

IL-BIBBJA U L-EWTANASJA

Mistoqsija: “X’tghid il-Bibbja dwar l-ewtanasja u/jew li jkollok rieda li tghix?”

Tweġiba: Dan huwa suġġett diffiċli hafna. Hemm żewġ naħat li huma diffiċli biex tibbilanċjahom. Fuq naħa wahda, ahna ma rridux li niehdu l-hajja ta’ persuna f’idejna u ngibuha fit-tmiem qabel iż-żmien – ewtanasja. Fuq in-naħa l-oħra, f’liema punt ahna sempliċiment inhallu persuna biex tmut – rieda li tghix?

Ġob 21:22 – “²²Jista’ xi hadd ighallem ’l Alla l-gherf, hu li jagħmel haqq mill-oghla hlejjaq?”

Xi nghidu dwar l-Etanasja? Il-verità kollha li twassalni għall-konklużjoni li Alla hu kontra l-ewtanasja hija *s-Sovranità Tiegħu*.

1. Fil-jiem ta’ l-Imhallfin, jintqal li:

- a. **Imhallfin 17:6** – “⁶Dak iż-żmien ma kienx hemm sultan f’Izrael: *izda kulhadd kien jagħmel dak li jidhirlu tajjeb.*”
- b. **Imhallfin 21:25** – “²⁵F’dak iż-żmien ma kienx hemm sultan f’Izrael: *kulhadd kien jagħmel dak li kien jidhirlu tajjeb f’ghajnejh.*”

2. Ahna nafu li mewta fiżika hija inevitabbli:

- a. **Salm 89:48** – “⁴⁸Min hu dak il-bniedem li jghix u ma jarax il-mewt? Jista’ jehles ruħu mis-setgħa ta’ Xeol? Sela.”
- b. **Lhud 9:27** – “²⁷U kif inhu miktub għall-bnedmin li għandhom imutu darba biss, u wara dan isir il-gudizzju.”

3. Izda, Alla wahdu huwa suvran fuq meta u kif tigris l-mewt ta’ persuna. Ġob jixhed:

- a. **Ġob 1:21** – “²¹U qal: *Gheri hriġt minn ġuf ommi, gheri narga’ mmur hemm. Jahweh tani, Jahweh hadli; ikun imbierek isem Jahweh.*”
- b. **Ġob 30:23** – “²³Għax jien naf li int twassalni sal-mewt, u fid-dar fejn jiltaqghu l-hajjin kollha.”
- c. **Salm 31:15** – “¹⁵Jiemi huma f’idek: *ehlisni minn id l-ghedewwa tiegħi, u minn dawk li jippersegwitawni.*”
- d. **Salm 68:20** – “²⁰Hu, li hu Alla tagħna, hu Alla tas-salvazzjoni; hu Jahweh Sidna li jehlisna mill-mewt.”
- e. **Ekklezjażti 8:8a** – “⁸Mhemm hadd li għandu s-setgħa fuq nifs il-hajja biex iżommu, jew setgħa fuq jum il-mewt;...”

4. Alla Għandu l-aħħar kelma fuq il-mewt.

- a. **1 Korintin 15:26** – “²⁶L-ahhar għadu li jinqered hi l-mewt.”
 - b. **1 Korintin 15:54-56** – “⁵⁴Għalhekk, meta dan il-ġisem li jithassar jilbes in-nuqqas ta’ tahsir, u dan il-ġisem li jmut jilbes in-nuqqas ta’ mewt, imbagħad issehh il-kelma li nkitbet: Il-mewt inbelgħet fir-rebħa. ⁵⁵Ja mewt, fejn hi n-niggieza tiegħek? Ja qabar, fejn hi r-rebħa tiegħek? ⁵⁶In-niggieza tal-mewt hu d-dnub; u l-qawwa tad-dnub hi l-liġi.”
 - c. **Lhud 2:9** – “⁹Imma ahna naraw lil Ġesù, li kien magħmul ftit anqas mill-anġli talli **bata l-mewt**, inkurunat bil-glorja u l-ġieħ; biex bil-grazzja ta’ Alla jduq il-mewt għal kulhadd.”
 - d. **Lhud 9:14-15** – “¹⁴Kemm aktar id-demmm ta’ Kristu, li permezz ta’ l-Ispirtu etern offra lilu nnifsu bla għajb ’l Alla, inaddaf il-kuxjenza tagħna minn għemejjel mejta, biex taqdu ’l Alla l-haj? ¹⁵U għalhekk hu l-medjatur tar-rabta l-ġdida, biex permezz tal-mewt, li ndaħlet għall-fidwa tal-htijiet li saru taħt l-ewwel rabta, dawk li huma msejhin jiehdu l-wegħda tal-wirt ta’ dejjem.”
 - e. **Rivelazzjoni 21:4** – “⁴U jimsaħ Alla kull demgħa minn għajnejhom; u **ma jkunx hemm iżjed mewt**, u la għali, u la biki, u lanqas uġiġħ iżjed; għax il-hwejjeg ta’ qabel ikunu għaddew.”
5. **Il-mewt hija haġa li tigri naturali. Xi kultant Alla jhalli li persuna s-sofri fit-tul qabel ma l-mewt tkun irrealizzata; f’waqtiet ohra, it-tbatija ta’ persuna tkun qasira.**
- a. **Ekklezjażti 7:14** – “¹⁴F’jum il-hena, thenna, izda f’jum in-niket, thasseb: Alla għamel sew lil dan u sew lil dak, biex il-bniedem ma jsib xejn x’sa jġiri warajh.”
6. Hadd ma jhobb ibati, imma dan ma jagħmilx tajjeb għalina biex niddeterminaw li persuna hija lesta biex tmut. Spiss l-iskopijiet ta’ Alla huma magħmula magħ-rufa permezz tat-tbatija ta’ persuna.
7. Tribulazzjonijiet iġibu l-perseveranza. Alla jinteressah dwar dawk li qegħdin jitolbu għall-mewt biex iġibu fit-tmiem it-tbatija tagħhom. Alla jagħti skop għall-hajja saħansitra sat-tmiem. Alla biss jaf x’inhu l-aħjar, u ż-żmien Tiegħu ukoll fil-mewt ta’ persuna huwa perfett.
- a. **Rumani 5:3** – “³U mhux hekk biss, imma **niftaħru wkoll bit-tribulazzjonijiet**: billi nafu lit-tribulazzjoni tnissel is-sabar; ⁴U s-sabar, il-prova, u l-prova, it-tama.”
8. L-aħjar parir tiegħi lil min ikun qieghed ihabbat wiċċu ma’ deċiżjoni bħal din huwa:
- a. **Ġakbu 1:5** – “⁵Jekk xi hadd minnkum jonqsu l-għerf, ha jitlob lil Alla, li jagħti lil kulhadd b’id miftuħa u bla ma jċanfar ’il hadd u jkun mogħti lilu.”

Tindirizza l-Bibbja s-suwicidju? Suwicidju assistit minn tabib? Mewt? Qtil bi Hniena? Halli naraw:

1. Il-bniedem huwa ġisem, spirtu, u ruh.
 - a. **I Tessalonikin 5:23** – “²³U l-istess Alla tas-sliem iqaddiskom għalkollox; li l-ispirtu kollu tagħkom, u r-ruh, u l-ġisem, ikunu mharsin bla htija fil-miġja ta’ Sidna Ġesù Kristu.”
2. Alla jaf l-ispirti tal-bnedmin kollha.
 - a. **Numri 16:22** – “²²U waqghu għal wiċċhom, u qalu: O Alla, Alla ta’ l-ispirti tal-ħajjin kollha,…”
 - b. **Numri 27:16** – “¹⁶Halli Jahweh, Alla ta’ l-ispirti tal-ħajjin kollha, iqiegħed raġel fuq il-miġemgħa.”
 - c. **Eżekjel 18:4** – “⁴Ara, l-erwieh huma kollha tiegħi; bħal ruh il-missier, hekk ukoll ruh l-iben hija tiegħi:…”
 - d. **Lhud 12:23** – “²³Lejn il-ġemgħa l-kbira, u l-knisja ta’ l-ulied il-kbar, li huma miktubin fis-smewwiet, u lejn Alla l-Imħallef ta’ kulħadd, u lejn l-ispirti tal-ġusti li saru perfetti.”
3. Alla appunta żmien għal kulhadd li jmut.
 - a. **Lhud 9:27** – “²⁷U kif inhu miktub għall-bnedmin li għandhom imutu darba biss, u wara dan isir il-ġudizzju.”
 - b. **Ekkleżiażti 3:1-2** – “¹Kollox għandu żmienu, u kull haġa għandha waqtha taht is-sema: ²Waqgħ li titwieled, u waqgħ li tmut; u waqgħ li thawwel, u waqgħ li taqla’ l-imħawwel.”
 - c. **Ekkleżiażti 7:17** – “¹⁶La tkunx ġust iżzejjed; u lanqas tagħmilha ta’ għaref iżzejjed: għaliex għandek tinqered? ¹⁷La tkunx ħazin iżzejjed, u lanqas tkun iblah: għaliex għandek tmut qabel waqtek?”
4. Il-mewt hija meta l-ispirtu jhalli l-ġisem. Dan hu att ta’ Alla.
 - a. **Ekkleżiażti 8:8** – “⁸Mhemm ħadd li għandu s-setgħa fuq nifs il-ħajja biex iżommu, jew setgħa fuq jum il-mewt;…”
 - b. **Ġakbu 2:26** – “²⁶Għax bħalma ġisem bla spirtu hu mejjet, hekk il-fidi bla opri hi mejta.”
5. Il-Mulej jara wkoll meta għasfur jaqgħ.
 - a. **Mattew 10:29** – “²⁹Jaqqaw żewġ għasafar tal-bejt ma jinbighux habba? U wieħed minnhom ma jaqqax fl-art mingħajr ma jrid Missierkom.”
6. Ewtanasja hija t-tehid tal-ħajja qabel iż-żmien ta’ Alla.
 - a. **I Samuel 2:6** – “⁶Jahweh jibgħat il-mewt, u jagħti l-ħajja; inizzel fl-imwiet u jtalla’.”
 - b. **Ġob 14:5** – “⁵La darba magħdudin huma jiemu, la darba l-għadd tax-xhur qiegħed f’idejk, u l-limiti tiegħu int appuntajt li ma jistax iġhaddihom.”
7. Huwa l-gvern biss li kien mogħti l-awtorità minn Alla biex inehhi ħajja ta’ persuna fil-każ tal-Piena Kapitali.

- a. **Ġenesi 9:6** – “⁶Kull min ixerred demm il-bniedem, **mill-bnedmin demmu jixxerred**: għax bi xbihat Alla, Alla għamel il-bniedem.”
 - b. **Rumani 1:32** – “³¹Bla mohħ, ma jzommux kelmithom, bla għibda naturali, bla hniena: ³²Li għalkemm jafu l-ħaqq ta’ Alla, li dawk li jagħmlu dawn il-ħwejjeg **ħaqqhom il-mewt**, mhux biss jagħmluhom, iżda jjeħdu pjaċir b’dawk li jagħmluhom.”
 - c. **Atti 25:10-12** – “¹⁰Imbagħad Pawlu qallu: Jiena qieghed quddiem it-tribu-nal ta’ Ċesri, fejn għandu jsir ħaqq minni: lil-Lhud ma għamiltihom ebda deni, bħal ma taf tajjeb int. ¹¹Għax jekk jien ħati, jew għamilt xi haġa li ħaqqha l-mewt, ma nfittix naħrab il-mewt: iżda jekk m’hemm xejn minn dawn il-ħwejjeg li huma qegħdin jixluni, hadd ma jista’ jerhini f’idej-hom. Nappella lil Ċesri. ¹²Imbagħad Festus, wara li thaddet mal-kunsill, wieġeb: Appellajt lil Ċesri? Għand Ċesri tmur.”
8. Tobba qatt ma huma mogħtija awtorità minn Alla fl-Iskrittura biex inehhu l-hajja ta’ xi hadd. Qatt Luqa għamel dan?
- a. **Kolossin 4:14** – “¹⁴Isellu għalikom **Luqa, it-tabib il-maħbub, u Demas.**”
 - b. Imkien ma naqraw li Luqa nehha l-hajja ta’ xi hadd b’dan il-mod!
9. Barra mill-gvern, fil-każ tal-piena kapitali, il-bnedmin l-oħra kollha huma mogħtija l-kmandament:
- a. **Ezodu 20:13** – “**La toqtolx.**”
 - b. **Mattew 19:18** – “¹⁸...U Ġesù qal: **La toqtolx,...**”
10. Li tassisti suwiċidju huwa li tpoġġi lilek innifsek fil-post ta’ Alla.
- a. Tnehhi l-ispirtu mill-gisem huwa xi haġa magħmula minn Alla fiż-żmien Tiegħu. Dan hu x-xogħol ta’ Alla, mhux tagħna jew tat-tobba.

PRINĊIPJI BIBLIĊI

1. Kmand biex niehdu hsieb u kura tax-xjuħ u mhux nabbandunawhom.
 - a. **Dewteronomju 28:50** – “⁵⁰Ġens ta’ wiċċ kiefer, li ma jħarisx lejn ix-xjuħ, u anqas ma jhenn għat-tfal.”
 - b. **Levitku 19:32** – “³²Int għandek tqum quddiem ir-ras b’xagħar abjad, u tonora l-wiċċ tar-raġel xiħ, u tibza’ minn Alla tiegħek, Jiena Jahweh.”
 - c. **Isaija 1:23** – “²³Il-kbarat tiegħek ribelli, u šħab tal-hallelin: kulhadd iħobb it-tixhim, u jġgri wara l-għotjiet: ma jagħmlux ħaqq mill-iltim, u lanqas il-kawza ta’ l-armla ma tiġi għandhom.”
 - d. **Mattew 15:3-6** – “³Izda hu wieġeb u qalilhom: Għaliex intom ukoll tiksru l-kmandamenti t’Alla minħabba t-tradizzjoni tagħkom? ⁴Għax Alla qal:

Wegġah lil missierek u lil ommok; u min jinsolenta lill-missier jew lill-omm, ha jmut bil-mewt. ⁵*Izda intom tghidu: Kull min ighid lil missieru jew lil ommu: Kulma bih tista' tkun meghjun minni, hu moghti lil Alla;* ⁶*U ma jwegġahx lil missieru jew lil ommu, ikun hieles. Hekk iggibu fix-xejn il-kelma ta' Alla minhabba t-tradizzjoni taghkom."*

- e. **Efesin 6:1-3** – ¹*Tfal, isinghu mill-ġenituri taghkom fil-Mulej: ghax dan sewwa.* ²*Wegġah lil missierek u lil ommok; dan hu l-ewwel kmanda-ment b'weghda;* ³*Biex jahbatlek tajjeb, u tghix hajja twila fuq l-art."*
 - f. **Ġakbu 1:27** – ²⁷*Religjon safja quddiem Alla u 'l Missier hi din: Iżzur l-iltiema u r-romol fil-hemm taghhom, u li żżomm lilek innifsek bla tebgħa mid-dinja."*
 - g. **1 Timotju 5:4, 8** – ⁴*Imma jekk armla ghandha l-ulied jew ulied l-ulied, ha jitghallmu l-ewwel juru tjeba f' darhom, u jroddu li haqqhom lill-ġeni-turi taghhom: ghax dan tajjeb u jingħogob quddiem Alla....* ⁸*Jekk xi hadd ma jahsibx għal niesu, u l-aktar għan-nies ta' daru, ikun çahad il-fidi, u hu aghar minn wiehed li ma jemminx."*
2. Naghmlu tajjeb li niftakru fit-talba lil Alla tas-Salmist:
 - a. **Salm 71:9** – ⁹*Twarrabbnix fix-xjuħija tiegħi; titlaqnix meta saħhti tonqosni."*
 3. Ukoll ghandna niftakru fil-gherf ta' Salamun:
 - a. **Proverbji 24:11-12** – ¹¹*Ehles lil dawk li huma meħudin għall-mewt, u għin lil dawk li sa joqtluhom.* ¹²*Jekk intom tghidu, 'Ahna dan ma kon-niex nafuh,' dak li jwieżen il-qalb ma jikkunsidraħx dan? U dak li jzomm ir-ruh tiegħek, ma jafux dan? U ma jhallas hu lil kull bniedem skond l-għemil tiegħu?"*
 4. Ahna ghandna naraw id-differenza bejn *"il-qdusija tal-hajja"* u *"l-kwalità tal-hajja."*
 5. Il-Bibbja tghallimna li ahna ghandna nkomplu nghixu wkoll jekk *"il-kwalità tal-hajja"* tista' tkun dgħajfa.
 6. It-tbatija tal-bniedem m'ghandix tiġi mnehhija bil-mewt. Ahna ghandna nghixu bit-tbatija, u nitghallmu minnha.
 - a. **Rumani 5:3-4** – ³*U mhux hekk biss, imma niftaħru wkoll bit-tribulazzjonijiet: billi nafu lit-tribulazzjoni tnissel is-sabar;* ⁴*U s-sabar, il-prova, u l-prova, it-tama."*

- b. **1 Pietru 1:6-9** – “⁶B’dan intom tiferhu hafna, ghalkemm issa ghal fit zmien, jekk jahtieg, tiddejqu b’hafna tigrub. ⁷Biex il-prova tal-fidi taghkom, billi hija aktar prezzjuza mid-deheb li jintemm, ghalkemm hu ippruvat bin-nar, tinstab li haqqa tiffhir, u gieh, u glorja, fid-dehra ta’ Gesu Kristu: ⁸Li thobbuh, ghalkemm ma rajtuhx; li temmnu fih, bla ma tarawh issa, u tiferhu b’ferh li ma jiffissirx u mimli glorja: ⁹Billi taqilghu l-ghan tal-fidi taghkom, is-salvazzjoni ta’ ruhkom.”
- c. **2 Korintin 1:3-11** – “³Imbierrek Alla, Missier Sidna Gesu Kristu, Missier il-hninet, u Alla ta’ kull farag; ⁴Li jfarragna fit-tribulazzjoni kollha taghna, biex inkunu nistghu nfarrgu lil dawk li huma fil-ghali, bil-farag li bih ahna nfusna mfarrgin minn Alla. ⁵Ghax bhalma t-tbatijiet ta’ Kristu joktru fina, hekk joktor bi Kristu l-farag taghna wkoll. ⁶Issa, sew jekk ahna mnikktin, dan hu ghall-farag u s-salvazzjoni taghkom; u kemm jekk ahna mfarrgin, dan hu ghall-farag taghkom, li jahdem fikom biex tifilhu ghall-istess tbatijiet, li ahna wkoll inbatu. ⁷U t-tama taghna ghali-kom hi qawwija, billi nafu li bhalma intom ghandkom sehem mit-tbatijiet, hekk ukoll ikollkom mill-farag. ⁸Ghax ma rridukomx ma tkunux tafu, huti, it-tahbit taghna li gie fuqna fl-Asja: kif konna maghfusin bla qies aktar milli nifilhu, hekk li qtajna jjesna li nibqghu hajjin: ⁹Tabilhaqq kellna fina nfusna s-sentenza tal-mewt, biex ma nafdawx fina nfsuna, imma f’Alla li jqajjem il-mejtin: ¹⁰Hu li helisna minn mewt hekk kbira, u jehlisna: fih nittamaw li jarga’ jehlisna; ¹¹Intom ukoll qeghdin tghinuna bit-talb tagh-kom ghalina, biex ghall-ghotja moghtija lilna permezz tat-talb ta’ hafna jinghata radd il-hajr minn hafna ghalina.
7. Min jaqbel ma l-ewtanasja jemmen li l-hajja ghandha valur biss meta din tkun ta’ “kwalita’ tajba.” Skond huma, meta “l-hajja t-tajba” tispicca, ikun il-waqt li joqtluk.
- a. Il-hajja tal-bniedem ghalihom hija bhal lumija li taghsarha u mbaghad tarmiha.
8. Il-Kristjani jemmnu fil-“qodusija tal-hajja.” Dan ifisser li kull hajja, zaghzugha jew xiha, b’sahhitha jew marida, bi prospett jew tbatu, ghandha valur u ghandha tkun imtawla ghaliex il-bniedem ghandu ruh u huwa mahluq fix-xbieha ta’ Alla.
- a. **Genesi 1:26-27** – “²⁶U Alla qal: Halli naghmlu l-bniedem fuq xbieha taghna, u fuq is-sura, taghna, u ha jkollhom hakma fuq il-hut tal-bahar, u fuq l-art kollha, u fuq kull hlieqa li titkaxkar fuq l-art. ²⁷Hekk Alla halaq il-bniedem fuq ix-xbieha tieghu: fuq ix-xbieha ta’ Alla halqu; ragel u mara halaqhom.”
- b. **Genesi 9:6** – “⁶Kull min ixerred demm il-bniedem, mill-bnedmin demmu jixxerred: ghax bi xbihat Alla, Alla ghamel il-bniedem.”

9. Għall-Kristjan il-hajja ma tieqafx meta l-“hajja t-tajba” tieqaf; din ma tieqafx meta jkun hemm it-tbatija; din tieqaf meta ż-żmien ta’ Alla jwaqqafha.
- a. **Ġob 1:21** – “²¹U qal: *Għeri hriġt minn ġuf ommi, għeri narga’ mmur hemm. Jahweh tani, Jahweh hadli; ikun imbierek isem Jahweh.*”
10. Il-hajja għandha tkompli, mhux minhabba ċ-ċirkustanzi tajba jew hżiena ta’ barra (kwalità ta’ hajja), imma pjuttost minhabba l-valur ta’ ġewwa tagħha (qđusija tal-hajja).
11. L-ewtanasja hija mod konvenjenti biex inehhi t-tbatija.
- a. Imma ahna nehtieġu aktar “kumpassjoni għall-hajja” u inqas “passjoni għall-konvenjenza.”
- b. It-tmiem (serħan mit-tbatija) ma jiggustifikax il-mezzi (ewtanasja).
- c. Ahna ma nehtigux aktar “qtil ta’ hniena” għal dawk li jbatu.
- d. Ahna nehtieġu aktar “servizz ta’ hniena” biex nghinu lil dawk bl-uġigh.
- e. Ahna nehtieġu inqas bħal mara ta’ Ġob – “Ishet lil Alla u mut” (**Ġob 2:9**).
- f. U nehtieġu aktar bħal Ġob—“¹⁰*Iżda hu qalilha: Inti titkellem bħal ma titkellem wahda belha. X’ inhu? nilqghu l-ġid minn id Alla, u ma nilqghux id-deni? F’dan kollu ma dinibx Ġob b’xofftejh*” (**Ġob 2:10**).
12. Nies ibatu jistgħu jiġu għandna u jitkellmu kif darba tkellem il-profeta Ġona:
- a. **Ġona 4:3-9** – “³*Għalhekk, issa, o Jahweh, nitlobok ħudli ħajti, għax ahjar għalija mmut milli nghix.* ⁴*Imbagħad qallu Jahweh: Sewwa li tagħdab hekk?* ⁵*U Ġona ħareġ mill-belt, u qagħad bil-qiegħda n-naħa tal-lvant tal-belt, u hemm għamel għalih għarix, u qagħad tahtu fid-dell, sa ma jara x’jiġri fil-belt.* ⁶*U Jahweh Alla nibbet siġa tar-rigħnu, u għliet fuq Ġona, biex ikun hemm id-dell fuq rasu, biex teħilsu mid-diqa tiegħu. U Ġona ferah ferħa kbira bis-siġra tar-rigħnu.* ⁷*Iżda Jahweh l-ghada, mas-sebħ, qajjem duda, li għamlet għas-siġra tar-rigħnu, hekk li nixfet.* ⁸*U ġara ma’ tluġ ix-xemx, illi Jahweh qajjem rih xlokk jahraq; u x-xemx daqqet fuq ras Ġona, u ntelaq, u xtaq fih in-nifsu li jmut, u qal: Ahjar għalija mmut milli nghix!* ⁹*U Alla qal lil Ġona: Sewwa qiegħed tagħmel li tagħdab minhabba s-siġra tar-rigħnu? U wieġeb: Sewwa li jien għadabt, imqar għall-mewt!”*
13. Waqt li huma jagħmlu dan, halli ahna ma nghinuhomx fil-mewt tagħhom , imma halli ahna naġixxu kif aġixxa Alla ma’ Ġona; nieħdu hsiebhom, infarr-ġuhom u nikkommunikaw magħhom.

Rakkonti Bibliċi ta' suwiċidju:

1. Is-suwiċidju ta' Abimelek assistit minn wiehed li jgorrli l-armi.

- a. **Imhallfin 9:50-55** – “⁵⁰Imbagħad Abimelek mar Tebes, u dawwarha, u hadha. ⁵¹Kien hemm torri qawwi f'nofs il-belt, u ħarbu hemm l-irġiel kollha u n-nisa, in-nies kollha tal-belt; u sakkru warajhom, u telgħu fuq il-belt tat-torri. ⁵²U Abimelek ġie lejn it-torri, u ħabat għalih, u resaq lejn il-bieb biex jagħtih in-nar. ⁵³Imma wahda mara waddbet haġra ta' fuq ta' mithna għal fuq ras Abimelek, u kissritlu rasu. ⁵⁴U sejjah iż-żagħżuġh li kien iġorlu l-armi u qallu, **Islet ix-xabla u oqtolni, li ma jgħidux li qatlitni mara.**” **U ż-żagħżuġh nifdu u miet.** ⁵⁵U malli l-Iżraelin raw li **miet Abimelek**, telqu kulhadd lejn daru.”
- b. Innota żewġ affarijiet f'din l-istorja. L-ewwel—il-Bibbja hija ktieb ta' stor-ja. Hija ma tiskuzax dak li ż-żagħżuġh għamel hawn, imma sempliċiment tgħid x'gara.
- c. *It-tieni*, matul il-jiem ta' l-imħallfin, “⁶**Dak iż-żmien ma kienx hemm sultan f'Iżrael: iżda kulhadd kien jagħmel dak li jidhirli tajjeb.**” (Imhallfin 17:6;21:25)

2. Is-Sultan Sawl jikkommetti suwiċidju wara li l-iskudier tiegħu ma riedx li joqtlu, u mbagħad huwa stess jikkommettu suwiċidju.

- a. **I Samwel 31:4** – “³U t-taqbida hraxet madwar Sawl, u laħquh l-arċieri u darbuh kemm il-darba. ⁴Imbagħad Sawl **qal lill-iskudier tiegħu: Islet ix-xabla u infidni biha**, li ma jġugx dawn in-nies bla ċirkonċizzjoni u jinfduni huma u jiddieħku bija. L-iskudier ma ssugrax għax beza' hafna. U **Sawl qabad ix-xabla u ntxeħet fuqha.** ⁵Malli l-iskudier ra l-armi tiegħu ra li Sawl miet, **inxteħet hu wkoll fuq ix-xabla tiegħu, u miet miegħu.**”
- b. Sawl ma kienx qieghed ighix fil-fidi, u l-mewta tiegħu esprimiet nuqqas ta' fiduċja f'Alla.

3. Ahitofel joqtol lilu nnifsu.

- a. **2 Samwel 17:23** – “²³U xhin Ahitofel, ra li l-parir tiegħu ma sehħx, xedd il-ħmar, u qabad u mar id-dar fil-belt tiegħu. Ta l-aħħar ordnijiet lil niesu, **u tgħallaq, u miet**, u difnuh f'qabar missieru.”

4. Żimri joqtol lilu nnifsu.

- a. **I Slaten 16:18** – “¹⁸U ġara, malli Żimri ra li l-belt inqabdet, mar fit-torri tal-palazz tas-sultan u tah in-nar, u **ħaraq fuqu nnifsu l-palazz tas-sultan, u miet.**”

5. Ġuda l-Iskarjota, jotol lilu nnifsu.

- a. **Matthew 27:5** – “³Imbagħad Ġuda, li ttradih, meta ra li kien ikkundannat, nidem, u raġa' ġieb it-tletin biċċa tal-fidda lill-qassisin il-kbar u lill-anzjani. ⁴U qal: Dnibt billi ttradejt demm bla ħtija. Izda huma qalu: Ahna x'nindaħlu? Dak arah int. ⁵U xeħet it-tletin biċċa tal-fidda fit-tempju, u **telaq, u mar u tgħallaq.**”

- b. L-istess Ġuda, ma kienx qieghed ighix fil-fidi, u l-mewta tieghu wkoll esp-rimiet nuqqas ta' fiduċja f'Alla.
6. Il-Bibbja hija ktieb ta' storja. Hija tirreġistra dawn is-suwiċidji imma taghmlha ċara li s-suwiċidju huwa hażin. Barra mill-każ ta' piena kapitali amministrata mill-gvern, it-tnehhija ta' hajja, ukoll hajjitna stess qabel iż-żmien ta' Alla, huwa hażin. Ahna mkien fl-Iskrittura m'ahna awtorizzati biex inehhu hajjitna stess jew il-hajja ta' xi persuna oħra.
 7. Barra minn dan, dak li l-Iskrittura tghid hafna mit-tobba rabtu lilhom infushom b'gurament. Il-gurament huwa msejjah il-Ġurament ta' Hippokrate [Hippocratic Oath]. (Hippokrate kien tabib Grieg tas-seklu 5 QK) li jirregola l-etika tat-tabib.
 8. Parti minn dan il-gurament tghid: ***“Jiena qatt ma nagħti droga qattiela lil xi hadd jekk mitlub għaliha, lanqas ma jiena nagħmel suggeriment għal dan l-effett.”***
 9. Ahna li l-hajja għalina hija prezzjuża għandna nagħtu attenzjoni mill-qrib għal mod kif il-meżzi tal-komunikazzjoni iwasslu dawn il-hwejjeġ. Ahna għandna dejjem inkunu lesti li nuru l-oppożizzjoni tagħna kull darba li dawn juru xi tabib jassisti suwiċidju bhala att ta' “kumpassjoni,” kif ċertament sejr in jagħmlu fiż-żmien li ġej.

The Bible and Euthanasia

"The Doctor Will Kill You Now"

Put yourself into the not so distant future. You're looking for your aged parents and you think they may have gone to the doctor's office. You step into the doctor's office and find a waiting room full of aged people who are sick and dying. On a table is the latest issue of Hemlock Quarterly and Popular Pills. The sign above the desk reads: "Have your death certificate and living will ready." In a moment a nurse steps through a door and you overhear her say, "Mr. Jones, thank you for waiting, the doctor will kill you now." Unrealistic? Maybe not. Euthanasia is becoming more popular every year.

This issue of euthanasia is a by-product of 20th century medical success. People who formerly would have died are now kept alive by advanced medical treatments. Along with this prolonged life have come difficult ethical decisions, and a lot of slogans like "the right to die," "the choice not to suffer," "death with dignity," "doctor-assisted suicide" and "living wills." The time-honored Hippocratic oath upon which our nation's healing medical profession was founded, is slowly being discarded in favour of these slogans. A part of that oath reads: "I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect." Some countries, allow the publication of instructions for do-it-yourself suicide!

Derek Humphry's, *Let Me Die Before I Wake*, and recent bestseller, *Final Exit*, give instructions how to end one's life. Ian Gentles reports: "In 1990, 1,030 Dutch patients were killed without their consent. And of 22,500 deaths due to withdrawal of life support, 63 percent (14,175 patients) were denied medical treatment without their consent. Twelve percent (1,701 patients) were mentally competent but were not consulted." The Netherlands has over 20 years of experience with euthanasia. It has not been decriminalized there, but the nation's law enforcers turn a blind eye to doctor-assisted dying. In Chinese hospitals, active euthanasia is practiced on neonates. To make matters worse, there are pro-euthanasia advocacy groups around the world. The Euthanasia Society of America was founded in 1938 by the Charles F. Potter (a "Reverend" no less). We also have the Hemlock Society, Exit, Voluntary Euthanasia Legalization Society, and the Society for the Right to Die, Inc. The AMA even endorses euthanasia. In the past two decades the cases of Karen Ann Quinlan, Nancy Beth Cruzan and Baby Jane Doe have shown us the power of the courts to rule in favour of euthanasia. We may not bury alive our sick elderly like the Sandwich Islanders do, and we may not leave our aged parents to die on the banks of the Ganges River like children of India do, but it is clear that Americans have found an acceptable, clinical, high-tech, "humane" way of accomplishing the same thing. This article will explore briefly the nature, history and morality of the growing phenomena of euthanasia.

Defining Our Terms

Euthanasia, sometimes called "mercy killing," literally means "good death" (from the Greek words eu, "well," and thanatos, "death"). Beckwith and Geisler define

euthanasia as “the intentional taking of a human life for some good purpose, such as to relieve suffering or pain. Commonly the word denotes the taking of an adult life, though it can refer generally to taking any life after birth for supposed benevolent purposes” (141). “Euthanasia is assisted suicide. [Joseph - chr] Fletcher states that the relationship between suicide and euthanasia is so close that 'to justify either one ... is to justify the other'” (Wallace and Eser, 87). Infanticide (killing an infant or child), euthanasia (killing an adult), suicide (killing self), and even genocide (killing an entire race) are the same in theory (killing for supposed benevolent ends); they differ only in application. Sometimes you will here the terms “active euthanasia,” and “passive euthanasia.” What is the difference between the two? Active euthanasia refers to taking a life (producing death), where as “passive euthanasia” refers to allowing a death to occur without intervening (permitting death). The former usually involves the injection of a death-inducing drug (like Jack Kevorkian's “suicide machine”), and the latter usually involves the withdrawal of medical treatment which results in a disease or sickness naturally leading to death. One must also be familiar with the terms “voluntary euthanasia” and “involuntary euthanasia.” In the former, the patient has requested a desire to end life, and in the latter, a third party, usually a close relative, decides to end life. When these four (active, passive, voluntary, involuntary) are combined, we get four classes of euthanasia.

Euthanasia In Recent History

According to legal scholars, the long history of American common law has not supported a patient's right to die, but our times and laws are changing. Like the ancient Greek world, America is now divided over the issue of euthanasia. Passive euthanasia is widely practiced in this country and active euthanasia is gaining popularity. More than 30 years ago, one doctor had a broad vision for euthanasia saying it was for “...a group of individuals who will soon be encountering death ... a group with such severe mental damage ... and ... a group with varying degrees of cognizance...” (John Waddey quoting Dr. Robert Williams of Washington State Medical School.) This doctor's vision is slowly coming true. An old 1970 survey of Seattle physicians showed that 75% of them supported passive euthanasia if the patient had a chronic illness (Simpson, 18). In a recent article in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Guy I. Benrubi, M.D., praised the idea of “a specialty of physicians who alone would be empowered to perform” active euthanasia, and “certified specialists skilled in relieving suffering and, when necessary, terminating life painlessly” (198). Dr. Kevorkian addressed the National Press club in 1992 and said that euthanasia was for cancer patients, quadriplegics, people with multiple sclerosis and severe arthritis! There is no question that this country is traveling down the slippery slope from abortion to euthanasia. The first paved the way for the latter when it gave up the sanctity of human life. Even the pro-euthanasia advocates admit this. Joseph Fletcher saw the connection between the two when he concluded that abortion is “fetal euthanasia” and infanticide is “postnatal abortion.”

Moral Questions Surrounding Euthanasia

There is doubt that this issue will affect many today. People will continue to seek medical treatment and live or die as a result of their choice of treatment. What am I to

do when faced with such a situation? I must answer some difficult questions. The key questions in this issue include: “Am I preserving life, or prolonging death?” “Will the patient who dies be a victim of euthanasia, or a victim of a fatal ailment?” “Am I taking a life, or allowing a natural death?” “Am I providing the patient with natural means of sustaining life (food, water, air), or artificial means?” “What are my intentions, to end a life prematurely, or to avoid death?” “Do I desire the removal of non-beneficial treatment, or death itself?” If you have to answer these difficult questions one day regarding the care of a loved one, you must remember your basic moral obligation: to prolong life, not to prolong death. This obligation is made clear in the next section.

Euthanasia, Is It Biblical?

When we turn to the religious community for answers to the problem of euthanasia we don't get much help. Both Catholics and Jews oppose the practice, but there are varying views among Protestants (Simpson, 18). Of course the religion of humanism is very much in favour of it, recognizing an “individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide” (Claiborne quoting Humanist Manifesto II, 131). The answer to this difficult issue does not lie within medical, philosophical or theological theories, but within God's word. What we need to do in this case, as with any question, is go to the Bible for answers. We know that “***it is appointed unto man to die once***” (Hebrews 9:27). The question is, “When and how should man die?” *It is clear from God's word that euthanasia is immoral.* Why? Euthanasia, like abortion, infanticide, suicide or genocide, is intentional homicide or murder, and therefore immoral (Exodus 20:13). “***Thou shall not kill.***”

First, let's take the case of King Saul who was mortally wounded in battle and begged his armor-bearing to take his life. When Saul's servant refused, Saul attempted suicide (1 Samuel 31:1-6).

Later when an Amalekite passed by, Saul begged him to take his life and the Amalekite did so with good motives. The Amalekite was later judged for “***putting forth his hand to destroy***” (2 Samuel 1:1-16).

The case of Abimelech is similar (Judges 9:50-57). We find here that killing, regardless of the request by the one suffering, and regardless of the good motives of the one doing the killing, is immoral.

Second, we are given positive Biblical principles that address the specific situation of old age. We have a Biblical command to care for the aged and not abandon them (Deuteronomy 28:50; Leviticus 19:32; Isaiah 1:23; Matthew 15:3-5; Ephesians 6:2; James 1:27; 1 Timothy 5:4,8).

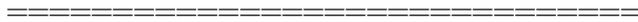
We would do well to remember the words in the Psalmist's prayer to God: “*Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength faileth*” (Psalm 71:9).

Remember also the wisdom of Solomon: “*Deliver those who are being taken away to death, And those who are staggering to slaughter. O hold them back*” (Proverbs 24:11).

Finally, let us remember the difference between “sanctity of life” and “quality of life.” The Bible teaches us that we must live on, even though our “quality of life” may be poor. Human suffering is not to be eradicated by death. We are to live with suffering, and learn from it (Romans 5:3-4; 1 Peter 1:6-9; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11). The pro-euthanasia advocates, on the other hand, believe that a life has value and should be prolonged only as long as it has some good “quality” to it. According to them, when the “good life” is gone, it's time to die. The bottom line justification for Dr. Kevorkian is: “the right not to have to suffer” (Bernardi, 1). “Disabled people all over the country have killed themselves ... The quality of their life is so bad that they see no hope, no future” (J.E. Tada quoting Ed Roberts, president of the World Institute on Disability). The “quality of life” argument was made back in 1973 by George Paulson: “How long shall life be preserved when there is no redeeming social value? If life has no apparent purpose, perhaps it is to the benefit of others that such lives not be salvaged” (quoted by Waddey). Christians, on the other hand, believe in the “sanctity of life.” That is, every life, young or old, healthy or sick, prospering or suffering, has value and should be prolonged because man has a soul and is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6). In other words, for the Christian, life does not stop when the “good life” stops; it does not stop when suffering sets it; it stops when God’s time for it to stop comes (Job 1:21). Life must go on, not because of the good or bad of outward circumstances (quality of life), but rather because of its inward value (sanctity of life). Euthanasia, then, is a convenient way to remove suffering. Clarke Forsythe makes a good observation when he says we need more “compassion for life” and less “passion for convenience” (2). The end (relief from suffering) does not justify the means (euthanasia). We don't need more “mercy killing” for the those who suffer, we need more “mercy-service” to help them live with the pain. We need less of Job's wife – “Curse God and die!” – and more of Job – “Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?”

Currently in this country, we kill the unborn (abortion), we kill the new born (infanticide) and we kill the aged (euthanasia). Unless we do something drastic to reverse our moral position on the sanctity of life, it will only be a matter of time before we, like Adolf Hitler, kill with impunity all those in between (genocide). It is really no wonder that we have the problem of euthanasia since we have a generation of doctors and moral ethicists weaned on evolution theory. We are just animals, according to that theory. We kill our domesticated pets; we kill our humans; no problem, we are all animals anyway. Animals kill their own, why shouldn't we? But shooting a horse trapped in a burning barn, and injecting a drug into an elderly patient trapped in suffering are not moral equivalents, because man is not an animal. The Russian poet Dostoyevsky remarked: “If God is not, then nothing is morally wrong.” May God give this nation time to come back to Him, back to the morals found in His word the Bible, and back to the sanctity of human life.

People in pain may come to us and speak like the prophet Jonah once spoke: “O Lord, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life ... Death is better to me than life ... I have good reason to be angry, even unto death” (Jonah 4:3,8,9). When they do, let us not assist them in their death, but let us act like God did with Jonah; care for them, comfort them and communicate with them.



INTRODUCTION: Euthanasia literally means *good death*. It is also called *mercy killing*. In the Netherlands where euthanasia has been practiced for years, it is called *deliverance*. It is advocated by Dr. Kevorkian (Dr. Death) and the Hemlock Society. Recently Oregon passed the first measure in the history of the U.S. to legalize euthanasia (although it has had trouble in the courts). The Bible clearly teaches against the practice of euthanasia. This can be illustrated in the story of the death of Saul as found in our text.

TEXT: 2 Samuel 1:6-10

- And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.
- And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I.
- And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite.
- He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.
- So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

NOTE: What follows are four Biblical arguments against euthanasia. Taken together, they make a clear Bible case against the practice known euphemistically as mercy killing.

- I. **THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE THAT LIFE AND DEATH BELONG TO GOD**
 - A. God is the Source of Life—John 5:26
 1. He has “life in himself”; i.e., He is the source of His own life (that’s what makes Him God)
 - B. God is the Giver of Life--Genesis 2:7
 1. Life is not an accident of nature
 - C. God is the Preserver of Life—Acts 17:24-25,28
 - D. God is the Taker of Life—Deuteronomy 32:39; 1Samuel 2:6

1. No man dies unless God allows it—Job 2:6
2. It is not your life to do with as you please/that is rebellion—Psalm 12:4

II. THE BIBLICAL PRECEPT THAT “THOU SHALT NOT KILL”--Exodus 10:13 -

- A. **NOTE:** The Exceptions to the Sixth Commandment Only Prove the Sanctity of Life
- B. The Exception of Self-Defense—Exodus 22:2
 1. Valid because your life and that of your loved ones is threatened
- C. The Exception of War—Numbers 10:9 “the enemy that oppreseth you”
 1. Valid because your country is threatened/an extension of self-defense
- D. The Exception of Capital Punishment—Genesis 9:5-6
 1. Valid because a life has been taken. Where capital punishment is not practiced on murderers, the land becomes guilty of blood—Numbers 35:31-34

One portion of the **Hippocratic Oath** says: “I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but I will never use it to injure or wrong them. I will not give poison to anyone though asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a plan. Similarly I will not give a pessary [this was a potion meant to cause abortion] to a woman to cause abortion. But in purity and in holiness I will guard my life and my art.”--This was stated by a pagan doctor in the fourth century B.C. We’ve come a long way.

III. THE BIBLICAL PRACTICE AS SEEN IN THE DEATH OF SAUL—2 Samuel 1:6-16

- A. **Saul’s Condition - (THESE ARE THE VERY ARGUMENTS USED TO SUPPORT EUTHANASIA)**
 1. **Saul was sure to die**—and soon
 2. **Saul was in a lot of pain**
 3. **Saul requested that he be killed**
- B. The Armorbearer’s Reaction—1 Samuel 31:4

1. He was sore afraid
 2. He refused his king's request
- C. King David's Reaction to the Amalekite
1. He declared the Amalekite **a murderer**—v.13-14
 2. He had the Amalekite executed—v.15-16

IV. **THE BAD PRODUCTS WHICH RESULT FROM EUTHANASIA—Matthew 7:20**

- A. **QUOTE:** The co-founder of the Hemlock Society in a fund-raising letter on behalf of the Oregon Initiative known as Measure #16 which allowed mercy killing said this: "A breakthrough in Oregon would start a domino effect of law reform on assisted dying throughout America". What are some of the dominos that would fall?
- B. Involuntary Euthanasia--in the small country of the Netherlands more than 1,000 people are put to death every year without their consent.
- C. Euthanasia For Psychological Problems--as above, it has already been done for bad cases of depression.
- D. Euthanasia For Mentally Retarded Babies--already being done
- E. Refusal of Treatment For Terminally Ill Patients--recommended in a recent article of the New England Medical Journal.

CONCLUSION: We had better be "sore afraid" of taking into our hands that which only belongs to God—1 Samuel 31:4



What Does the Bible Say about Assisted Suicide?

Although the Bible never says, "Thou shalt not commit suicide," it does say "You shall not murder," (Exodus 20:13) and that would include self-murder. It also warns of a dire eternal fate for any who practice murder (Revelation 21:8 and 22:15).

Some think that since the suicides recorded in the Bible are not explicitly condemned, then suicide is allowed. The problem with that view is that it is clear from scripture that the people who killed themselves, such as Saul (I Samuel 31:4) and Judas (Matthew 27:5) were living outside God's will

at the time of their deaths. They were not living in faith, and their deaths expressed a lack of hope in God.

Suicide and Sovereignty

This brings us to the main point, whether we're talking about suicide or assisted suicide. Suicide -- assisted or not -- is an expression of despair and/or an effort to wrest control out of God's hands. Christians believe in God's sovereignty -- that he is all-wise and all-powerful, and that life and death are best left in his care.

*"The Lord kills, and makes alive;
He brings down to the grave, and brings up."
I Samuel 2:6*

*"Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with You;
You have appointed his limits so that he cannot pass."
Job 14:5*

Not only is this 'best' but also right. It is an affront to God to take one's own life, both in consideration of his sovereignty, but also because murder is prohibited on the basis that it attempts to annihilate His image in man (Genesis 1:26,27). God requires the strongest punishment for murderers (Genesis 9:5-6).

Death and Eternity

Christians believe that when a person dies, he or she enters eternity.

*It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.
Hebrews 9:27*

One who is saved enters eternal life, one who is not saved is eternally damned.

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word,
and believes in Him who sent me,
has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment;
but has passed from death into life."
John 5:24*

Thus, a Christian should never recommend, or help with, a suicide of an unsaved person because that would be hastening the unsaved person's damnation and prevent any chance of repentance. Does that mean that suicide is all right for a Christian, since he or she will enter glory? Well, no, for the above reasons, and for the following:

The Apostle Paul, in Philippians 1:20-24, expressed his sincere wish to die and be with Christ.

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
. . . I am hard pressed between the two,
having a desire to depart and be with Christ; which is far better.
Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.*

He'd certainly had a rough life, and an early entrance into glory would have been a great relief. As the first missionary, who had brought many people to salvation, he could expect great rewards. Yet,

he realized that he was needed on earth for the benefit of those whom he had brought to faith in Christ, so he would leave the timing of his death up to the sovereign Lord. (See John 21:20-23.)

Ultimate act of self-will

While you or I may not be able to imagine what could possibly be the reason for our remaining on earth, that decision is best left to God. This is one way we can live in faith. We also have the example of Job, who had lost everything - children, wealth, health, respect - and his wife thought he should curse God and die. She was basically suggesting suicide. But Job would not think of it. He was under incredible physical and emotional stress, for no apparent reason, but he refused to give in to despair.

"Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?"

In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Job 2:10

Does a person's autonomy gives him or her the right to assisted suicide? In I Corinthians 6:19-20, the Bible says we (Christians) are not our own. We are bought with a price -- Jesus' blood. We belong to him, therefore we surrender our right to do as we wish with our bodies. We can and must use them to honor God.

Similarly, we have no right to involve another person in carrying out a 'death wish,' to carry out what is essentially murder (see Exodus 20:13). Assisted suicide means asking another person to take responsibility for your life, which you have no right to do. That is properly God's venue.

Challenge for God's people

Assisted suicide is a direct challenge for Christians. What can we do to prevent people from taking that drastic, irreversible step? One of the things that causes people to consider suicide is fear of being alone at the time of death. Christians are beginning to realize that we must come alongside people who are facing terminal illness, either by being with them right until the end, or by offering practical service to family members so that they can with with their loved one until the end. Baptists for Life has created a ministry called [LIFT](#) for just this reason. (See Matthew 25:34-40.)

True compassion

What do we need compassion for if not for moments when people are suffering? Compassion is best -- or perhaps only -- expressed in the event of another person's suffering. The word means "to suffer alongside" or to take another's problems on as one's own. Consider Acts 4:34-35 where the first believers had all things in common. If any were in need the rest didn't consider not sharing. There's also the admonition in James 2:15-16:

*If a brother or sister is naked, and destitute of daily food,
and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,"
but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body,
what does it profit?*

These verses apply directly to the needs of the terminally ill and chronically debilitated.

Dignity or Grace?

Another fear people have is the loss of dignity, but is it possible for a person to lose dignity? Dignity is innate in the individual by virtue of his being made in God's image (Genesis 1:26,27). That can never be taken, or given, away. Like compassion, dignity is best -- or perhaps only -- expressed in the face of suffering. The greater the suffering, the greater the occasion for dignity, because, as the Apostle Paul found, we can glorify God in our suffering:

*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.
Therefore I take pleasure in my infirmities, in reproaches,
in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake.
For when I am weak, then I am strong.
II Corinthians 12:9-10*

Many people equate a loss of independence with a loss of dignity, however that is a Western (or American) invention. Christians grow as they minister to people who are vulnerable and dependent. Likewise, it requires a special grace to be the one helped. There is no shame in being served. Both experiences are needed in a person's life, and in the life of the Church.

If suffering induces loss of dignity, then that would mean Jesus Christ himself lost dignity on the cross. On the contrary, he is our greatest example of endurance and source of comfort:

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses,
but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.
Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace,
that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
Hebrews 4:15-16*