

Euthanasia

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The 2012 Massachusetts ballot question on euthanasia has catapulted euthanasia to the top of the radar screen. Euthanasia is the act of assisting someone in hastening death. It is incumbent upon Christians, particularly Christian leaders, to proclaim God's position as revealed in the Bible upon such moral matters. Although the Word of God does not specifically mention euthanasia, we have enough Scripture evidence to stand against it. We will approach our topic from two directions. First, euthanasia is a 'sanctity of life' issue. Second, euthanasia is a practical denial of the sovereignty of God.

First, euthanasia is a 'sanctity of life' issue. It stands alongside two other murderous practices; abortion and infanticide. The Bible is clear that human life begins at conception and ends at physical death (Psalm 139:13-16; Hebrews 9:27). Any position that favors one of these three practices and opposes another is inconsistent. "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). The commandment is based upon the fact that every life is sacred in the eyes of God (Genesis 1:27). There is no such thing as a life without value, and no justification for killing for convenience, however well intentioned one may be.

Second, euthanasia is a practical denial of the sovereignty of God. There is "a time to die" (Ecclesiastes 3:2), and the number of our "days are determined" (Job 14:5). "It is appointed for men to die once" (Hebrews 9:27). These Scriptures teach that God has appointed the day of our death, and any effort to hasten that, be it through suicide or 'mercy killing', is an attempt to usurp God's sovereignty, and in opposition to His will and purposes. I stand with the majority of Christian ethicists that ordinary means should always be used to preserve life, but extraordinary means are not obligatory to prolong life when nature is taking its course. However, the government should never be in a position of authority to prevent the use of any means; ordinary or extraordinary.

Let us beware that we do not go further down the slippery slope that we have already slid down in accepting abortion and infanticide by accepting euthanasia in any form. Once we devalue some lives, who will make the judgment as to which lives are worth living and which lives are not? We need only look to history to see where this can potentially take a society: Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler.