one worrying over being bullied and called a loser. She discarded the baloney taught in school—you know, the fairy tale called evolution where the princess kisses a frog and it turns into a prince—and asked Jesus to be her Savior and friend.

“Of course, God never says no to a thirsty heart. He not only saved her soul but changed her life. She started concentrating on Jesus making her a winner and, well...! Worry was out of a job. And she was on her way to witnessing about the miracle of God’s love in her life. She even told her story on the internet and forgave the bullies!

“That’s what happens when you humans call out to Christ. Worries become nonexistent, or else manageable, as God reveals His love, step by step, day by day.

“But now I, Worry, have to step aside. It’s time for cousin Grief to expose his operation. You’ll find him both friend and foe. Once again, the awesome God who cares about you can use cousin Grief to heal you. Or the devil can use grief to tell you his constant lie that your life is hopeless. As always, the choice will be yours.”

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What Do You Do With A Broken Heart?

“You’ve heard from two of my cousins, Pain and Worry. Now it’s my turn. My name is Grief, and if you have not met me yet, you will. Some people know me by my two nicknames, Sorrow and Distress. Whatever you wish to call me, you’ll know when I enter your life. They all do. It’s when you have a broken heart, and sorrow and distress almost take your breath away.

“I often feel like a neutral player in the game of life. The God of love—your Creator—can actually use me to help heal you humans. But your adversary—you know who—also uses me to try to crush you with me—Grief.

“Let me explain myself. I show up when something bad—or sad—comes your way. Someone you love so much dies. Or maybe it’s the loss of a special pet. Or it might be a friend who turns his or her back on you. Or a husband or wife who deserts you. Or a child who rejects you. Or a parent who doesn’t want you. Or...well, why go on. You get the point.

“Where cousin Pain works a lot on your body, I, Grief, work on your mind. That’s when God can use me to help heal you, or the devil will use me to try to let you think you’re on your own with a dead-end ahead.

“What amazes me is how many of you people try to carry me—Grief—all alone. You were never meant to. Your Creator God made you to live in His companionship and in His loving care. His Spirit is meant to carry your spirit through the toughest of times. How sad when you try to do it alone. Even I, Grief, feel grieved over that.

“How the devil tries to use me should be obvious. He wants God out of the equation. To make you think no one cares. That there’s no help to be found. Let him use me, Grief, to beat up on you long enough, and old devil Lucifer knows he can lure you into the valley where my other cousin awaits you—Depression. And from there, he may try to take you where there’s no turning back—to the monster himself—Suicide. Even I—Grief—warn you that you don’t want to go there.

“And God? How does He use me to help heal you? Remember David? He grieved over his terrible sins of adultery and murder—and the predicted loss of his little baby boy. But his broken heart turned to a hopeful one because he knew he would see the child in heaven. He grieved over his treacherous son Absalom’s death and almost didn’t recover. But again God rescued him from me, Grief, because David just couldn’t live without His Creator.

“Three other women grieved with broken hearts. The big difference between growing bitter or getting better was Jesus. Mary and Martha grieved over their dead brother Lazarus. They were so

distressed they even accused Jesus of showing up late. They forgot they were looking into the face of the resurrection and the life. But Christ came through. He always does.

“The same with that widow in the village of Nain. She grieved over the death of the only one she had left in the world. Once again, Jesus made the difference.

“God made you humans to cry. Tears of grief can bring healing. That’s why Christ told you it’s OK to sorrow—to grieve. But He added that you are not to grieve as hopeless people do. After all, if you are trusting in Jesus, you have eternal life and He even promises to make everything you go through turn out for your good. How can you beat that?

“Do you see it? Try to handle me—Grief—without God and you might tough it out. Millions do. But you’ll never know the peace and comfort—and the hope of uniting with loved ones for eternity—without inviting the Savior into your hearts. And without Him, you’ll find cousin Depression waiting to see what he can do to make your life miserable.

“My name is Grief. I’ve told you like it is. Choose Jesus and my effect on you will be softened with His sweetness and healed with His hope. Say no to Him and all you have done is said yes to the one who is a liar from beginning to end, Satan himself. Why be so foolish to give him that pleasure?”

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Depression: The Swamp Of Hopelessness

“You’ve heard from cousins Pain, Worry and Grief. You could almost call them nice in comparison to me. When I reach you—or you reach me—you’ll find me a swamp that will try to suck you under. I’m Depression—and I’m bad.

“No, I don’t kill all my victims. But I make every one of them so miserable and negative that they affect everyone around them. It’s what I can do to your emotions to give you that feeling of gloominess, dejection, inadequacy and hopelessness. Some of you fall into my swamp of depression over a physical problem that won’t go away. Or the young man whose gal left him for another. Then there was the woman who had an abortion and almost went crazy when she awakened to what she had done to her baby. I can really work my depression on young people. You know, that feeling of inadequacy over looks or talents. Or no caring friends. Or a dysfunctional home. Or a fear that they won’t be able to navigate the future.

“Then there are people with marriage and financial problems that look bigger than mountains—and older folks who believe no one cares about them anymore. My valley of depression has no shortage of people with not just broken bodies, but far worse—broken spirits.

“Some never find a way out. They live with me, Depression, and they die with me. Others learn to cope by going to psychiatrists and popping pills. Most of those psychiatrists don’t know a thing about the best cure for depression—on encounter with God. And too many of those anti-depressant pills help in the short run and do harm in the long run. But those are the best hope you humans have, unless...

“...unless you meet the Architect of life. You know, the One who is more than talk. Yes, that One who created you and knows what you really need to be fulfilled and able to handle anything life throws at you. It’s no use you saying, ‘I know you mean I need God. That might work for others but not me. God could never understand what I have to handle as a human.’

“Now even I, Depression, can’t let you get away with that excuse. That’s because of what I tried to do with Jesus and utterly failed. I hoped to drown Him in my swamp of depression and keep Him from giving His life in order to save yours. Talk about reasons to feel depressed! He had plenty. Siblings who doubted who He was. Religious leaders always trying to kill Him. Disciples—his very best friends—who abandoned Him when he needed them the most. People loving Him one minute when He gave them free meals and hating Him when He pointed out that He, not the free bread, was what they

needed most in life. Huge nails driven through His wrists and feet. And the sins of every human being—that's a lot of garbage—placed on Him so that you could be forgiven, saved from the hell that is your sin, and join Him and His Father in a forever Kingdom.

“So if you choose to remain with me—Depression—in my depressing swamp, you may do so. And the devil who uses me to affect and infect so many of your heads will do anything in his limited power to keep you from knowing that someone does care. Someone with all power in heaven and on earth who loves you beyond your craziest hope or imagination. He is the chief psychiatrist you can run to. His office hours are 24/7 and you'll like the price. He paid it all in advance. He's also a heart specialist with transplants His forte. Why, He removes the worst and hardest spiritual hearts damaged by sin and transplants His own beautiful heart of right thinking and righteous actions.

“Though my name is Depression, and Satan wanted me to keep my mouth shut, I have told you the truth. After all, what more can the devil do to me. I'm already depressed. But you? Don't enter that final valley of no return—that monster cousin of ours called Suicide. Take Jesus. Ask Him to forgive your sins and change your life. Ask Him to handle your problems and show you His solutions. Then start to read and obey His Word—the Bible. He promises to pull off the biggest miracle of all—to make Himself known to you in a way you'll understand. Even I, Depression must say WOW! to that.

“But ignore His offer and insist on running your own life and you just might begin to entertain the devil's biggest lie of all—that no one care and your only escape is suicide. I warn you. Don't buy that lie!”

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The Devil's Final Trap

"Well, here I am. What people think is their last resort. I'm the baddest of the bad. The worst of the worst. My name is Suicide. If I wasn't being forced to tell you about me, I'd keep my mouth shut and you in the dark. That way even you might one day entertain me as an option. But once you know the truth, I'll be exposed for what I am—the devil's deadliest tool.

"You've met my cousin's Pain, Worry, Grief and Depression. They think they're better than me. As bad as they are, they act like I'm a monster and don't let me get too close. That's okay. I still use them to trap my victims. You humans might survive those other four, but not me. With them, you can still find God's help and strength to carry on, and be a testimony to others—even in your sufferings. But try me—buy me—Suicide, and there's no going back. Gotcha! Satan calls it luring you out of the frying pan, into the fire. Literally!

"Our victims are many. Young and old. Educated and simple. Men and women. Students and teachers. Dads, moms, sons, daughters. The old woman who hung herself after leaving a note saying, 'I'm so lonely.' The cancer victim who was tired of suffering. The teenagers who made a suicide pact and followed through. The politician caught in a scandal, who killed himself rather than be humiliated. The athlete who was over the hill and chose death—me, Suicide—rather than life without the glory. Another teen who was bullied and embarrassed by her peers on the Internet. The parent distraught over the death of a child. You get the point. Why go on with my endless list of victims?!

"But I, Suicide, the deadly enemy of desperate humans, also have an enemy. My enemy is the one who calls Himself Love—yes, God. And the One who walked on this planet and gave His life so that you humans could be set free from sin and the devil's lies and experience the awesome power of His love in your lives.

"I told you in the beginning that I would do what I never do—tell you the truth—just this once. So here it is. The one who uses me—the devil—came to kill, steal and destroy. Your Creator came to give you abundant life that never ends. The dark voice tells you there is no God and that you are only the protoplasm and psychoplasm of evolution with no purpose or value. The voice of light—Jesus—says you have an eternal purpose and incalculable value.

“The dark voice lies that you own yourself and can take your life whenever you want. That other voice of your Maker tells you that you’re not your own because He bought you with His love and wants you to live until He calls you to His home.

“The dark and panicky thought from Satan insists that your life is now meaningless and should end at your hand. The voice of your designer—your awesome God—whispers that your life has meaning and that He who gave it should be the One who determines your final physical breath.

“Oh you blind humans. So many of you who take me, Suicide, as your way out buy the lie that if there was a God, things would be easier. Well, there is a God, and things are never easy. He never told you they would be. My evil boss—you know who—didn’t make it easy on Jesus. Will you ever get it? Look what Jesus went through. He was tempted in all points as you humans. All points? Even the temptation to end His sufferings and His life? Even I, Suicide, couldn’t seduce Him. And now He offers all He is and all He has to you! The Creator of the universe loves little old you!

“Wake up, human. If God gets you, I don’t. Reject Him today and you just might accept me some day. If I, Suicide, win, you end your life on earth and begin it again in hell. Whether you believe or not. And, maybe even worse, you leave your loved ones with the stigma of suicide and some family and friends who might decide to follow your tragic example.

“But if Jesus wins, I lose. For no matter what you go through, you have His promise (yes, from God who cannot lie) that He will not leave you comfortless. And He guarantees you a peace that will settle in your heart and head and that no storms of life or lies of the devil can overcome.

“So there. Just this once, I’ve told it like it is. Choose me, Suicide, and you lose—immediately and for eternity. A very poor choice. Choose the awesome Son of God and you win—His presence now, and together with Him forever. A very wise choice indeed. Cousins Pain, Worry, Grief and Depression will no doubt test, tempt and try you all through your brief time on earth. But me, Suicide—don’t even think about it! If you do...Time for me to go. Because here He comes, Jesus, with His arms wide open for guess who? Yes, you!”

WRAP UP

Son now—you're in the valley of decision. You have one awesome God who loves you. You have one adversary who hates you. Jesus wants to give you new life. Satan wants to steal, kill and destroy your future. You must make the choice. Jesus the Savior is not a religion. He is reality. So receive Him right now. Pray this prayer: "Dear God. I need you. I cannot carry my burdens alone. Forgive me all my sins. Cleanse my heart with the precious blood of Jesus. Lord Jesus, come into my heart and life. I want to love You. I want to know You. Amen"

I want to know you have made your decision to trust the trustworthy one—Christ. Jim will tell you how to get in touch with us. I'm Frank Eiklor. Until next time—remember you'll always find Jesus is More Than Talk.