

Dear Thia,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You asked if the Bible has anything to say regarding cuttings of the skin. You also wanted to know why people are doing this act.

There are approximately 1.9 million cutters in America. Most cutters are females between the ages of 13 and 30. The reasons for self-injury are complex and can stem from trauma or psychological disorders. Some of the young women cutters suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of sexual or emotional abuse. Cutters have also been diagnosed with chemical disorders like manic depression or bipolar disorder; eating disorders; and obsessive-compulsive disorder. These women perceive cutting their bodies as a way to exert control over their lives. They cut themselves to feel relief, to release tension, to express internal pain in an external way, or as punishment for being “bad.”

In the Old Testament we learn that self-mutilation was a common practice among false religions. 1 Kings 18:24-29 describes a ritual in which those who worshipped the false god Baal slashed themselves with swords and spears. Because of the traditions of pagans, God made a law against this sort of practice. Leviticus 19:28 says, “You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves; I am the LORD.”

In the New Testament, cutting oneself was associated with someone who was possessed by demons (Mark 5:2-5). It was characteristic of behavior caused by evil spirits. Today, self-mutilation is rarely used for ritualistic practices or actual demon possession, but instead is done by teenagers and young adults who have misplaced anger and pain that they are attempting to work out in destructive ways. Although the Bible does not talk about self-mutilation in terms of depression or anxiety, it is very important that whoever is making a practice of this behavior seeks psychological and Christian counseling. Our bodies are precious gifts from God and should be respected, not abused.

We hope we have answered your question. Please write us again.

Sincerely,
Christian Questions Radio