

# CARING (and never killing)

## Physician-assisted suicide and God's Word



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We live in a culture of choice. We choose many things in our lives that are necessary and essential to support both body and soul. For Christians living in this culture, choice is not a matter of “picking and choosing,” nor is it to be self-serving.

Choice, as used in the Bible, is a covenant term whereas God in Christ is the subject of all choices that we make. Hence, any choice that flies in the face of His Word is self-serving. As Jesus states in John 15:16:

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”

As Christians in this fallen world, our choices are made trusting in the Word and promises of God.

Christians are to live in a culture of caring for those in and outside of our families. The Christian life is not only taking care of our needs, but more importantly, taking care of the needs of others. That is what *agape* love is all about: caring for others, not only those who suffer physically, mentally and spiritually, but also those who are dying. We are to always care and never kill; or hasten or encourage someone to end their life through physician-assisted suicide. We are chosen by God, baptized by God and enabled by God in Christ so

that whatever we do, we do to the glory of God.

Unfortunately, the culture of choice has become a culture of death. “My body, my choice!” Self becomes our god. When suffering becomes a burden to self and those around us, our culture looks to physician-assisted suicide; treating suicide and murder as though it's noble and good.

But our Lord says, “You shall not murder.” What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

Christians cling to the Word and promises of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. By the Holy Spirit we bear fruits of repentance and faith. We trust in His sufficient grace despite very difficult situations. We always care for others. We are not to seek control of our lives, nor the lives of the dying. We are called to bear one another's burdens in the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we care and never seek killing or hastening death as the remedy.

Several states, as well as Washington, D.C. (2016), currently support physician-assisted suicide under the pretext of “death with dignity, medical aid in dying or patient care in dying.” Those states include Oregon (1994), Washington (2008), Montana (2009), Vermont (2013), California (2016), Colorado (2016), Hawaii (2018), New Jersey (2019) and Maine (2020).

This so-called death with dignity for those who desire to end their life with the assistance of a physician occurs when a doctor provides a patient with a prescription for the drugs (often an oral barbiturate, which is a sedative). The physician provides the patient with directions for a lethal dose with the understanding that the patient intends to use the drugs to end their life. This is not the euthanasia which is practiced in Canada, the Netherlands and other European countries, wherein the physician administers the drugs that will end in a person's death. In both cases, the culture of death applauds this as a so-called courageous act. “My body, my choice!”

Those who seek physician-assisted suicide believe that suffering is for nothing. Indeed, suffering from unbearable, intractable pain is very difficult. We don't choose to suffer. However, we live in a fallen and broken world that came to all humanity when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, thus violating the Word of God. Our bodies suffer from this brokenness. Pain and suffering leave us desperate for a remedy to relieve this burden to us and our family and friends. Our fears, suffering and pain turn to the One, Jesus Christ, who knows our distress and the desire to rid ourselves of living a life of pain. Our faith clings to the promises of our Lord's Word.

...You have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

— 1 Peter 1: 6-9

Physician-assisted suicide holds to “picking and choosing” what a person believes is going to end the suffering for “self” and their family. Suffering

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## LIFE

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has no boundaries. Suffering respects no one as it is the result of this fallen world and our sinful nature. The Lord Jesus Christ knows all about our suffering and those whom we love, especially those with a terminal illness. He is never somewhere else. Jesus neither leaves us nor forsakes us in our suffering.

By His sufficient grace, we are more than conquerors and know that we bear one another's burdens, thus fulfilling the law of Christ (loving others in their suffering).

We never kill. We always care.

 *Advocates for Life*  
**ON THE WEB**

- [sidadvocatesforlife.com](http://sidadvocatesforlife.com)
- [facebook.com/sid.lcms.alt](https://facebook.com/sid.lcms.alt)



## The Word carries on

Holy Cross Lutheran Church of Wartburg (near Waterloo) has been holding drive-in worship every Sunday since March 22. Worshipers are able to listen by tuning into an FM radio station, and they bring lawn chairs for outside seating. Pictured is Rev. Dan Ostlund presiding over a recent service.

## PLANNING

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significant income and estate taxes. Even though you have a serious illness, it may be worth considering changing your domicile to a state with a lower tax structure. This will require that you establish a new residence, change your driver's license and auto registration, file your income taxes and show that you are a permanent resident of the new state.

### Advisors and family

Particularly if you have a substantial estate and are quite ill, it is important to make sure that you have reliable and trustworthy advisors. Far too many elders who have substantial assets become weak and are victims of elder abuse. A group of trusted advisors and family members will protect you and your property.

Your advisors will discuss your vehicle use. There are several cases when seniors felt able to drive vehicles, but were progressively less capable. One individual in her 80s drove regularly to visit her daughter just one mile away. However, one day she made a wrong turn and became disoriented. A day and a half later, the highway patrol discovered the car idling at the side of the road several hundred miles away. Fortunately, she did not become lost during the winter or she very easily could have frozen to death before being discovered.

Advisors and family members will need to discuss with the seriously ill person the arrangements for transportation and the possibility of higher levels of care. This could mean moving from home into an assisted living facility or nursing home. These discussions are best undertaken while the seriously ill

person is still able to think clearly and make good decisions.

Planning with a serious illness is a challenging process. Yet it is much better for the person and for the protection of the estate that the process is entered into openly and willingly by the individual and his or her advisors and family.

If you find yourself or somebody that you love in this situation, contact Scott Radden, LCMS Foundation gift planning counselor, for assistance in preparing or reviewing your plan. Scott can be reached at 618-977-4049 or [Scott.Radden@lfnd.org](mailto:Scott.Radden@lfnd.org).



Scott Radden

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