

# Euthanasia

Reminding others every person has a meaningful existence. For there is no return from this choice.

## Navigating this Resource

Below you will find some common conflicts between God's will and human wisdom. The topics are listed in alphabetical order in Forest Green. Under each topic is an example of a common ideology that falls under that topic. Following the ideology are a few possible comments you can make when you want to say something but are also concerned about being sensitive and preserving the friendship. These are not the only response but examples of ways to keep the conversation going while encouraging the person to clarify what they are saying, think more deeply about the subject, and open up an avenue for you to gently offer your concern or alternative viewpoint.

The responses below are best used with the questions posed in our resource Conversations, which can be found following the link below.

A scripture reference at the end of each section informs us of God's will regarding the particular ideology.

## Autonomy

### IMPROPER IDEOLOGY: EUTHANASIA ENSURES PATIENT AUTONOMY AND RESPECTS THE WISHES OF THE DYING

Possible Response:

- I see it differently. I believe everyone has value regardless of the time they have left on this earth. To respect their wishes would be communicating to the person they can continue to live if they like, but you see no reason they should.
- I think pain clouds reasoning. I don't think it would be wise to ask a woman if she wants more children at the height of her labor pain. Therefore, I don't believe autonomy in moments of pain is always wise.
- I can't help but think about how much doctors influence a patient's treatment decisions. Patients could request aid in dying because of the doctor's assurance that it is for the best. The information chosen to be shared and how it is presented all factor into the patient's autonomy.

- Should the wishes of the dying be granted even if those wishes are morally wrong? Should we give a dying man his desire that his mortal enemy be murdered?
- I just can't see how consent can turn a moral wrong into a moral right. Could you help me understand what you mean?

Fact:

- Doctors cannot explain life's source by some scientific equation. Life is a mystery that is frankly out of our control and should therefore be respected.

1 Corinthians 6:19-10; Jeremiah 17:9

## Best Interest

### IMPROPER IDEOLOGY: EUTHANASIA IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PATIENT

Possible Response:

- Is it correct to say not everything a person believes to be in their own best interest actually is (e.g., suicide, murder, embezzlement, etc.)?
- I think pain clouds reasoning. I don't think it would be wise to ask a woman if she wants more children at the height of her labor pain. Therefore, I don't believe autonomy in moments of pain is always wise.
- I just can't see how consent can turn a moral wrong into a moral right. Could you help me understand what you mean?
- I would fear a person who cannot pay their medical bills would be more likely to be recommended for euthanasia than someone who can. What do you think?
- I feel the presence of euthanasia as a fail-safe option could erode the trust that the healthcare system will do everything possible to relieve suffering before terminating life. What do you think?

Facts:

- Studies in the Netherlands (where euthanasia is allowed) show more than 95 percent of those who request physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia have a major psychiatric illness. Many withdrew their request when treated for their depression or pain (Washington v. Glucksberg, nos. 96-110).

Isaiah 55:8-9

## Dignity

### IMPROPER IDEOLOGY: EUTHANASIA ENABLES PEOPLE TO DIE WITH DIGNITY

Possible Response:

- Could you help me understand how an act against oneself could be an act for oneself? I can't see how an act of extinguishing a life dignifies that life.

Romans 5:3-5

## Financial Burden

### IMPROPER IDEOLOGY: EUTHANASIA RELIEVES THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF THE FAMILY

Possible Response:

- I'm concerned about the patient's mental anguish of guilt and thoughts of "getting out of the way."

Imagine a situation where euthanasia has become accepted. Grandpa is terminally ill, and his family has already made subtle hints, if not overt suggestions, about saving medical expenditures for Junior's education or some other pressing need. Can you imagine a terminally ill man's distress if he refuses to accept legal euthanasia?

- I would agree that a family would not have to make heroic financial efforts to sustain life artificially, but could you help me understand how it is morally right to end life to save money?
- The problem I see is every dependent person is a financial burden; the young are financial burdens to their parents, and aging parents can be to the young. Please help me understand the difference.

Hebrews 13:5; 1 Timothy 6:10

## Life Experience

### IMPROPER IDEOLOGY: DON'T JUDGE UNLESS YOU'VE BEEN THERE

Possible Response:

- I'm not sure I agree. If someone can only discover the right thing to do if presented with the situation personally, then few of us could say that slavery is wrong because we haven't experienced the daunting task of harvesting a large crop alone.

- Maybe I'm wrong, but isn't the best time to assess moral issues when you're thinking clearly and not hampered by emotional or physical distress?

John 8:31-32; 1 John 2:21

## **Suffering**

### **IMPROPER IDEOLOGY: EUTHANASIA SHOWS MERCY IN AVOIDING NEEDLESS SUFFERING**

Possible Response:

- I don't see it that way. I don't believe people lose their value when they lose their health.
- Every human being has some form of suffering in their life. How does one differentiate suffering worthy of euthanasia and perseverance through suffering to build character?

Consider:

- Euthanasia, to alleviate suffering, assumes there is nothing beyond the grave, so death ends suffering.

Romans 5:3-5; Hebrews 10:36; Romans 8:18

## **We Are Here to Help**

Do you have a question that goes deeper than what we have here? Get in touch with us by emailing [brueckj@sturgismissionarychurch.com](mailto:brueckj@sturgismissionarychurch.com).