



A TALKING POINTS BOOK BY
VAUGHAN ROBERTS

ASSISTED SUICIDE

The logo features a stylized, light gray bird-like shape above the text.
thegoodbook
COMPANY

INTRODUCTION

TALKING POINTS

The world is changing. Fast.

And not just politics, technology and communication, but our whole culture, morality and attitudes. Christians living in Western culture have enjoyed the benefit of being in a world which largely shared our assumptions about what is fundamentally right and wrong. We can no longer assume that this is the case.

In two short generations we have moved to a widespread adoption of liberal values, many of which are in conflict with the teaching of the Bible. Increasingly, believers are finding themselves to be the misunderstood minority, and feeling at odds with where the world seems to be heading.

Let's not deny it: some of this has been good. Christians have often failed to discern the difference between our own cultural values, and those that are demanded by Scripture. We are as prone to bigotry as others. We have much to repent of in our attitudes towards the freedom and role of women in society, and in our lack of compassion and understanding

towards, for example, those who have wrestled with same-sex attraction.

But now again, we find ourselves in unfamiliar territory and ill-equipped to deal with it. Sometimes it's easier to protest and rage against the tide of history than to go back to our Bibles and think carefully about what God is saying—holding up society's views, and our own, to the truth-revealing mirror that is God's word.

At our best, we Christians have been in the forefront of social reform. Think of the great nineteenth-century reformers of the slave trade, prisons and poverty: William Wilberforce, Elizabeth Fry and Lord Shaftesbury. But now we find ourselves on the back foot, unable to articulate a clear response to a pressing question of our day. And even when we have understood God's mind on a particular issue, we have struggled to apply it compassionately in our speech and in our relationships.

This short series of books is an attempt to help ordinary Christians start to think constructively about a range of issues—moral, ethical and cultural—that run against the grain for those who name Christ as Lord. They are an attempt to stimulate believers to start talking with each other as we search the Scriptures together. Their aim is to help us think biblically, constructively and compassionately, and not to feel intimidated when we are

challenged or questioned, or, perhaps worse, remain silent.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS NOT...

In such a short book, we cannot hope to answer all the questions you may have about how to think about ageing, illness and assisted suicide. Nor can we address the many practical challenges you may be facing with family or friends, or personally.

Nor does this book present a thorough treatment of all the Bible has to say on these questions. If that is what you are hungry for, there will be other, longer, and perhaps more technical books that will help you dig deeper.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS...

Rather, our aim is to give you an accessible introduction to the many questions that surround the issue of assisted suicide, and a starting point for constructive discussion between Christian believers and with others. It aims to give you a cultural briefing on where we are with this question, and some pointers on how Christians should think, talk and act.

But we also hope that it takes us all beyond the issue—to a genuine compassion and love for those who are caught up in some way with these questions. They may be questions that are deeply personal to

you. They may be questions that are thrown at you in a proud, assertive and hostile way. Or they may be questions that are real because they affect a close family member or friend. Whatever your situation, we hope this book will be a first step towards understanding the landscape, and an encouragement to know and share the love and hope we have in Christ.

Tim Thornborough

Series Editor

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euthanasia

[yoo-thuh-ney-zee-uh]

noun: **euthanasia**

1. the painless killing of a patient suffering from an incurable and painful disease or in an irreversible coma.

synonyms:

mercy killing, assisted suicide, physician-assisted suicide; merciful release, happy release;

rare quietus

[Source: dictionary.com]

*“I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked,
nor suggest any such counsel.”*

The Hippocratic Oath

“My Life. My death. My choice”

Assisted Dying slogan

*“Those who have a terminal illness and are in
great pain should have the right to choose to end
their lives, and those who help them should be free
from prosecution.”*

Stephen Hawking, physicist

*“Euthanasia kills the patient twice—once when we say,
‘Yes, your life is not worth living,’ and then when we
help him die.”*

Dr Peter Saunders, physician and medical ethicist

*“This is not a matter of life versus death, but about the
timing and manner of an inevitable death.”*

Dr. Marcia Angell, Harvard Medical School

“Thou shalt not kill.”

The sixth commandment, Exodus 20 v 13 (KJV)

*“All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades...
... but the word of our God will stand forever.”*

Isaiah 40 v 6-8