Taking Suicide Seriously

Christian support for someone considering suicide requires a dual approach: immediate safety intervention combined with compassionate spiritual care that avoids common pitfalls.

Immediate Safety Comes First
Protecting the person must take priority—calling paramedics or police is appropriate when someone has both a plan and means, regardless of potential embarrassment. Attempting to transport a suicidal person to the hospital yourself is dangerous and should be avoided. Refer them to a mental health professional or encourage continued treatment, recognizing the limits of your expertise while remaining involved to provide biblical comfort that professionals cannot offer.

Spiritual Care Without Platitudes
The most important theological correction is this: never suggest that suicidal thinking indicates weak faith or lost salvation. This misconception often deepens despair. Instead, communicate that their suffering is real and serious but does not reflect spiritual failure, and assure them they are not alone—that both God and their community see and care about their pain.
While affirming God's love may comfort some, suicidal individuals are often too depressed to believe such statements, so avoid trite spiritual platitudes. Rather, preach Christ crucified—emphasizing Christ's atoning work and the hope of resurrection rather than generic reassurances.

Addressing the Underlying Crisis
Suicidal thoughts stem from hopelessness and despair that pain will never end, typically rooted in mental illness. Sometimes the underlying problem can be addressed relatively simply; asking the person to commit not to harm themselves for three days while you investigate potential solutions may create space for intervention. Follow up the next day to assess whether suicidal thoughts have decreased, and seek professional help immediately if they persist.
The church's unique contribution is offering the assurance of Christ's atoning sacrifice and resurrection—not as a substitute for professional mental health care, but as the foundation for hope that transcends current suffering.

If you know of someone battling with suicidal thoughts or you do yourself, please do not hesitate to take action immediately. The church number is 812-254-2651. The elders at Antioch can be reached by email at elders@antiochbible.org