

UNANSWERED

**INVISIBLE DISEASE:
MENTAL ILLNESS**

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INTRODUCTION

- After receiving more than four thousand questions at his Christian Thinkers Society events, Dr. Jeremiah Johnston recognized six categories of recurring, trending questions.
- Today we will examine another one of those questions:
- Mental illness and suicide - it's the invisible disease, it's the elephant in the room.

SUICIDE

SUICIDE

- People are surprised to hear that suicide and mental illness are the most frequently asked questions.
- For every question he receives about the Bible, he receives three questions about mental illness.
- He argues that it is the “elephant in the room” of every church in North America.
- Suicidal thoughts are common in our congregation and common among pastors.

SUICIDE

- In a speech Joe Biden reflected on the tragic death of his wife and young daughter.
- “For the first time in my life, I understood how someone could consciously decide to commit suicide . . . not because they are nuts. Because they’d been to the top of the mountain, and they just knew in their heart they’d never get there again.”

SUICIDE STATISTICS

- Nearly one million people worldwide take their lives every year.
- Twice as many Americans kill themselves than kill one another.
- One in five completed suicides in the U.S. involves a war veteran.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students.

CHRISTIAN - SUICIDE

- Can a Christian complete suicide? Yes.
- A Christian can be chronically depressed and contemplate suicide and even complete it.
- “Just because a person has received Jesus Christ as their Savior does not eradicate their choice in behaviors, their hereditary traits, nor their biological, mental, and emotional states.”

CHRISTIAN - SUICIDE

- Many Christians wonder what happens to a follower of Jesus who commits suicide.
- Salvation we receive from Jesus Christ is eternal.
- Ephesians 1:13 - "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

CHRISTIAN - SUICIDE

- 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 - "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."
- Matthew 11:28 - "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
- We wait until the return of Jesus when He will make all things new (Revelation 21:5).

OUR FALLEN BODIES

“Until the day Jesus returns, I will live in a body which does not function as God originally intended. My brain, which is a key, central, integral part of my body will not function correctly. Chemicals will become unbalanced. Serotonin will not be properly absorbed. Norepinephrine will be unevenly distributed. Synapses won't fire correctly. My brain, just like every other part of my body, is prone to illness.”

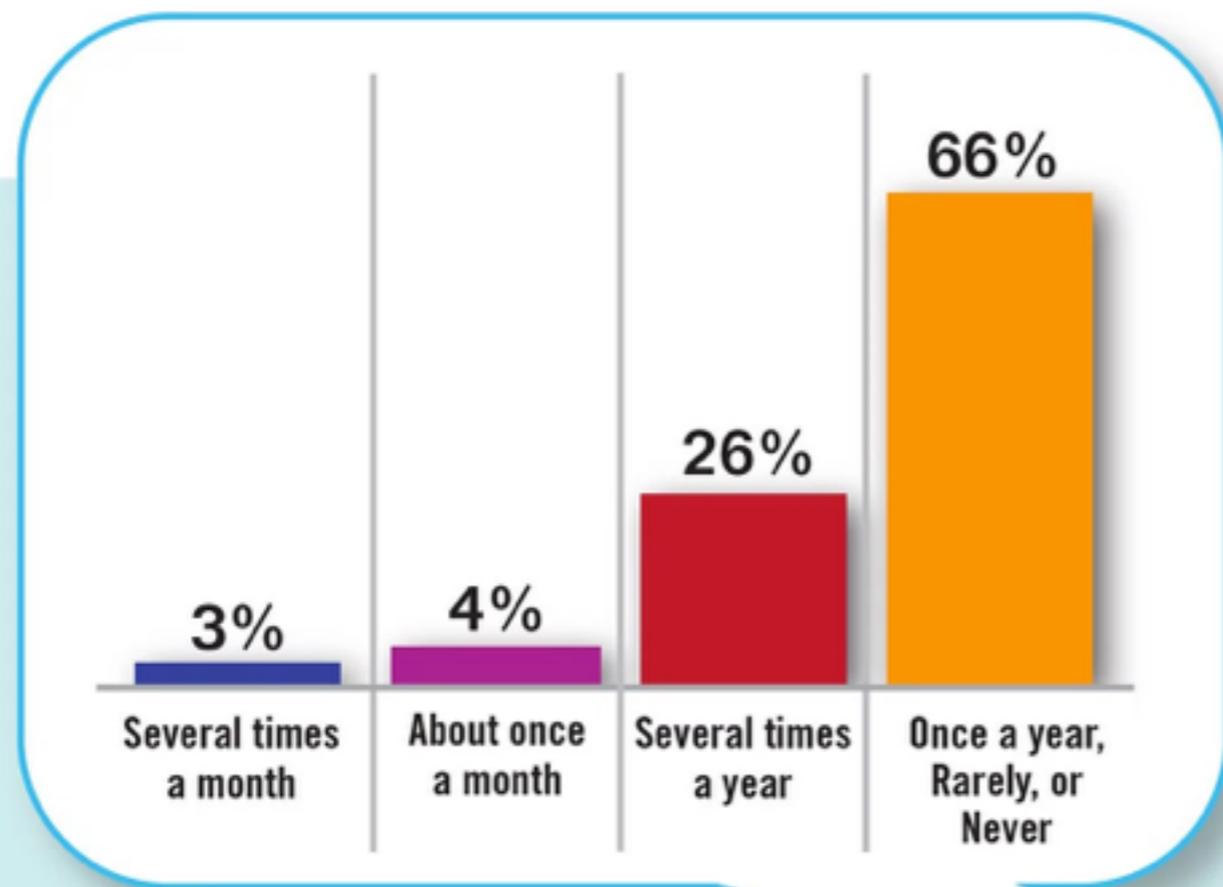
RESPONSE

- Proverbs 4:23 - Above all else, guard your heart.
- Romans 12:2 - Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 - We demolish arguments and every prevention that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ.

MENTAL ILLNESS

STATISTICS

- Depression is the leading cause of disability.
- There were an estimated 9.6 million adults in the U.S. with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) in the past year.
- There were an estimated 43.7 million adults with mental illness in the past year.
- One in twenty Americans live with serious mental illness: bipolar, schizophrenia, PTSD, or chronic depression.

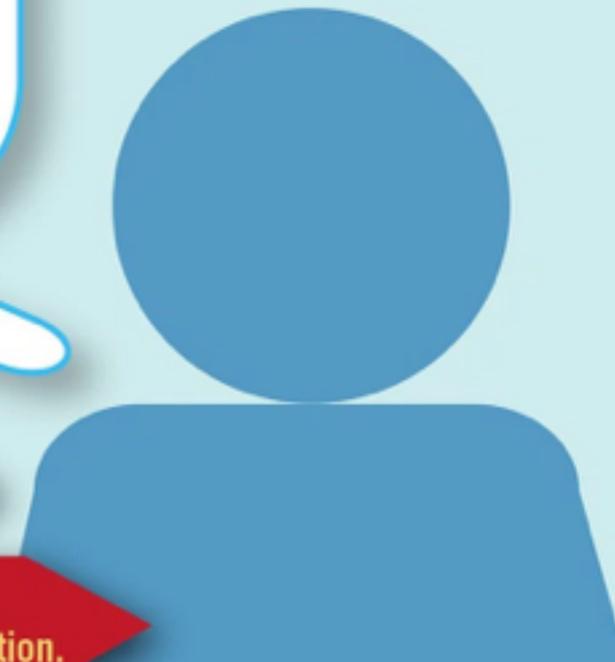


1% Don't know.

How often pastors speak to the church in sermons or large group messages about mental illness.

23% of pastors say they've experienced some kind of mental illness.

12% of pastors say they've received a diagnosis of a mental health condition.



HEALTHY LEADERS

- Say no more often.
- Take frequent short sabbaticals.
- Monitor your balance between work and personal.
- Regularly assess your spiritual fitness.
- Do not make decisions when you are tired.
- Prioritize your physical health: eat nutritiously, be physically active, and get adequate sleep and rest.

RESPONSE

- Psalm 82:4 - "Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."
- Acts 20:35 - "In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
- Galatians 6:2 - "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

THE CHURCH OF
INVISIBLE DISEASES

STOP THE SILENCE

- The number one problem in our churches related to matters of mental health and mental disorders is silence.
- One in four people suffer from mental illness.
- Invisible diseases in the brain have the power to isolate you and cause you to cease to be a productive member of society.
- They can shorten your lifespan.

STOP THE SILENCE

- Mental illness is in our churches but we often fail to talk about it.
- Jesus focused on removing barriers to belief and restoring people who were suffering: “When Jesus heard this, he told them, ‘Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners’” (Mark 2:17).

STOP THE SHAME

- Some people have been asked to leave a church because of their mental illness.
- We don't see Jesus banishing a hurting person from His earthly ministry.
- People with mental issues cannot simply be "fixed" with a prayer at the altar. Does God heal? Yes.
- But mental problems can continue just as physical problems can continue after prayer.

UNDERSTAND

- Understand mental illness and be present.
- Mental illness is defined as a physical dysfunction of the brain that causes the inability to think or feel or act in a person's normal manner.
- "Outside of a miracle, an individual does not get out of bed in the morning and speak away high cholesterol; similarly, one cannot pray away mental illness."

UNDERSTAND

- Ruby Wax (TED talk) - says that all diseases, except those of the brain, garner sympathy from people.
- Our church families are so helpful when someone is physically sick but often don't know what to do when a person is emotionally sick.
- Dr. Daniel Moorehead - "Mental illness is nobody's fault. . . . Mental illness is not a matter of choice or willpower."

THE HEALING EQUATION



HEALING

- We can learn from the example of John Newton who reached out to William Cowper.
- Our churches are filled with William Cowpers, talented people, struggling with mental illness.
- The invisible disease should be invisible no longer.
- We need to talk about it and minister to those dealing with mental illness.

SESSION DVD
BIBLE STUDY KIT

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LASTING TRUTH FOR TRENDING QUESTIONS

CHRISTIAN THOUGHTS
A BIBLE STUDY KIT



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