

Making the Best Choice . . .

You are sitting by the bed of someone you love . . . someone with a terminal illness. What happens when you find yourself agonizing over a medical decision—a major decision with moral implications? Is it ever right to choose death for a loved one who is suffering? What perspective should you have in order to make the right decision? How can you be sure you are making the best choice in the midst of a medical crisis?

When answers to questions seem elusive, you need to know where to go. The Bible reveals what makes life worth living. Wisdom from the Word of God will guide you in making end-of-life decisions—decisions with true dignity.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”
(James 1:5)

Q: “I deeply care about my terminally ill mother. As long as euthanasia is based on love, doesn’t that make it okay?”

Your love must be a great comfort to your mother, but loving a person does not give you the right to kill that person. The Bible describes love as protective in nature. Out of love, we are to persevere and protect our loved ones from premature death.

“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”
(1 Corinthians 13:7)

Q: “When someone is dying, is it wrong to ‘pull the plug’ on artificial life support?”

Sometimes a person is kept alive by means of mechanical or artificial life-sustaining procedures. These methods replace vital functions such as breathing or the beating of a heart. Sometimes, these procedures serve only to postpone the moment of death. In this case, withholding a mechanical or artificial measure is not euthanasia because pulling the plug results in a natural, inevitable death. God has already determined the number of our days with limits we cannot exceed.

“His days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass.”
(Job 14:5)

Controversies within Society

Advancement of Medical Technology

Outside Concern—“People will live too long!”

Personal Concern—“I’m afraid my death will be prolonged.”

Escalating Health Care Costs

Outside Concern—“Medical treatment is too expensive.”

Personal Concern—“I’m afraid I’ll become a financial burden.”

Shift from Doctors’ Decisions to Patient’s Rights

Outside Concern—“Doctors are too restrictive regarding death.”

Personal Concern—“I won’t have any rights over my life or my death.”

Mass Marketing of Situation Ethics

Outside Concern—“The aged are too unproductive.”

Personal Concern—“I am afraid that I’ll be too dependent on others.”

*“For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die.”
(Ecclesiastes 3:1–2)*

Questions and Answers about Euthanasia

- **Question:** “What is the biblical position regarding euthanasia?”

Answer: One of the Ten Commandments in the Bible says, “*You shall not murder.*” (Exodus 20:13).

- **Question:** “Isn’t euthanasia a private choice?”

Answer: No. Euthanasia involves the active participation and assistance of at least one other person.

*“Rescue those who are being taken
away to death; hold back those
who are stumbling to the slaughter.”
(Proverbs 24:11)*

Key Verse to Memorize

*“Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.”
(Psalm 139:16)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread

Job 2:3–10

When Facing the Decision— Value the Sanctity of Life

Seek God’s perspective on the sanctity of life. (Deuteronomy 30:19)

Accept the beneficial role of pain and affliction in life. (2 Corinthians 1:5)

Notify a wise family member, pastor, physician, or respected Christian friend to get involved, to pray for direction, and to help in your decision. (Proverbs 16:20)

Consider all the options, especially hospice care, as an alternative. (1 Timothy 5:8)

Turn to pain management experts. (James 1:5)

Identify whether you are playing God by hastening or postponing death. (Deuteronomy 32:39)

Trust in God’s sovereignty over the circumstances. (Psalm 135:6)

Yield to the voice of God speaking in your heart and guiding your decision. (Isaiah 30:20–21)

*“God said, ‘Let us make man
in our image, after our likeness.’”
(Genesis 1:26)*

No Time to Be Timid

When friends or loved ones are facing death, have the courage to discuss their eternal salvation!

Commit to God the time you will talk together.

Open the conversation gently to spiritual matters.

Understand what is most important to communicate.

Rely on the Holy Spirit to give you the right words and timing.

Assure them of God's love.

Give them an opportunity to accept Christ.

Entrust the results to God!

*Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him, and he will act.
(Psalm 37:5)*

Related Topics . . .

- Chronic Illness:
God's Peace in the Midst of Pain
- Death:
The Doorway to Your Eternal Destiny
- Evil & Suffering . . . Why?
Is God Fair?
- Hope:
The Anchor of the Soul
- Suicide Prevention:
Hope When Life Seems Hopeless
- Terminal Illness:
How Can I Ever Let Go?

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For more comprehensive help, refer to our *Biblical Counseling Keys . . .*

Euthanasia:

The Myth of Mercy Killing.

If you would like more information, call 1-800-488-HOPE (4673) or visit www.hopefortheheart.org.

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