OUTLINE

• Defining Euthanasia
• The Relevance of Euthanasia
• Arguments about Euthanasia
  • Rebutting Euthanasia Proponents’ Claims
  • The Biblical Argument
• The Slippery Slope in the Netherlands
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EUTHANASIA ETYMOLOGY

• The word “euthanasia” is a combination of two Greek words:
  • ἐὖ - meaning “good” or “beneficial”
  • Θάνατος – meaning “death”
Euthanasia Defined

House of Lords Select Committee on Medical Ethics:

A deliberate intervention undertaken with the express intention of ending a life, to relieve intractable suffering.
EUTHANASIA DEFINED

House of Lords Select Committee on Medical Ethics:

A deliberate intervention undertaken with the express intention of ending a life, to relieve intractable suffering.
Deliberate Interventions include:

- Direct euthanasia – a doctor kills a person
- Assisted suicide – a doctor gives a person drugs to help them commit suicide
Euthanasia Defined

Deliberate Interventions include:

- Removal of food and water from an individual who is not terminally ill.

Terri Schiavo (1963-2005)
EUTHANASIA DEFINED

Deliberate Interventions do not include:

- DNR – orders to not resuscitate
- Living will instructions forbidding certain medical procedures
- Discontinuing already ineffective interventions (ending life support)
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EUTHANASIA’S RELEVANCE

• Euthanasia will become more openly discussed as a result of demographic changes over the next several decades.
• At least 350% increase in the number of 85 year olds. [1]

Euthanasia's Relevance

• Euthanasia is increasingly being debated.
  • Many Christians are unsure as to what, if anything, the Bible has to say about this topic.
• Euthanasia is becoming increasingly permitted worldwide.
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The Main Pro-Euth. Argument

• The major argument offered by euthanasia proponents is that “Euthanasia protects the dignity of a terminally ill patient by respecting his choice to die.”[1]

Euthanasia is not always used to kill the terminally ill.
Euthanasia cause celebre Jack Kevorkian admitted to killing 130 patients.
According to the Detroit Free Press,[1] 60% of his “patients” were not terminally ill and 10% experienced no regular pain.

Consent to euthanasia is not always real consent.

John Noonan, Circuit Judge: “Physician neutrality and patient autonomy, independent of their physician’s advice are largely myths. Most patients do what their doctors recommend. As an eminent commission concluded, ‘Once the physician suggests suicide or euthanasia, some patients will feel that they have few, if any, alternatives…”"
RESPONSE #3

• Arguments related to changes in lifestyle are inherently nebulous and subjective, and are therefore poor justifications to terminate a patient.
Patients seeking suicide don’t need euthanasia.

The number of terminally ill persons committing suicide in the United States is approx. 767.[1]

The number of euthanasias in the Netherlands is a 120x the rate of the American suicide rate of the terminally ill.

RESPONSE #5

• Permitting euthanasia, even where it is seemingly narrowly legislated, begins a slippery slope.

• Permitting euthanasia for the terminally ill gradually permits other kinds of illnesses.

• The requirement for voluntary euthanasia permits nonvoluntary or involuntary euthanasia over time.
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1. God values human life. It may be taken only in certain circumstances.

2. Biblical passages that reference suicide.

THE BIBLICAL ARGUMENT

1. God values human life. It may be taken only in certain circumstances.

2. Biblical passages that reference suicide.

Genesis 1:26-27
Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
GOD VALUES HUMAN LIFE

Genesis 9:6
Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.
G O D  V A L U E S  H U M A N  L I F E

Exodus 20:13
You shall not murder.
1. God values human life. It may be taken only in certain circumstances.

2. Biblical passages that reference suicide.

Examples of Biblical Suicide

Case #1: Judas Iscariot

Matthew 27:5b – And [Judas] …went away and hanged himself.

Acts 1:18 - (Now [Judas] acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out.)
Case #2: Ahithophel

2 Samuel 17:23 - Now when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey and arose and went to his home, to his city, and set his house in order, and strangled himself; thus he died and was buried in the grave of his father.
Case #3: Zimri

1 Kings 16:18 - When Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the king’s house and burned the king’s house over him with fire, and died,
Case #4: The Judgment of the 5th Trumpet

Revelation 9:6 - And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.
WHAT ABOUT SAMSON?

**Judges 16:28,30** - Then Samson called to the Lord and said, “O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.” …And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!”

- Samson’s death was ancillary to his main purpose – to slay the Philistines.
1. God values human life. It may be taken only in certain circumstances.

2. Biblical passages that reference suicide.

EXAMPLES OF BIBLICAL EUTHANASIA

Case #1: Abimelech

Judges 9:54 - Then he called quickly to the young man, his armor bearer, and said to him, “Draw your sword and kill me, so that it will not be said of me, ‘A woman slew him.’” So the young man pierced him through, and he died.
Case #2: Saul & the Amalekite

2 Samuel 1:9 - Then he said to me, ‘Please stand beside me and kill me, for agony has seized me because my life still lingers in me.’ So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen.
Case #2: Saul & the Amalekite

David’s response (v. 14) - Then David said to him, “How is it you were not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the Lord’s anointed?” And David called one of the young men and said, “Go, cut him down.” So he struck him and he died. David said to him, “Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, ‘I have killed the Lord’s anointed.’
Case #3: Job & Job’s Wife

Job 2:6-8 - So the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes.
Case #3: Job & Job’s Wife

Job 2:9 - Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!”
EXAMPLES OF BIBLICAL EUTHANASIA

Case #3: Job & Job’s Wife

Job 2:10 - But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
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REVIEWS OF DUTCH SYSTEM

• The following major reviews have informed this study and shown serious problems in the Dutch system:
  • Two studies by the British medical journal The Lancet (1991, 2012),
  • The Dutch government’s Remmelink report (1991)
  • Carlos F. Gomez, University of Virginia
  • Alexander Capron, University of Southern California
  • John I. Fleming, Southern Cross Bioethics Institute (Australia)
Dutch Euthanasia Law

• Euthanasia is permitted where:
  • The patient is suffering unbearably with no prospect of improvement,
  • The patient voluntarily and repeatedly requests euthanasia,
  • The patient understands his choice and circumstances,
  • A second doctor agrees,
  • The first doctor is present at the euthanasia,
  • The patient is at least 16, or 12 with parental consent.
ABUSES IN DUTCH SYSTEM

• The Lancet’s first study, in 1991, showed that “in cases of euthanasia, the physician often declares that the patient died a natural death.”[1]
• Their 2010 report showed conclusively that there was at least a 23% underreporting of euthanasias in the Netherlands by doctors.[2]

DOCTORS VIOLATE EUTHANASIA LAWS ELSEWHERE

• In Australia, 29% of doctors in Victoria admitted illegally euthanizing patients and 85% of nurses admitted they had helped in euthanasias.[1]

• 10% of American oncologists admit to participating in euthanasias, the vast majority of whom live in jurisdictions where euthanasia is illegal.[2]

• 4% of American oncologists euthanize at least one patient per year.[3]


[3] - “Time to Die”, The Economist (7/12/12), Emanuel, “Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia” (National Institute of Health study, found in Holland-Frei, Cancer Medicine, 6th Ed.).
ABUSES IN DUTCH SYSTEM

• The Remmelink Report indicated that in the early 1990s, euthanasias was responsible for approximately 10% all Dutch deaths. This did not include euthanasias for AIDS patients, handicapped newborns or psychiatry patients. [1]

• Over half of these killings were nonvoluntary. [2]

• Doctors rationalized these deaths by stating they made a determination that the patient would have “a low quality of life,” “no prospect of improvement,” or “the family couldn’t take it anymore.” [3]

ABUSES IN BELGIAN & DUTCH SYSTEMS

- The Dutch euthanasia system (and the system used by its neighbor, Belgium) are being used to kill more people than just the terminally ill, including:
  - A 28 year old woman in normal health suffering from “chronic depression,”
  - A 54 year old woman with a personality disorder,
  - A pair of brothers facing blindness,
  - Elderly persons suffering from dementia.

ABUSES IN BELGIAN SYSTEM

• The Belgian euthanasia system has similar abuses:
  • 32% of euthanasias in the region of Flanders were determined to be involuntary,
  • Only 52.8% of euthanasias in the same region were even reported.[1]

THE SYSTEM IN OREGON

- The editorial board of The Oregonian wrote a piece noting: "On the negative side, Oregon's physician-assisted suicide program has not been sufficiently transparent. Essentially, a coterie of insiders run the program, with a handful of doctors and others deciding what the public may know."[1]

[1] – “Washington’s assisted suicide measure: Don’t go there”, The Oregonian (9/20/08)
CHILDEUTHANASIA IN BELGIUM

• In 2005, academics investigated every death of a child under the age of one in the Belgian region of Flanders. In over half the cases of infant mortality, investigators determined that Belgian doctors had made “end-of-life decisions” for the infant, either by injecting an overdose of morphine or using lethal drugs.[1]

• According to eyewitnesses, as reported in the Economist, intensive care nurses in one Belgian hospital reported seeing over 24 babies killed without anyone’s consent.[2]

A “Model Case”
The Death of Cees van Wendel