Case Study: End of Life Decisions

Author Note

Introduction

Christians believed that everything in this world is created by God, and they believe that Jesus Christ is an image of the physical body of God. Death is generally considered as a bitter reality of life but it is a common experience for the professionals of health care. In Christianity, it is not simply a natural and biological phenomenon but it's a deep philosophical and religious matter to be discussed. But in the 21st century, medical technology has changed the experience, quality, and scope of death and dying narrative.

# Death in the Christian Worldview

 According to Christian narrative, death of a person is not a great evil that could befall on a human being. Moreover, it is malformed in the light of the renaissance of Jesus Christ. "The Christian teaching that "God died" essentially transforms how death is seen and experienced. Christians think that death is a tragedy that can happen to anyone but it is also a conquered enemy in Biblical narrative. Death is a twisting of God's original project plan(Christianity - Concepts of life after death | Britannica.com n.d.).

From a Biblical perspective, we are all made by God and we have to go back to Him. God has created human beings as naturally rational with a great mind for thinking best for ourselves and to live our life not by coercion but by choice. All human beings are accountable before God for their rational or irrational decisions. While the authority remains with God, we are just supposed to qualify whatever he has chosen for us.

In the given case study, George, a successful attorney is suffering from the disease of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), which ultimately leads a person to be imprisoned on his own.George belongs to Christianity and he interpreted his suffering in light of the Christian narrative, with an emphasis on the resurrection and falling of the world. He interprets his suffering as God's will. He believes that he is suffering from this traumatic situation because either God allows the suffering to bring his man closer to him and to make him realize that how Christ suffered, or because the man is lacking in his spiritual beliefs.

George is a man of firm religious beliefs. He interprets his sufferings as a call from God to come closer to the teachings of their Holy book. He looked at his suffering as God's help to let him stick to his faith stronger than ever before. He also thinks that if he is suffering from this disease because of what he had done in the past, it is an opportunity for him to seek forgiveness for his sins and go back to his God with a pure soul.

Although he stands strong with his faith in God, still he feels that the situation is traumatic. He accepts that everything is done by God in a planned manner; his sufferings are also the part of His plan so that the people in their pain, recall their God, and repent on their sins. He believed that it is one way of God's love for his man. Christians believe that when a person commits a sin, it's the God love for him who encourage his man to repent on his sin and struggle for a better life as proposed by their Holy Book (Engelhardt and Iltis 2005). The above-mentioned reasons and beliefs help George to determine whether to go for the treatment and seek forgiveness, with a strong belief that he will be relieved once he dies.

After the diagnosis of the disease, George expects the rest of the life, fighting with the disease until he is acquitted for his sins and go back to his God. Christian worldview suggests that, George should go for the treatment because his life is precious. Jesus gives a message that even birds are under the observant eye of God, so how much more, a human would be under his loving gaze? So, if God loves human life this much and keeps his concerned and loving eye on him, then humans should also take care of God's most loving creature. Christianity ethics suggest that George should pay more value to his life for his family, and for the God who loves him so much. Christianity teaches people to hold faith in God and should live their lives for humanity.

In anticipating his future life, George is afraid of losing his mobility and ability to speak. He finds it terrible to imagine his life to be dependent on others. These fears force him to take the possibility of voluntary euthanasia under consideration. In Christian worldview, Gorge should not choose for voluntary euthanasia, because the death of a person is a difficult experience for the family and friends. While choosing voluntary euthanasia, George should keep in mind the grief and the pain from which his family would suffer. Christians strictly prohibit euthanasia because of the strong belief that life is given by God and human beings are the images of Him, they have no right to surrender his life to the death against the will of God (BBC - Religions - Christianity: Euthanasia n.d.).

Christians believed that death and dying is an important spiritual process which should not be interrupted by anyone. In Christianity, euthanasia is morally wrong either it is voluntarily decided by the patient or not. They believed that a terminal illness helps people to face death. Hence from the view of Christianity, George is not supposed to finish his life voluntarily, but he should fight with his sufferings bravely. In light of all the above-mentioned options, I would suggest that George should opt for further treatment though; he cannot be recovered from such an intense disease. But he should not go for voluntary euthanasia. Christianity considers death as a spiritual process and the belief of death with dignity., which allows the patient to hasten an inevitable death(Christianity and the Value of Human Life - Entering the Public Square n.d.). George should fight with his disease by choosing the option of end-of-life care, which leads to death with dignity. Long illness will help him face the fearful death. Along with the treatment, he should continuously repent on his sins to gather the love of his God. In the Christian worldview, euthanasia is considered as an opposing act for God's love. So, George should not opt for committing this sin. He should realize that the value of life does not depend upon its quality but it's a gift of god, even if it’s full of suffering and pain. According to the Christian worldview, he should enter into the dying process with all his faith and trust in God and the teachings of his holy book and solidarity with its fellow human beings. He should opt for the death of dignity by letting himself beloved by all unconditionally. Roman Catholic Church gives an option to gorge by saying that it is moral and ethical to refuse for the aggressive medical treatments for saving a life. Refusing treatment is not considered euthanasia, but it is a way of properly accepting the condition of facing death.

If I have to face George's situation, I would first prepare myself for my future life which I have to live with this terminal illness. Because I believe that whatever happening in our lives is with the planning of God and that he loves all his human beings a lot. If God has chosen this suffering for me, I believe that he wants to make me attentive towards his love and providing me with an opportunity to repent of my sins.

 It is my faith that life is a precious gift of God and we are supposed to keep this gift with great care. I would never opt for voluntary euthanasia but chose to get the proper treatment to survive in better health until my God calls me back to him with respect, love, and dignity.

 As a part of this community, I am not autonomous, in my decisions; whatever I choose for myself will ultimately impact society. If I chose for voluntary euthanasia, someone following me will also think about it, and it will prevail in the society, but if I bravely fight with my illness till my planned death by the God, it will be a positive message for others. I would prefer to spend quality time with my family and will try to do something good for society until or unless I reach the stage of total dependence.

 I would like to conclude my essay, by saying that whatever the situation is, we should firmly believe in God's planning, because he loves us and always, and allow that much suffering to us that we can bear. If we have the strongest belief in resurrection and felleness, we will always repent on our sins and never dreaded from the day of death.

References

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