

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About...

Euthanasia/Assisted Suicide

In the past few days, a young woman who was diagnosed with a terminal cancer, decided that she did not want to go through the pain and suffering that came with this diagnosis. So she ended her life on her own terms.

There are two main arguments that people use for euthanasia: death with dignity, and compassion (release from suffering). Euthanasia, also called "mercy killing," can be a difficult issue. The Bible teaches that humans are unique among all creatures by being made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, the 6th commandment stated, "You shall not murder," (Ex. 20:13). The meaning of "murder" is defined in four main passages in the Old Testament (Ex.21: 12-14; Lev. 24:17-21, Num. 35:16-31; Deut. 19:4-13). These passages make it clear to us the definition of what is prohibited, namely the "intentional killing of an innocent human being," (Ex. 23:7; 2 Kings 21:16; Psm. 106:37-38; Jer. 19:4). Euthanasia clearly falls within this Biblical definition. There is no provision for compassionate killing, even at the person's request, and there is no recognition of a "right to die," as all human life belongs to God (Psm. 24:1).

When one is suffering from a terminal illness there is an opportunity for this person to show their faith in God, which encourages family members and friends to be faithful to God through prayer and comfort for the family. It also calls us to give our whole selves to the love and service of others by expending our time, money, and energy in finding compassionate solutions to human suffering (Matt. 22:37-40; Mark 8:34; Phil. 2:4-11; Gal. 6:2). When family and friends are compassionate to one who is terminally ill by meeting their physical, psychological, and spiritual needs, the requests for euthanasia become rare.

We know that physical death is inevitable for all mortals (Psm.89:48; Heb. 9:27). God alone is sovereign over when and how a person's death occurs, as Job testifies, "I know you will bring me down to death to the place appointed for all the living," (Job 30:23). Solomon wrote, "No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death," (Eccl. 8:8). Euthanasia and assisted suicide are man's attempts to usurp authority from God. God gives purpose in life even to the end, and only God knows what is best, even in the matter of one's own death.

The most powerful Christian argument against euthanasia is that physical death is not the end. When John wrote, "These things I have written to you who believe in the son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13). For those, however, who do not know God, euthanasia is not a merciful release from this life. It may be propelling them towards a judgment for which they are unprepared, (John 5:28-29).

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