



## **Depression, Addiction, and Suicide Scripture and Church Teaching**

**The Psalms are a great source of hope and consolation for everyone, especially those who may be dealing with depression, addiction, and suicidal thoughts. Look up the full passages in a Bible.**

**Psalm 23:** “The Lord is my Shepherd”

**Psalm 27:** “The Lord is my light and my salvation”

**Psalm 34:** “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted

**Psalm 46:** “God is our refuge and strength”

**Psalm 55:** “Cast your burden on the Lord”

**James 4:10:** “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”

**Isaiah 41:10** “...do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.”

**Jeremiah 29:11-14** “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord...”

**The Catechism of the Catholic Church shares Church teaching on suicide as well as addiction, whether it be substance abuse or an addiction to pornography.**

### **Suicide**

“Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it to him. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life. We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of” (CCC 2280).

“Suicide contradicts the natural inclination of the human being to preserve and perpetuate his life. It is gravely contrary to the just love of self. It likewise offends love of neighbor because it unjustly breaks the ties of solidarity with family, nation, and other human societies to which we continue to have obligations.

Suicide is contrary to love for the living God” (CCC 2281).

If suicide is committed with the intention of setting an example, especially to the young, it also takes on the gravity of scandal. Voluntary co-operation in suicide is contrary to the moral law. Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide.” (CCC 2282).

**“We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives.”** (CCC 2283).

### **Addiction**

“Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good” (CCC 2288).

“The virtue of temperance disposes us to *avoid every kind of excess*: the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco, or medicine. Those incur grave guilt who, by drunkenness or a love of speed, endanger their own and others’ safety on the road, at sea, or in the air” (CCC 2290).

“The use of drugs inflicts very grave damage on human health and life. Their use, except on strictly therapeutic grounds, is a grave offense. Clandestine production of and trafficking in drugs are scandalous practices. They constitute direct co-operation in evil, since they encourage people to practices gravely contrary to the moral law” (CCC 2291).

“*Pornography* consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense. Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials” (CCC 2354).

**Addiction is one of the many consequences of Original Sin, it is thus a spiritual as well as a physical battle. While appropriate medical help is essential, one must also recognize the need for God’s grace and submit to the saving action of the Holy Spirit in overcoming an addiction.**

“Because man is a *composite being, spirit and body*, there already exists a certain tension in him; a certain struggle of tendencies between “spirit” and “flesh” develops. But in fact this struggle belongs to the heritage of sin. It is a consequence of sin and at the same time a confirmation of it. It is part of the daily experience of the spiritual battle: For the Apostle it is not a matter of despising and condemning the body which with the spiritual soul constitutes man’s nature and personal subjectivity. Rather, he is concerned with the morally *good or bad* works, or better, the permanent dispositions -- virtues and vices -- which are the fruit of *submission* (in the first case) or of *resistance* (in the second case) to *the saving action of the Holy Spirit*. For this reason the Apostle writes: “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit” (CCC 2516).