

Euthanasia

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- I. Introduction
 - a. What is euthanasia?
 - i. Act or method of causing death painlessly, so as to end suffering: advocated by some as a way to deal with victims of incurable diseases. – Websters Unabridged Dictionary
 - ii. It is practiced on animals who are suffering pain from injury or disease, or who are no longer useful or needed.
 - iii. It has been practiced on human beings at different times and places in history, and is carried out today in limited ways in our country and more so in some other countries.
 - b. In our nation, the state of Oregon has legalized physician-assisted suicide.
 - c. Physician assisted suicide is a form of euthanasia.
- II. KEY THOUGHT: In our study, we are going to look at the practice of euthanasia, and seek to demonstrate the error of the view that men and women should seek death in order to accomplish some personal or societal goal.
- III. Arguments for euthanasia:
 - a. Life below a certain level of quality is not worth living
 - b. Non-productive lives are a burden on society
 - c. Sick/Disabled persons are a burden on those who care for them
 - d. Pain and suffering is senseless and can/should be avoided as much as possible
 - e. Some physical and mental conditions have no hope of recovery and should be terminated
 - f. Since a person is only responsible to him or herself, each person has the right to end his or her own life at will.
 - g. Since the needs of the society are greater and more important than the needs of any individual in that society, the society is authorized to end the life of any of its members with or without their knowledge or permission.
- IV. Arguments against euthanasia
 1. Pain and suffering does not have to be purposeless.
 2. It reinforces the false idea that a person's worth depends on beauty, health vigor, power, influence, wealth or contribution to Gross National Product
 3. Society is in no danger of running out of physical resources for caring for the weak and infirm.
 4. Voluntary, heartfelt caring for those who need help enriches, rather than drains, the person or society
 5. Systems of voluntary euthanasia often disregard the fact that suicidal feelings and actions are primarily caused by depression and are not a rational assessment of the value of ones life. People suffering depression need help, not death!

6. Systems of voluntary euthanasia put pressure on the weak and vulnerable to self-select themselves for death In 1984, Colorado Governor Richard Lamm, addressing the **Colorado Health Lawyers Association, declares that elderly people have a "duty to die."**

"Like leaves which fall off a tree forming the humus in which other plants can grow, we've got a duty to die and get out of the way with all of our machines and artificial hearts, so that our kids can build a reasonable life."

 - a. University of Tennessee Philosophy professor John Hardwig

From <http://web.utk.edu/~7Ejhardwig/dutydie.htm>

I cannot say when someone has a duty to die. Still, I can suggest a few features of one's illness, history, and circumstances that make it more likely that one has a duty to die. I present them here without much elaboration or explanation.

1) A duty to die is more likely when continuing to live will impose significant burdens -- emotional burdens, extensive caregiving, destruction of life plans, and, yes, financial hardship -- on your family and loved ones. This is the fundamental insight underlying a duty to die.
7. Systems of voluntary euthanasia inevitably result in involuntary euthanasia being performed (Holland) SOURCE:
 - a. Holland was the first modern nation to legalize euthanasia in 2002 after several decades of permitting it
 - b. According to the Rummelink Report, in 1990 Dutch physicians deliberately and intentionally ended the lives of 11,840 people by lethal overdoses or injections—a figure which accounts for 9.1% of the annual overall death rate of 130,000 per year. The majority of all euthanasia deaths in Holland were *involuntary deaths*.
 - c. K. F. Gunning published his experience with the specialists who, when asked to admit an elderly patient to the hospital, advised the general practitioners to administer lethal injections instead.
 - d. H. W. Hilhorst, in his extensive study (sponsored by Utrecht University and the Royal Dutch Academy of Science), found that involuntary active euthanasia was being practiced in eight hospitals
 - e. In March 2012, mobile euthanasia units began operating to bring euthanasia directly to the homes of people who want to die
8. Human beings do not have the ability or authority to put a price tag on a human life.

9. Any society that puts a price tag on human life can also mark down the price. (National Socialists, way before Haulocaust)
 The *original* euthanasia program was to "purify" the German race. It was a creation of physicians, *not* Hitler. He simply allowed the use of the tools others had prepared.

The first gas chamber was designed by professors of psychiatry from 12 major German universities. They selected the patients and watched them die. Then they slowly reduced the "price tag" until the mental hospitals were almost empty. They were joined by some pediatricians, who began by emptying the institutions for handicapped children in 1939. By 1945, almost 300,000 "pure blood Aryan" Germans had been killed. By then these doctors had so lowered the price tag that they were killing bed wetters, children with misshapen ears, and those with learning disabilities. Wertham, *The German Euthanasia Program*, Hayes Publishing Co., Cinn, 1977, p. 47 from http://www.abortionfacts.com/online_books/love_them_both/why_cant_we_love_them_both_25.asp

This was not persecution of Jews or other nations, this was the killing of their own

10. Any society where citizens can be killed if their lives are judged "not worth living" will be filled with suspicion and mistrust
 True of Nazi Germany,
 Also in Holland:

Hospitalized seniors are routinely visited by an organization that offers to oversee their case to prevent their doctor from killing them. Warnings have been published that elderly patients, out of fear of euthanasia, refuse hospitalization and even refuse to consult doctors. An inquiry among hospital patients showed that many fear their own families may ask for euthanasia without consulting them.

. The Dutch Patients' Association placed a warning in the press that, in many hospitals, patients are being killed without their will or knowledge, or the knowledge of their families, and advised the patients and their families to carefully inquire on every step in the treatment, and when in doubt, to consult a reliable expert outside the hospital."

- o Termination of those who cannot express their wishes has serious medical ramifications:
 - I. sometimes patients who have been in "vegetative" states for a long time wake up, e.g., following an anesthetic accident seven years earlier, the health authority in the north of England had discussed applying to the courts to remove his feeding — but — after those seven years he woke up and was "competent enough to indicate his refusal to be interviewed." *Guardian* (newspaper London), March 16, 1996
 - II. Seven other notable cases are recounted in "Fighting for Dear Life" by David Gibbs, p. 215-225
 - III. Dr. Kay Andrews, Director of the Royal Hospital for Neuro-Disability, stated, "Over a two-year period, 15 out of 18 patients, thought to be in p.v.s., came around." *Sunday Telegraph*, Feb. 11, 1996 205
 - IV. In a British study of 40 patients diagnosed as P.V.S., 17 or 43% were later found to be alert, aware and often able to express simple wishes. This vital consciousness in their closed-in state, for some, lasted several years. K. Andrews et al., *Brit. Med. Jour.*, 7/6/96

- V. What does the Bible say about euthanasia?
 a. Christian arguments against euthanasia

- i. All life is a gift from God – Acts 17:24-25; That is a precious gift, not to be rejected by man, but to be used for God’s purposes
- ii. Suicide is wrong
- iii. Physician assisted suicide is wrong
- iv. Euthanasia is Wrong
 - 1. Job – Pain and Suffering (Job 2:7-10)
 - 2. Abimelech – Pride (Judges 9:52-54)
 - 3. Saul – Fear (1 Samuel 31:3-4)\

VI. Conclusion

- a. Euthanasia – Good death
 - According to the euthanasia proponent:
 - Is free of pain and suffering
 - Avoids major degradations of physical and mental powers
 - Is chosen
 - According to the Christian:
 - Leaves one in a right relationship with God
 - Furthers the cause of Christ
 - Does not depend on physical circumstances

1. Will you have a good death?

⁷For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. ⁸For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. – Romans 14:7-8

⁷And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. – 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

²⁰...Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. ²⁴Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. ²⁵And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith – Philippians 1:20-25