“S.T.O.P. and Read This Book"

By Saved and Pierced

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Printed in the U.S.A.

Dedicated to all those struggling with depression and thoughts of suicide in their own lives.

I pray this book will be like a bright full moon on the darkest night or like a bright lighthouse spotted on a foggy day.

May we all love those around us and realize that we are all in this journey of life together.

Introduction

Have you ever thought about taking your own life? Do you know what it's like to have bombarding thoughts of taking your own life running around your head? If so, then I am glad that you chose to stop and read this book. I want you to know that I have struggled with those same thoughts during my life. Especially while writing this book, I felt constantly under attack with depressing thoughts of suicide swirling around my head.

Social media didn't help with the constant barrage of people posting to tell me they are living a life more exciting than mine. And Hollywood didn't help with the endless stream of movies showing people shooting other people in violent plots supposed to entertain me. Amidst all this drama online, many of us importantly have some real life problem that is either nagging away at us or has our life completely turned upside down in some urgent crisis. For many of us, such is modern life today.

But I am here to give you hope and I want to tell you one important answer for all of us struggling with depression and thoughts of suicide. And here it is, "We are not alone." If you don't read past this page of my book, then I want you to remember this, "You are not alone in your thoughts of ending it all." At some level, each of us is struggling with some current crisis in life. It may be a health issue, the loss of a loved one, or perhaps you lost your job, or you have a current problem at your school or college.

Our life is full of challenges and right in the middle of those challenges, the demons in our heads try to tell us that we are totally alone facing our current crisis and that we have it worse than anyone else. That's the lie and the deception. Our demons seem to know that if they can get us feeling all alone in our life, then they have a greater chance of convincing us to end our life.

I am here today to tell you confidently and lovingly that you are not alone in your problems. We are all struggling in life and we all need support from one another to get through it. If you don't believe me, then try calling a friend today and ask them what problems they are dealing with right now. They will tell you. In fact, that can be another secret to solving our own problems. Try calling a friend and offering a listening ear to their problems. I think you will find that somehow by offering support to your friend, you will suddenly feel better about your own situation. By sharing our burdens with one another, they become lighter and easier to solve or at least to carry.

So please keep reading and know that you are loved and you are not alone in this journey that we call life. Talking and sharing with others is one of the key answers to solving depression and thoughts of suicide. Let's all have the courage to help ourselves and each other.

Part One

Have you ever thought about taking your own life? I do from time to time. Sadly, this is becoming considered normal in modern day life and the age of social media. Many of us look fine outwardly, but inwardly we are struggling each day with thoughts of depression and suicide. Has some recent crisis gotten you so angry or anxious or depressed that you have thought about ending it all? Does this sound familiar?

The Center for Disease Control ("CDC") reports that 12.8 million people in the U.S. thought about ending their own life in 2023. They also report that the annual rate of suicide has increased 37% from 2000 to 2018. The CDC reports that suicide is now a leading cause of death in the United States, especially among teenagers and adults between the ages of 18 and 40 years of age. I only share those statistics for one purpose; so that you and I will know that we are not alone. Depression and thoughts

of suicide have become an epidemic among us. There are lots of reasons why, but I want to share more about myself and some of the symptoms that I have dealt with in my own life journey.

When I become depressed and so down about things that I want to end my life, I usually have negative thoughts bombarding my head. I feel alone and desperate in my life situation. I begin to feel like no one cares about me. I sometimes feel like everything in my life doesn't work out. This makes me feel like a failure and a fraud in my life. I'm supposed to have it all together and I don't. I feel bad. I feel sad. And I feel alone. Some people call this "stinking thinking," and I think that's a good name for it. Once this "stinking thinking" starts for me, I can't turn it off. I cascade downward and inevitably some other piece of bad news hits me, sinking me further into depression. As I approach rock bottom, I begin thinking about ending

my own life. I think about committing suicide both to escape my own pain, but also to save others the pain of dealing with me and my problems.

When I am at this point of rock bottom, I usually know that I need to talk to someone about it, but I don't want too. My own pride tells me that it might be easier to take my own life rather than share my pain with someone else. I don't want to admit to my close friends and family how depressed I am feeling. I am a husband and father, so I am supposed to be the strong one in my family taking care of everybody else. I am sure many mothers and fathers and sons and daughters can relate to this. Everyone in our family just wants us to be okay. We are supposed to have all the answers. The last thing we really want to do when we are super-depressed is to have a stressful and depressing talk with our spouse or family member about how badly we are feeling. Sometimes it

can lead to an argument as our spouse may get frustrated that we are so depressed while being married to them. This just makes the rock bottom worse. Similarly, when I was young man, the last thing I wanted to do was talk to one of my parents about how depressed I was feeling. Even with the most supportive of parents, this sort of talk can be stressful, depressing and very hard to do.

Usually if I am going to talk to someone when I am feeling at rock bottom, then I am going to start with my best friend. Someone who knows me well and is often willing to listen to me without trying to quickly solve my problems. But even before I call my best friend, I still have to get myself out of my "stinking thinking" just enough that I am ready to reach out. Over the years, I have developed a process that has helped me to shift out of my hopeless depression. When this sort of rock bottom is

happening to me, I like to remember the word "S.T.O.P." to help turn myself around.

The (S) stands for "Someone cares about me." Maybe I don't feel like that is true right now. I have been there many times. Especially right after someone has rejected me. Maybe somebody that I care about a lot suddenly is not talking to me. They won't see me in person and they are not returning my calls or texts. Some people call it being "ghosted." I know what that is like. I have been "ghosted" and it really hurts, especially if it is someone we have been in a close relationship with. It can send me into a major depression. I can start to spiral downward. But I need to remember that just because one person is being a "jerk" to me does not mean that no one else cares about me. I care about me. And I have friends and family that care about me. Even strangers care about

me. Sometimes because of my disability I fall outside in public and often very kind strangers come to my aid!

Isn't it amazing how one person ghosting us can make us feel so miserable. This is part of the "stinking thinking" and this is why we have to "S.T.O.P." We need to realize that just because one person is being cruel or unkind to us, that doesn't mean that other people don't care about us. (S) Someone cares about me. I always need to remember that during my struggle and especially at rock bottom.

The (T) in "S.T.O.P." stands for "Things will get better". I don't know what crisis you are going through, but I have been through some of my own. Here are a few of mine. I went completely broke financially and I do mean penniless. I had my first wife leave me and divorce me. I have lost all feeling in my right foot due to nerve damage and as a result I walk using a cane. I lost my dear

little brother to cancer and he was in his thirties. I have lost other close family members that I love. I have lost jobs, several of them. I have been audited by the IRS. I have declared bankruptcy. I have had two painful back surgeries. I have had people that I care about be down-right nasty to me.

I have had some really bad days. And one thing is true about all of those bad days, things eventually got better. Things will get better for each of us. It may take a little while, but life will let up. Storms will pass. The pouring rain stops. You may have to wait a little while, but if you will "S.T.O.P." and wait, then "Things will get better." I can promise you that and I have been through some terrible storms.

The (O) in "S.T.O.P." stands for "Open up to change." This should be the easy part, but sometimes it's not. If we are in a bad place, then we should be open to

change. However, sometimes we get stuck. Sometimes we are so down on our luck, we don't realize that we are resisting things getting better. When I am in a bad place, I don't react well to people giving me advice. I tend to think they don't understand my situation and why my life is so bad. I'm often resistant to change and to trying something new. I can be stuck in a bad mood. A lot of times I need to do something outside, like take a walk or a hike or a drive, to get myself emotionally in a better place where I can embrace a new idea or a change. I need to do something to make myself "Open up to change." This is often when things do get better.

Most often it starts for me when I am finally ready for and open to a positive change. I have to decide to let go of the bad and be open to something good happening to me. Maybe I'm broke and alone, but someone wants to take me out to eat. Then I should go. Maybe someone

wants to give me some work or a project. Then I should do it. Maybe someone wants me to go to a meeting or a party with them. Then I should go do it. Let's be open to positive changes in our lives. Being open to positive changes will make things better.

The (P) in "S.T.O.P." stands for "Put the phone down," at least for a period of time. Most of us have our favorite device that we use to escape life. Maybe for you it's your large screen tv or laptop instead of your phone. But for many of us, it is our phone. We binge watch our favorite streaming series. We spend hours on Facebook, Instagram or TikTok. We watch YouTube videos or stream Netflix. Whatever we are doing, we are not really living, we are escaping. And yes, sometimes it's good to take a break to relax and escape life for a little while, but far too many of us are escaping life for hours or days at a time. And ultimately, it's depressing. We spend hours

watching other people, many of them fake or exaggerated, seeming to have better and more exciting lives than our own, only it's not real life. We are comparing our own lives to something or someone that is not real.

How crazy is that? We are comparing our own life to some imaginary story that somebody else made up, probably to either make money or get famous. So that makes us feel worse. And then while we are watching them on our phone, we are not getting anything done in our own life, so that makes us feel worse too. It's hard to do good work or to exercise or to even just make some food with a phone in our hand. To do most anything well, we need to focus on the task at hand and to not be so distracted. Try this for me. Think of something productive to do, like take a walk or make something to eat. And now I want you to go do it without your phone. Just do something productive and focus on it while you do

it. I think you will discover that you enjoy doing that thing even more when you aren't looking at your phone. Mobile phones can be very useful. But ultimately our lives can be better without a phone in our hands every minute of the day. Try taking a break from your phone, I think you will like it and be more happy and productive.

The next time you are thinking about taking your own life, I want you to think about "**S.T.O.P.**" **S**omeone cares about you. **T**hings will get better. **O**pen up to positive changes. **P**ut down your phone for a period of time. Sometimes by making a "S.T.O.P.", we give life a chance and it gets better. Often after I practice my own "S.T.O.P." process, then I am ready to talk to a close friend about my current problems. Sometimes a good close friend can share a new perspective from their own life experiences and may even have a solution that I haven't thought about. Once I successfully re-engage with

my friends and family, then I know I am back on a better track. I may not have solved the current crisis, but I know I will get through it with the support of my friends and family. I have remembered that I am not alone in this life and that I don't have to solve all my problems by myself. If you are hurting today, then I want to encourage you to try the **"S.T.O.P."** process and then afterwards try calling a close friend and talking to them about your situation. I really believe this will help get you back to a better place and moving forward in a positive direction in your life.

And if for some reason, you cannot seem to do these things then I want you to keep reading "Part Two" of my book because I have been stuck in my life and I want to share more with you about it.

Part Two

I came very close to taking my own life while in college. I was at a great school and I was on the football team, but I was deeply unhappy. I felt a tremendous amount of pressure to make good grades, to be a success on the football field, and to be popular socially on campus. The reality was that I hated playing football and my body was completely worn down with a bad ankle and a bad back. I also didn't have enough time to balance doing my school work or have any kind of social life while also doing college athletics. I felt trapped and alone and my body hurt like hell after a summer boot camp on the football field. I sat alone in a bathtub one night in my dormitory and I took a whole bunch of ibuprofen. I didn't know if it would kill me or not, but my goal was to at least be unconscious for a few hours. I don't really remember what happened next, except that I woke up in my bed in the dorm the next day and I didn't go to class or football

practice. I think someone from the team came to check on me and I told them what happened. To his credit, the team coach sent me to a school mental health counselor.

Things got better after that. I quit playing football and just focused on being a college student. I was able to grow stronger friendships with my college roommates because I had more time to spend with them and that helped give me the social support that I needed to succeed at school. My body healed up and I physically felt better. Thankfully, I was able to graduate from college a few years later and went on to have a successful career.

As a young adult in college, I hit a wall and had a mental health crisis. I thank God that I did not take my own life that night, although it could have turned out differently. I did finally get some counseling help and made positive changes to my life and things got better. In hind sight, I needed to take my own advice and to stop

before taking a bottle of pills. That is why I am writing this book. I want anyone that reads it to **"S.T.O.P."** before taking their own life.

Sometimes we need to take a breath and realize that we are at a crisis point before it becomes desperate. It's okay to admit that we are deeply unhappy about something and that we want to change it. If something or someone has you under so much pressure that you want to end your own life, then it is time to pause and step away from that thing or that person. No thing or no person has the right to make you feel like you want to kill yourself. When that happens, something is out of whack and often someone or something has pushed your boundaries way too far.

It's hard to stand up for yourself. Most of us, including me, try to go along with things in life to keep the peace. But sometimes a situation gets so bad that we have no choice but to stand up for ourselves, especially if

something or someone is making us miserable. Your life should not be miserable. Let's start making some changes together. Do you have something in your life that makes you deeply unhappy and that you want to change? What steps would you need to take to make that change? How will making that change make your life more positive and is it worth going through the pain to make that change?

Often a long journey starts with the first step. What is a first step that you can take today to make your life better? Do you need to have a difficult talk with somebody to make that change? Do you need a friend or colleague to help you talk to that other person? How can you make this change or have this talk in a safe manner?

Sometimes, we need to ask for help from other people to deal with a major crisis in our life. I want you to think about if you need a friend, family member or colleague involved to make this life change happen safely

and smoothly. Do you have a friend, family member or colleague you can call and describe the change that you want to make? Often a best friend or a loved one can help support us when we are making positive changes in our lives.

I know sometimes it can be hard to reach out to a friend or a loved one for help, especially when we are having a crisis. Remember that somebody cares about you. Sometimes, it easier to talk to someone you don't know very well, like a mental health counselor. There is a national helpline you can reach by dialing or texting 988 and you can talk to a counselor for free, anytime, 24 hours per day. If you are feeling overwhelmed and you are afraid to talk to a friend or loved one about it, then I want to encourage you to call the national helpline by dialing 988 on your cell phone. There is no shame in calling the national helpline and someone at 988 wants to talk to you.

We all understand that sometimes our thoughts can overwhelm us and we just need some immediate help. Sometimes the greatest gift we can give ourselves is reaching out for help when we need it.

If you are overwhelmed with life, then call 988 and talk to someone about it now. After a first conversation, they may suggest or even help you to find a therapist or mental health counselor that you can talk with on a regular basis. I have used therapist or counselors several times in my life for a period of weeks and months at a time, and it has proven to be very helpful to me. Sometimes having a trusted outside person to talk our problems through with is the key to getting better. Please consider taking this step to find someone to talk too. My only purpose in writing this book is to help you. If you are feeling like taking your own life, then there is nothing more important than calling and talking to someone about it today.

You can call the 988 helpline anytime day or night. If you don't have a friend or family member to talk too, then call or text 988. Love yourself enough to make the call. Talking to someone is often the first step to things getting better in your life. Reach out for the help you need today. You are not alone in this. Make the call or text, dial 988 or a trusted friend or loved one. Share with them how you are feeling today.

Part Three

I want to share with you about a time that I was broken down and I decided to reach out in prayer to God because I didn't feel like I had anyone else to turn too. I was 36 years old and married to my wife with two children, but I had become immobilized in my house because of severe back pain. I was relapsing after having a back surgery about five years earlier. I don't know what brought on the injury, but I could hardly walk or stand for about two weeks because of the intense back pain.

I was basically stuck in a bed, except for trying to make it to our bathroom and our hot tub for some relief. I had become unable to drive or go to work because of the pain. My wife was very concerned for me physically and for our finances because I was our sole wage earner. My primary doctor had given me a prescription for pain, but my back pain was coming through the pain pills and the

doctor's only other suggestion was for me to go back to see my surgeon for another surgery.

I just knew that I could not have another back surgery at that moment in time. I had an intense management job and I felt that I could not be absent for two or three months to have a second back surgery. I was literally in a crisis and I didn't feel like anyone could help me. During this time, I could barely stand and walk because of the intense back pain. I was in mental and physical agony.

One day I crawled from our bed to our hot tub for a soak which seemed to at least distract me from the pain for a few minutes. As I sat in the hot tub that afternoon I looked up at the ceiling and I said, "God, if you are real, I need your help. I just can't have another back surgery right now. I need to get better so that I can work. God, please help me. I'm sorry I have been so out of touch in

my life. I pray that you will have mercy on me, in Jesus name. Amen." I wish I could tell you that I got instantly healed in the hot tub that day. I did not, but I do believe that God heard my prayer. Slowly I started to get slightly better. Also, my boss told me to work from home for as long as I needed and I got set up so that I could do some computer work from bed. Then after about a month, I finally felt good enough to leave the house with my wife and my two boys to have breakfast at a little cafe in our small town.

As we entered the cafe and I limped painfully into the diner, a man approached me with very kind eyes. He said, "Sir, I am a chiropractor in the next town over and I can see you are having back problems. I'm guessing you have had surgery." I looked up at him. He had caught me off guard and I quietly responded, "Yeah, but I'm having a relapse." The chiropractor said, "I would never adjust you

in this condition, but we could try some massage and some other techniques which might help if you want to come over to my office one day." I said, "thank you, how can I reach you?" He dug in his pocket and handed me a business card with his telephone number on it and said, "Give me a call, I will make space for you anytime."

I called him the next day. I believe this was God having mercy on me. I became a patient of this kind and experienced chiropractor. He slowly and gently got me back into good place over the next few weeks. He never adjusted me, but he would massage my back and use some sort of tens unit to loosen up my back. He would closely look at my legs and apply light traction to my right leg to help open up space in my lower back. He worked on me over several weeks of treatment and I started to really improve. I really felt in my heart that God had answered my prayer and spared me from another surgery.

A few months later after going back to work, I was feeling so thankful to God that I decided to try going back to church in our area. I picked a nearby church where we had attended a wedding in the past. The next Sunday morning I walked into the church, grabbed a program, and sat down in the back row. As I looked at the program, I heard some familiar music coming from the front. I have only played one type of musical instrument in my life and that was a clarinet in high school. I knew I was hearing clarinet music which was sort of special. I looked up and in the front of the church I saw a father, son and grandfather, each playing a clarinet to make a beautiful trio. I got goosebumps and I felt like God was watching over me. I later learned that the family of clarinetists played at the church only one Sunday each summer. That year it just happened to be on the day when I decided to go back to church. Over the next few months, I went on to

become a member of the church and I even joined the church choir which gave me great joy and a whole new set of friends.

I don't know where you stand with God and religion. I grew up in a church as a youth, but I quickly fell out of any sort of religion during my college years and then my career. I know a lot of people have had very negative experiences with churches and religion. Other people seem to like going to church, while some people find a Higher Power through nature or reading or through meditation. I believe that each of person has to discover God for ourselves. I have tried several different paths and I just want to share with you that I believe in God and his son, Jesus. I believe during some of my darkest days that they have answered some of my most desperate prayers and have kept me going in this journey of life.

I'm ashamed to admit that it takes a crisis for me to pray sometimes, but I thank God that he has answered me during those times. I believe Jesus answers all those who call on him humbly during a time of crisis. I want to encourage you that if you feel like no one else can help you, then call on God and Jesus. I believe God will hear you and answer your prayer, although it may be different than you expect. I have a friend that likes to call God, "Jehovah-sneaky." What he means is that God often answers our prayers in unexpected ways. But I believe he hears and answers our prayers, especially when we are in a major crisis. I understand if you are skeptical, but I encourage you to try praying. You may never know if God is listening, if you don't try speaking to him.

You may want to start with a prayer like this, **"Dear God, I am in a crisis today. I don't know who else can help me, but you do. I don't know whom else to turn too. I'm sorry I took so long to call on you for help. Please help me to get out of this situation. I just want my life to be better. God, please help me today, in Jesus Name. Amen."**

After praying, we then have to wait and this can the hardest part. After we pray then we need to give God some time to work. We may not see any changes at first, but he is working behind the scenes. And that doesn't mean that I won't still try to help myself. Prayer in combination with taking positive steps in our lives is a great recipe for solving a crisis. I often say a prayer and then take the next positive step that I can in my own life journey.

I hope that you are feeling better than when you started reading my book. Perhaps you are feeling a little lighter and less depressed about things. I want to encourage you to have hope about your current situation or recent crisis. If you joined me in prayer above, then I want you to have hope that God will help you to solve this current crisis in your life. I believe God is going to answer you.

But I also want to be very responsible towards you, my reader. If you are still feeling overwhelmed and feeling suicidal, then I want you to call a friend, a loved one, or the national helpline by dialing 988 on your cell phone. We all understand that sometimes our thoughts overwhelm us and we just need some immediate help. If you are reluctant to call the 988 helpline, is there someone else that you can call and talk too? Do you have a friend or family member that you can speak to about how you are

feeling? Perhaps a friend or loved one can help you to find a therapist or counselor that you can talk to regularly in the weeks to come.

I want to encourage you to reach out to someone and make that call. I believe in prayer, but I also believe in reaching out to other people for the help we need. I believe that people care about you and want to know that you are feeling depressed and even suicidal. They may not have the answer to your problem, but I believe they would like to be on your team. Let's call someone today and tell them how depressed you are feeling. Tell them that you are reaching out for a listening ear. Tell them that you want some help to stop feeling this way. Sometimes taking the first step is the hardest. Let's take that first step today and call someone. Finding a trusted friend, therapist or counselor is often the first step towards finding a better and happier life.

I care about you and so do others in your life, probably more than you know. I wrote this book for you. Call someone today and share what's on your heart with them. If you get down again, then read this book again, say a prayer to God, and call somebody today. Keep talking to other people. Your life will get better. I promise and I have been to some low places. You did not read this book by accident. Have faith in that. We are all in this life together. I am sending you love and prayers from me. I will close with one of my favorite scriptures and the words of Jesus.

"My Peace, I leave with you. My Peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." John 14:27

Author Biography

Saved and Pierced lives with his family and writes to help others. He prefers to be anonymous and believes all Glory should go to God for his mercy and faithfulness. He gives Praise to Jesus for the gift of salvation and eternal life in Heaven. Call on Jesus and he will surely save you. He is faithful and merciful to all whom call on him.