



Case Study #1

Brittany Maynard: Physician Assisted
Suicide

Samuel Whatley, JD Van Hook, Christine Yi

Direct Quotes from Brittany

“I would not tell anyone else that he or she should choose death with dignity. My question is: Who has the right to tell me that I don't deserve this choice? That I **deserve to suffer** for weeks or months in tremendous amounts of physical and emotional pain? Why should anyone have the right to make that choice for me?”

“I'm choosing to **suffer less**. To put myself and my family through **less pain.**”

1. Is PAS a morally acceptable practice?

No, PAS is not a morally acceptable practice because humans should not be their own agents of death, regardless of the trials they might face.

2. Should legislation permitting PAS be passed?

No, legislation permitting PAS should not be passed because there is a higher authority by which human life is governed, including its beginning and end.

3a. Argument from Timaeus' Perspective

“Let me tell you then why the creator made this world of generation. **He was good**, and the good can **never have any jealousy of anything**. And being free from jealousy, **he desired that all things should be as like himself as they could be**. This is in the truest sense the origin of creation and of the world, as we shall do well in believing on the testimony of wise men: God desired that all things should be good and nothing bad, so far as this was attainable.”

3b. Argument from Timaeus' Perspective

- Timaeus argues that the universe is arranged in marvelous order and beauty by a purposeful and altogether good divine Agent/Craftsman. This good creator has teleologically arranged his universe towards what is good and excellent, and the inhabitants of his universe (i.e., human beings) are intended to emulate this order and excellence.
- Human beings were created as part of his universe for a purpose (i.e., participate in the good) and are thus a part of the Craftsman's work.
- To kill oneself would be to steal from the Craftsman a part of his work and remove oneself from his purpose.

4. What does Timaeus get right or wrong?

- Timaeus does not give an account of an omnipotent authority. In other words, even though the Craftsman is able to bring life out of chaos, he does not have authority over death.
- Brittany and others in her position must be under an ultimate, good authority in order for their purpose in life to be out of their control and for an ultimate good.
- Even if – and we have all been in this position at some point or another – we cannot see the purpose or the good we are participating in, especially in intense suffering, there is a greater authority that keeps us alive until the other agents of death in this world take us from this life.

5. What is our response as Christians?

- In James 1: 2-4 God does not call us to run away from the trials in our lives, he calls us to, “Consider it pure joy”
- God uses our sufferings to give us hope: “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope” (Romans 5: 3-4).
- James 1: 12 says that through perseverance in trials we will receive the crown of life, if you completely neglect the trials in your life then you miss out on what life really is. You miss all of the work that God wants to do in and through you.