

life matters

Euthanasia: What does God say?

Vol. 16, No. 1

a publication of

WE EUTHANIZE DOGS AND CATS, so why not put suffering people out of their misery too? Governments in five countries and five U.S. states allow assisted suicide – for virtually any reason in some cases.¹ Why isn't that a good idea everywhere?

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Third, God's law calls for capital punishment in cases of pre-meditated murder. Accidental deaths are also investigated and people found guilty of manslaughter receive a sentence less than death.⁴

God, therefore, never ignores or minimizes human deaths and neither should we. Every person must be accounted for.⁵

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The Bible doesn't shrink from dark subjects, even suicide. Its record shows that those who killed themselves were not walking closely with God at the time.⁶

On the other hand, godly men such as Moses, Elijah, Job, and Paul at times longed (even prayed) for death, yet

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Suffering & sovereignty

Both the beginning and ending of life are under God's sovereign control. According to 1 Samuel 2:6, "The LORD kills, and makes alive." Job, whose misery led to eloquent complaints, ultimately bowed before God and expressed faith in His wisdom and His will.⁸

As finite creatures, there is much we do not know. Human dominion does not extend to our being able to determine the right moment for a person to die.⁹ Only God knows.

None of our Bible heroes claimed a right to "bodily autonomy." Paul wrote that our bodies belong to God and must be used in ways that honor Him.¹⁰ While he anticipated relief from struggles and great joy upon dying and being with Christ, Paul also acknowledged the benefit his life continued to bring the Christian community – even from jail.

These men never adopted the idea that a loss of independence strips a person of dignity. Dignity is innate in the human being, no matter his or her age or physical condition. We have value because we're made in God's image and that can never be lost, stolen, or given away.

In fact, dignity is best – perhaps *only* – expressed in the face of suffering. The greater the suffering, the greater the occasion for dignity. As Paul discovered, we can glorify God in our suffering.¹¹

If suffering means losing dignity, then Jesus Christ lost it on the cross. But no! He is our shining example of

glorious endurance; His cruel death and victorious resurrection became every believer's source of hope.¹²

Suffering and loss of independence are instead opportunities for Christian ministry. We grow in biblical virtues as we help others who are vulnerable, weak, and dependent.

Likewise, special grace is required for the acceptance of help. There is no shame in being served. Both experiences are necessary in a person's life and in the life of the Church.

As with dignity, compassion can only be demonstrated when someone struggles. As we follow Christ's example in service and take up the burdens of others as our own, we become like Him. We also become like the early Church.¹³

Demands for assisted suicide and euthanasia challenge us all to be people who will come alongside the terminally or chronically ill, the elderly, and their families – by being with them and by offering practical support.

Life Matters Worldwide initiated the LIFT program for just this purpose.¹⁴ If you'd like to know more about it, please contact our office.

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