

How far does compassion go? by lcl

Mat 22:36 Master, which *is* the great commandment in the Law?

Mat 22:37 Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

Mat 22:38 This is the first and great commandment.

Mat 22:39 And the second *is* like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Mat 22:40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

It is pretty clear that we are to love one another even as we care about ourselves. Agape love brings a commitment to have compassion on others without selfish motives. Normally, this type of caring is pretty clear as illustrated by the story of the Good Samaritan caring for one who had been robbed and beaten. There is little doubt in our mind as to what actions would be appropriate to help one in need. However, there are sometimes when caring compassion is not always easy to choose. Choices are easy when there is hope for recovery after healing. But how about if the person is terminally ill with no hope of recovery, or is put into a situation where there is a likely-hood for great suffering without the possibility of help or relief? Isn't this is similar to a horse with a broken leg. We know, that on one hand God tells us not to kill other people, as below.

Mar 10:19 You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and your mother.

Yet, God also allows that we are to follow the law as servants under authority. This can include killing in war or lawfully putting to death those being punished by the law. Many of God's laws through Moses involved a punishment of death.

Heb 10:28 He who despised Moses' Law died without mercy on the word of two or three witnesses.

Rom 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the higher authorities. For there is no authority but of God; the authorities that exist are ordained by God.

Rom 13:2 So that the one resisting the authority resists the ordinance of God; and the ones who resist will receive judgment to themselves.

Rom 13:3 For the rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the bad. And do you desire to be not afraid of the authority? Do the good, and you shall have praise from it.

Rom 13:4 For it is a servant of God to you for good. For if you practice evil, be afraid, for it does not bear the sword in vain; for it is a servant of God, a revenger for wrath on him who does evil.

Rom 13:5 Therefore you must be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

When to take a life therefore depends on an agreement within authorities instead of an individual's decision. Perhaps doctors should make this type of decision in groups of 2 or 3 as a court of medical review. Most hospitals do have

an ethics review board that rules before a plug is pulled on a respirator. But, what if the individual to die requests a child's help to relieve their suffering? Apply that to the verses below. Couldn't this be interpreted as honoring the parent by obeying?

Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Col 3:20 Children, obey *your* parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

How about if a person asks for compassion to end their pain in a circumstance where drugs are not available?

Luk 6:31 And as you desire that men should do to you, you do also to them likewise.

Finally, what would you want done if you were the sick one? I thank God that today drugs can be given to relieve suffering in most instances. However, there may be other cases for a long term period with no quality of life or no likelihood for medical help. This is where the choices get really hard. Doctors are told to do no harm, yet if a person is surly going to die, it seems that the harm has already been done. I recommend prayer for God's guidance and help. God can perform a miracle of healing or He can give you peace about what direction you must follow. God's grace is sufficient to help in times of need. He also promises wisdom when it is asked for. Seek and you will find God and His will.

Everyone should fill out Living Wills and Last Wills and Testaments to aid in assuring that their desires are done instead of causing a child to have to make such a heavy decision , or giving their estates to the government or lawyers.

Another Christian friend also reminds that Life on any plain is sacred. Also, if there is any doubt that a person has not been saved by Christ, the gospel should be presented one last time, even if the person is in a coma. Hearing is the last attribute of communication to die. Remember, that God wants to be involved in all aspects of life and death. Consider that sickness, pain and heartache might also be the very thing that the Father is using to humble our hearts into hearing and seeking Him. When we find Christ, we can ultimately "rejoice in all things" when we have found God's will.