



A Christian Response to Euthanasia

Session 4 Leader Outline

Student Handouts

- Student Handout #7: "What Christians Can Do"

Scriptures for Session 4

Objectives

- To inform the students of actions they can take to protect themselves and their loved ones with pro-life advance directives instead of the Living Will.
- To introduce alternatives to euthanasia and physician assisted suicide.
- To identify ways a Christian can be a support to hurting people who are at risk for euthanasia.

Welcome/Prayer

Welcome students and open with prayer. Be sure any new members of the group have the student handouts from previous sessions.

Introduction to Session 4 of the DVD

As the first three sessions have pointed out so clearly, big changes are taking place in the world today, especially changes in medicine and law. There are many opportunities for Christians to make a difference.

In this last session, we had two goals:

1. Protecting ourselves and loved ones from the advances of euthanasia.
2. Identifying ways we as Christians can respond.

In the final segment of the DVD we will see the use of hospice care as an alternative to euthanasia. Note the DVD shows one of the original hospices in England, which is an inpatient facility. Hospice care in the United States is primarily provided in the patient's home, but has the basic philosophy of hospice in England.

As your participants watch Session 4, have them look for the answer to the question, "Why do hospice patients almost never request euthanasia or physician assisted suicide?"

Show Session 4 of the DVD

Discussion

Ask the students: Why do hospice patients almost never request euthanasia or physician assisted suicide?

Hospice care offers hope and assistance to the patient and the family. However, we must be careful to select a hospice that embraces life. Some hospices consider food and water an extraordinary means of life support and may be unwilling to insert a feeding tube when death is not imminent.

Perhaps the biggest gap between the Christian view and pro-euthanasia view is the way we would answer the following question. "Is there a time when nothing can be done for the patient?"

Christian Answer: There may come a time when it may become useless to continue treatment with curative drugs or surgery but one can still give attention and friendship, relief and comfort. There is also a difference between letting nature take its course in a dying person's life and hastening his or her death by whatever means and for whatever purposes, no matter how well intended.

Hospice care can be helpful when someone is dying; however, hospice care is limited. Medicare and insurance companies only pay for hospice services for individuals with a 6 month or less prognosis. This leaves out many chronically ill people who do not qualify for hospice care, such as people with muscular dystrophy, end stage kidney failure, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, emphysema, stroke victims who are not dying, chronic severe depression and many other long term illnesses.

Family, church, and health care providers must be sensitive that without their support these people may feel the only solution to their many problems is to die. They may feel depressed and pressured to request euthanasia or physician assisted suicide fearing their family or society views them as a burden.

Pass out Student Handout #7 "What Christians Can Do." Have members of the class read the following verses:

- Luke 10: 25-37 and I Peter 5: 6-11

Discuss: What is the Christian response? What can your church do?

Discuss: How can they individually as well as a class put Christ's words into action?

By now, those in your class will realize how important it is to prepare health-care decisions in ADVANCE regarding medical treatment. Otherwise, choices may be made for them based on someone else's values and beliefs that they do not agree with.

You may want to have a professional guest speaker, from your local pro-life group, such as a

lawyer, doctor, nurse or hospice worker, share on this topic. However, be sure your speaker agrees beforehand regarding food and water according to the Student Handout #5 "Principles Governing Medical Decisions." Stress the danger of filling out a Living Will versus having a more complete and safer advanced directive such as the Durable Power of Attorney.

Suggestion: It would be good to have the wallet card "Emergency Life Alert - Principles Governing Medical Treatment Decisions" for each student. As you probably already know, instructions for obtaining the wallet cards are available on the Key Material Order page. It would also be good to have an advanced directive to show your class. This is also available from the link given on the Key Material Order page. It is 14 pages long so it will be a lot of work to give one to each participant; however, by using the same link, they can download a copy for themselves if they would like to.

Closing Moment

Take time to thank everyone for attending and encourage them to follow-up on the areas they covered in these sessions. Remind them that our faith does not insulate us from the many problems in our life. What it does do is help us solve our problems in the light of the Lord's love and give us opportunities to share His perfect compassion with each other. Close with prayer.