

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About... Euthanasia - Again!

What exactly is euthanasia? Webster says the word comes from the Greek root that may be translated "good death," but more strictly translates "easy death," or "mercy killing." It is the practice of mercifully terminating life when a person is hopelessly ill or injured in order to hasten the relief of death. There are two forms of euthanasia: 1. Passive euthanasia is a refusal to use life-sustaining medical equipment to prolong life when there is no prospect of recovery. 2. Active euthanasia is when one deliberately takes action to end a person's life. The later form is certainly subject to Biblical scrutiny.

Job was a good and upright man who feared God, was blessed with 10 children, and his possessions made him one of the greatest men of his day (Job 1:1-3). When Job lost it all, he did what many people in similar situations do, he began to wish he had never been born. He just wanted the pain to stop and be at rest from his present sorrows (Job 3:1, 11-13, 16-17). Note what Job did when things went so wrong in his life and health. He "fell to the ground in worship. He said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'" Through all this Job did not sin, nor did he blame God (Job 1:20-22).

People in despair usually focus only on their problems and wallow in self-pity. Often they choose to avoid worship to God: they neglect prayer, worship assemblies, and do not want to talk with Christians. If instead they learn to give God thanksgiving, to meditate on what is good, and trust God to help them, then they have strength and peace beyond understanding (1 Peter 5:7; Phil. 4:7).

People who want to end their lives see no value in life and question why they should continue living. Servants of God know they are loved and valued by God, no matter how dark the circumstances of life may be. We are made in the image of God, a little lower than the angels. We are the most important of God's earthly creatures, superior to animals. Would God give us this position if we were worthless and unimportant to Him? (Gen. 1:26-27; Psm. 8:3-5; Heb. 13:6) After death, we will be judged as to how we lived our lives (2 Cor. 5:10). If we die in sin, we face eternal death separated from God (2 Thess. 1:8-9). But no matter how bad things are in this life, there is hope for a better life if we serve God faithfully (1 Pet. 1:3-4; James 1:12; 2 Cor. 4:16-17).

As the world continues with the "culture of death," Christians need to be prepared to deal sympathetically with those driven to despair. Three elements of guidance can be given to people who are frustrated with living. First, we must teach the truth that we were created by God. Evolution has brutalized humanity with its doctrine that we have clawed our way up from the slime of antiquity. Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 that the Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We have value and we are important.

Second, we must point out to friends that the painful conditions of human existence are the result of sin, either directly or indirectly, but that Christ came to remedy the problem of evil.

Third, we must teach, and we must demonstrate, that the relationship of being "in Christ" can provide a sense of tranquility and joy that makes this life easier to experience (James 1:2-3).

Also, in the case of Job, we see a prime example for a case of euthanasia. If Job had taken the advice of his wife, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die." (Job 2:9) For those who would practice euthanasia, this would be the answer, but let's hear what Job had to say by the inspiration of God: "You speak as one of the foolish woman speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity? In all this Job did not sin with his lips" (Job 2:10).

Remember, suffering enables a Christian to learn humility, and in so doing, we are better equipped to comfort others. Performing active euthanasia causes the administrator of death to sin and at the same time suicide for the one who requests such death. Taking one's own life, although it may be by the hand of another, is still murder - self-murder. Christians should know that euthanasia is not an issue to be dismissed or ignored. At the same time, mercy-killing lies in direct contradiction to Biblical teaching. As Christians we must stand against assisted suicide. It is our Christian responsibility to do such.

Send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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