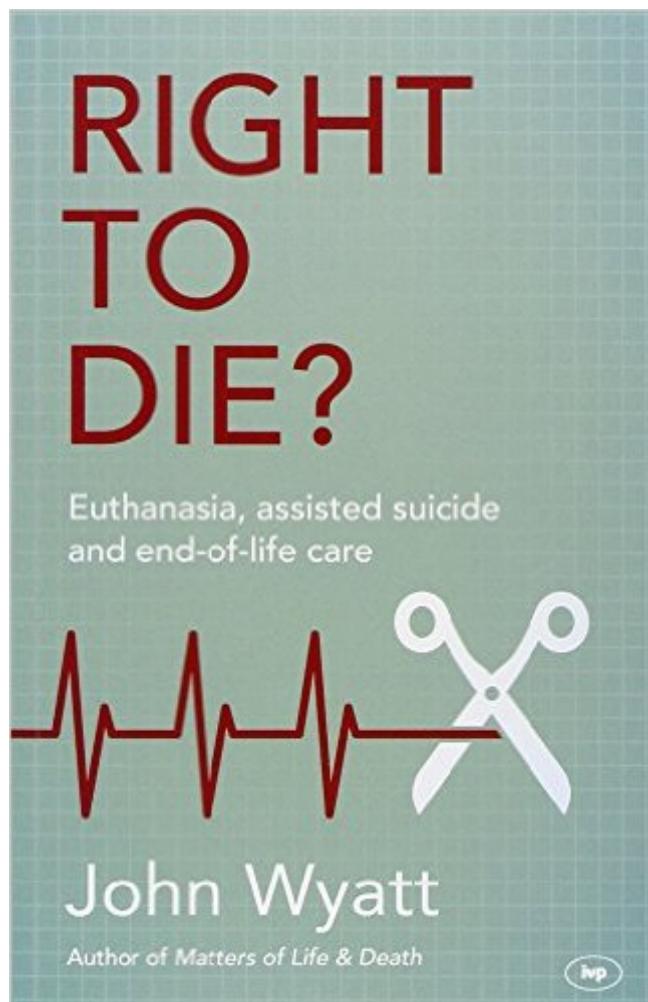


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Right To Die?: Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide And End-of-Life Care



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Customer Reviews

Support for assisted suicide is growing. I have mixed feelings but Lord Carey is in favour and I oppose most things he says. On the other hand, Michael Wenham, whom I respect, is opposed. This book does not presume any medical knowledge as it seeks to help lay people understand the debate. The arguments in favour of the legalisation of assisted suicide and euthanasia are no longer focussed on unbearable suffering. Instead there is a rising demand for choice and control over the time and manner of our death, coupled with fears about the social and economic consequences of increasing numbers of elderly and dependent individuals. Although fear of pain is widespread, it has become apparent that with appropriate levels of medical expertise and palliative care resources, pain can be controlled. With skilled care and expertise no-one need die in agony. Now the central issue is the right to self-determination, and the diseases in focus are no longer cancer, but chronic debilitating neurodegenerative conditions such as motor neurone disease and multiple sclerosis. The author traces the history of euthanasia. Nazi Germany spoke of those who were 'of no slightest use to society.' 60% in the UK supported the Voluntary Euthanasia Society when it was founded in 1936. While the Netherlands allowed it for incurable pain, Oregon allowed an individual to decide if he thought his life was worth living. Cicely Saunders and many other pioneers of palliative care in the middle of the 20th century were motivated by Christian compassion to find ways of controlling physical and other forms of pain at the end of life. They discovered that, with skilled modern medical care, it's not necessary to kill the patient in order to kill the pain.

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