

The First Adam's Choice: Death!

Warning – eat and die...

Interrogation – did you eat of the tree?...

Choice of Death – tree of life...

Judgment –

 Serpent cursed/crushed

 Woman – pain, multiple conceptions, desire...

 Man – ground cursed, labor complicated by
 struggle, return to dirt in physical death...

Consequence – driven from the garden and the tree
of life...

Biblical Idea of Death

1. Biblical words for death have a very broad semantic range -
2. Death is never associated in the Bible with heart or mind -
3. Biblical concept is cessation of respiratory function - expired, breathed his last, spirit (breath) taken by God -

Three Views of Death

1. Death is natural and should be sought and embraced. This often leads to abandoning life prematurely.
2. Death is a disaster that must be avoided at all costs. This often leads to making physical life the highest good.
3. Death is a real evil, the result of man's rebellion, but it is something over which God's grace triumphs in Jesus Christ.

1981 Uniform Determination of Death Act

1. Irreversible cessation of the
 - a. circulatory function
 - b. respiratory function
2. Irreversible cessation of all of the functions of the brain
 - a. entire brain
 - b. including the brain stem

Two Cultural Generalizations About Suffering

1. Suffering is an unqualified evil!
It is of no value to anyone.
2. Suffering is to be avoided at all costs! Happiness is the highest good for human life.

Redemptive Possibilities in Suffering

1. Value to the Sufferer – weakness, self-centeredness are exposed and refined, character and virtues are often formed
2. Value to God - God's glory and power may be demonstrated and it provides opportunity to trust and praise God (Job, man born blind, Paul)
3. Value to Others – caregivers may learn much in helping, suffering may produce the ability to comfort others

Happiness as the Core Value of Life

1. Maximizing happiness is the core value of life, suffering must be avoided at all costs, an unacceptable quality of life does not maximize happiness therefore suffering sets the agenda for one's life & death...
2. God, His Kingdom and Righteousness sets the agenda for one's life – death... dealing with suffering may be the test that reveals who or what is setting the agenda...

Toward a Christian Response

Offered with Respect and Concern for Supporters of P.A.S. & not in Anger toward or Contempt for them...

1. Autonomy and freedom are western ideals in the tradition of John Locke...it is interesting to note that taking one's life denies one's autonomy, i.e. the free choice to end life precludes any other choices...
2. Personhood is not a function of the higher cognitive capacities, rather it defines each of us in the image of God...no matter what functions are lost the person is still a person...(use of persistent vegetative state)...

Issues and Cases

1. Physician Assisted Suicide - polls
2. Present Practice in Oregon -
3. Baby Doe – courts -
4. Down's Syndrome Babies -
5. Terry Schiavo -

Active Voluntary Euthanasia

Taking Life to Avoid Suffering or Unacceptable Quality of Life

1. Right to die with dignity...
2. Act of mercy for the sufferer & family...
3. Relieves family of a heavy \$ strain...
4. Relieves society of a heavy social strain and \$ drain...
5. It is humane...

Support for Voluntary Euthanasia

1. Courts have ruled the right to privacy in abortion...same right for euthanasia...
2. Autonomy is the first criteria for decision making in medical ethics...
 - a. Major Premise: I am my own...
 - b. Minor Premise: Time and means of my dying lie at core my private life...
 - c. Conclusion: I retain the right to die and no one may take it from me...

Observations about *Imago Dei*

1. Image defines man in his being and not just in his function -
2. Man is the Image of God and does not simply bear the Image -
3. Image is an ontological category -
4. Implications for the unborn (inception of life), the infirm (end of life) and the comatose -

Terminal Illness and the Termination of Treatment

Preserving Life? Postponing Death?

1. Sustaining Life - use of means that will either cure the patient or at least contribute to a reasonable expectation of life...
2. Prolonging Death - artificially prolonging a truly terminal patient's irreversible and imminent process of dying...

Biblical Perspective: Termination of Treatment Application of the Guidelines!

Disease at a point where there is no known therapy and death is imminent despite any means used:

1. Treatment that only postpones death need not be initiated or may be discontinued...
2. Palliative care is owed to all persons - food, fluids, pain control, relief from suffering, nursing care and relief of stress for the patient and family...
3. Care must include spiritual care and nurture that prepares the patient for death...

Implications for End of Life Decisions

1. Advanced Directives -
2. Distinction between prolonging life and postponing death -
3. Withdrawing and/or not initiating certain treatments -
4. Palliative care -
5. Spiritual care -

Practical Suggestions

1. Choose an advocate who shares your values and ethical code...
2. Choose an attending physician who also shares your values and ethical code...
3. Understand that the line between ordinary and extraordinary varies given the medical situation...
4. Avoid writing details to cover every possible situation - talk about the general things...

Man in Grace: Last Adam's Choice of Life

1. Born without sin – chose life...
2. Sustained all three essential life... relationships without committing any sin – imputed righteousness...
3. Willingly underwent all of God's wrath against man's guilt – justification...
4. Reversed the cosmic effects of Adam's sin - new heaven & earth...

Results of the Work of Christ

All of the Consequences of Adam's Sin have been Reversed by Christ's Redemptive Victory but they Have Not Yet Been Fully Removed

1. Creation is groaning in bondage awaiting the revelation of the Sons of God -
2. Believers die in hope of the resurrection of their bodies in a future day - "sleep in Jesus"