

## **Ethics & Morals**

### **Euthanasia**

**(Ex 20:13)**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Good Evening
  - a. Good to see each of you hear once again.
  - b. What a nice day compared to the last few frigid days!!!
2. Series of lessons on morals and ethics.
  - a. Social Drinking; Gambling; Abortion...
3. I want to begin with an illustration:
  - a. A Father once returned home from work one afternoon only to find his three year old daughter crying as if her heart would break. This little girl's turtle had died and she was devastated. The mother had attempted to console the little girl all afternoon, but with no success. So this father was left with the task of somehow explaining the mysteries of life and death to his three year old daughter. First, he attempted to console her by offering to get her a new turtle to replace the one that had died. However, even at three years old, this little girl was smart enough to know that there is a certain non-transferability about living things. A turtle is not a toy. There's no such thing as getting another one just like the one that died. This little girl's tears continued to stream down her face. In desperation, the father offered to have a funeral for the turtle, but his daughter didn't know what a funeral was. So he began to explain, "A funeral is a great festival in honor of the turtle." Well, she didn't know what a festival was either, so he tried to explain further. "You might say it's like a birthday party. We'll have cake, ice-cream, and balloons, and all the neighborhood children can come over to our house to play." Success at last! This little girl's tears began to dry, and she quickly returned to her happy, smiling self. Then an utterly unforeseen thing happened. They looked down on the floor and lo and behold, the turtle began to move. It wasn't dead after all. Dumbfounded, the father stood there speechless, but his little girl, with all the innocence of her tender years, appraised the situation, looked up at her father and said, "Daddy, LET'S KILL IT!"  
(<http://preachinghelp.org/sermons/euthanasia.pdf>)
4. Tonight's lesson is going to be on "euthanasia" if the illustration wasn't clear enough...
  - a. We are going to examine this, as some put gray area, of life or better yet the taking of life.
5. With that in mind let us look at the topic of euthanasia.

#### **I. Euthanasia Defined**

- A. Definitions by medical doctors &/or medical teachers
  1. Kathleen Foley, MD & Herbert Hendin, MD defined in the intro to their book "The Case Against Assisted Suicide: For the Right to End-of-Life Care"  
(<http://euthanasia.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=000142>)
    - i. "The word euthanasia was coined from the Greek language ... in the seventeenth century by Francis Bacon to refer to an easy, painless, happy death. In modern times it has come to mean the active causation of a patient's death by a physician, usually through the injection of a lethal dose of medication."

2. Michael Manning, MD, in his 1998 book *Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide: Killing or Caring?* wrote...
  - i. "The term euthanasia ... originally meant only 'good death,' but in modern society it has come to mean a death free of any anxiety and pain, often brought about through the use of medication. Most recently, it has come to mean 'mercy killing' -- deliberately putting an end to someone's life in order to spare the individual's suffering." (Ibid)
- B. Defined by Webster's Dictionary
  1. "1869 : the act or practice of killing or permitting the death of hopelessly sick or injured individuals (as persons or domestic animals) in a relatively painless way for reasons of mercy" (Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.)
- C. Four forms of euthanasia
  1. Voluntary - passive euthanasia
    - i. Medical personnel, at the patient's request, will merely allow nature to take its course
  2. Voluntary - active euthanasia
    - i. Medical personnel, at the patient's request, will take some active means to hasten death
  3. Involuntary - passive euthanasia
    - i. Medical personnel, without the patient's instruction will merely allow nature to take its course
  4. Involuntary - active euthanasia
    - i. Medical personnel, without the patient's request, will take some active means to hasten death

[So active euthanasia is the taking of life whereas passive euthanasia is permitting death. Many times those in support of active euthanasia blur the lines between the 2 and use passive examples to support active examples.]

## II. Reasons Given For Supporting Active Euthanasia

- A. The mentally & physically handicapped are not wanted by society anyway
  1. They bring society down.
    - i. A more accurate way this is portrayed is they are an "embarrassment to society" or "everybody just stares at them"
    - ii. This is nothing new remember the Romans had the same thought process. Even as early as 850 B.C. we see these writings.
- B. The financial hardship of taking care of "these people" is too high
  1. This is what is used not only with the handicapped but the aged.
- C. People should have the "right" to choose when and how they die.
  1. Same oh same oh as used with most arguments.

### III. The Bible On Euthanasia

- A. All moral issues are found in God's Word
  - 1. We just have to have the desire to study & want to know the truth.
    - i. **II Ti 3:16-17; II Pt 1:3**
  - 2. This topic is no different
- B. God and death
  - 1. God has always separated death by another or self into two categories
    - i. Killing which is scriptural
      - a. **Gn 9:6** "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man."
      - b. **Js 9:24** "So they answered Joshua and said, "Because your servants were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to **destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you;** therefore we were very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing."
    - ii. Murder is not scriptural
      - a. **Ex 20:13** "Thou shalt not kill." (KJV)
        - 1. "You shall not murder" (ESV; NKJV)
      - b. **I Pt 4:15** "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters."
  - 2. Death is a reality with mankind given to us by God.
    - i. **He 9:27** "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment"
    - ii. So to allow a person to undergo the natural process of death is not the same as taking another person's life ie active euthanasia.
- C. Notice the one example of euthanasia
  - 1. King Saul at the end of his life asked his armor-bearer to kill him.
    - i. **I Sa 31:4** "Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it."
  - 2. Notice the armor-bearer refused and Saul tried to take his life.
    - i. But a young Amalekite does take credit for ending Saul's life.
      - a. **II Sa 1:1-16**
    - ii. For taking Saul's life at his request notice what David did to the young man.
      - a. **II Sa 1:15-16** "Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go near, and execute him!" And he struck him so that he died. 16 So David said to him, "Your blood is on your own head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed.'""
  - 3. The armor-bearer was killed for murdering.

- D. Active euthanasia is trying to redefine what life is.
1. Ethicist, Joseph Fletcher offered indicators of personhood: (IQ greater than 40, self-awareness, self-control, a sense of time, capability of concern for others; communication)
  2. Life is the union of body, spirit, and soul.
    - i. **Ec 12:7** "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it."
    - ii. **Ja 2:26** "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
  3. Notice how God thinks of the handicapped
    - i. **Ex 4:11** "So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?"
    - ii. **Jn 9:3** "Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him."
    - iii. **Lk 14:13** "But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."
  4. Notice how God thinks of the elderly
    - i. **Ep 6:1-3** "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.""
      - a. We don't stop respecting & honoring when they get "elderly"
    - ii. **Lv 19:32** "You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD."

## CONCLUSION

1. C.S. Lewis coined the term, "verbiicide" to denote the murder of a word. That is what euthanasia advocates have done with the language of "compassion" and "mercy."
  - a. One writer wrote, "In order to advance their agenda with the public, euthanasia advocates are cloaking doctor's deliberate homicide of patients in rosy phrases such as: "quality of life, death with dignity, and the "right to die." But no matter what they call it, euthanasia is still murder"
2. An action may only be truly called "merciful" if it falls into the realm of what is permissible by God.
  - a. Often what is said to be done to spare another suffering is really done to spare oneself of suffering.
3. Active Euthanasia
  - a. All its forms are wrong because it usurps God's exclusive prerogative over human life and death.
4. Passive Euthanasia
  - a. Allowing death under certain circumstances - does not necessarily violate any biblical principles per se, except when it involves withholding basic human care, food, water, warmth, etc.
5. We, as God's children need to do our best to affirm the value of life in a culture of death.
6. Invitation