

Living our Faith at the End of Life

I Corinthians 15: 51-57

I. Death and Dying in Theological Perspective

- Human Life is God's sacred gift
- Innocent human life is not to be taken
- Obligation to protect the most vulnerable in society
- Death came as a result of the entrance of sin into the world (Romans 5:12, I Cor. 15:21-22)
- Death is not part of God's original design
- But death is a normal part of a person's life under the sun (Eccl. 2:14-16, 3:19-21, 5:15-16, 9:1-6)
- Death is both an enemy and a part of life

II. If death is a conquered enemy:

- Death need not always be resisted; doctors need not always "do everything."
When the prognosis is poor, and further treatment is futile, death can be welcomed as the doorstep to eternity.
- Making what is left of life more burdensome is wrong.

III. Turning Off Life Support

- Withholding/Withdrawing Life sustaining treatment:
 - When a competent patient requests it
 - When it is futile
 - When the burdens outweigh the benefits

IV. End of Life Medical Decisions

- Removing Life Support
 - Playing God?
 - Killing Your Loved One?
 - Starving Someone to Death? (Case of Terri Schaivo)
 - Violating the Sanctity of Life?
 - Waiting for a Miracle?
 - Suffering being Redemptive?

V. Facing End of Life Decisions

- End of Life Decisions:
 - Have a Living Will
 - Talk with loved ones about their wishes at the end of life
 - Facing Death in Biblical Perspective

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. How does thinking about death as a “conquered enemy” change the way you think about your own death or aging process? How is that different, if at all, from the way the culture at large thinks about death?
3. If relevant, describe a time in your life when you’ve been faced with some of these end-of-life issues in a personal way. What were some of the lessons learned from that experience?
4. Should a person nearing the end of life have the legal right to determine the timing of his or her own death? Where should the moral line be drawn? What key biblical principles would you draw on to answer that question?
5. What are some key ideas you might want to share with your own children to guide decisions they may have to make for you at the end of your life? How can they love you well through that time?