

# Human Identity: A Biblical perspective on medical ethics

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# Outline

- Big picture: what do the Bible and science say about human identity?
- Case study: how does this play out pastorally?
- What is the direction of travel? What should we do?

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# 'What is man...?'




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# Genesis 1:26 and 2:7

“Let us make mankind in our image...”


“Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”



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# 2 Corinthians 5:1-3

“For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.”

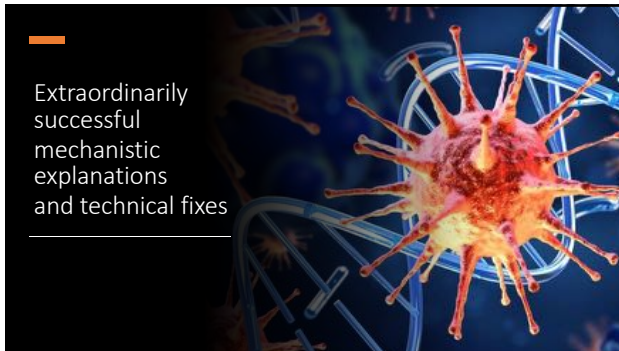


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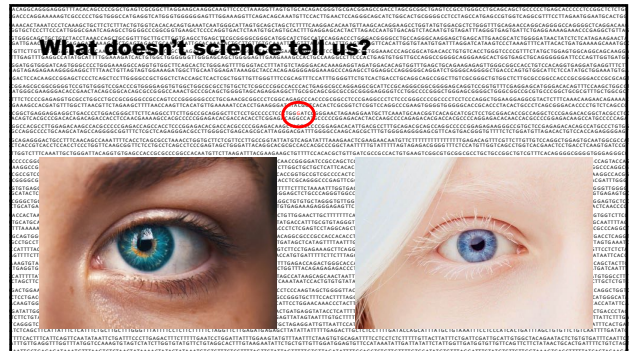
# So what does science say about human identity?



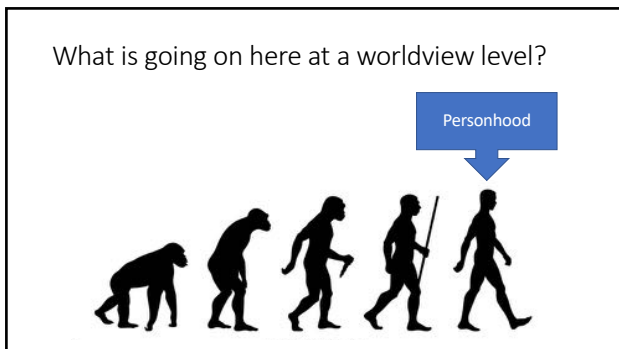
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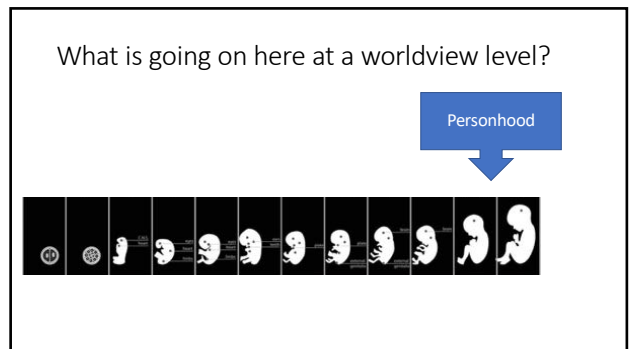
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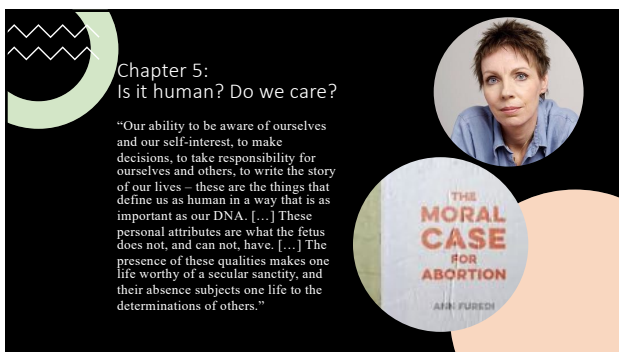
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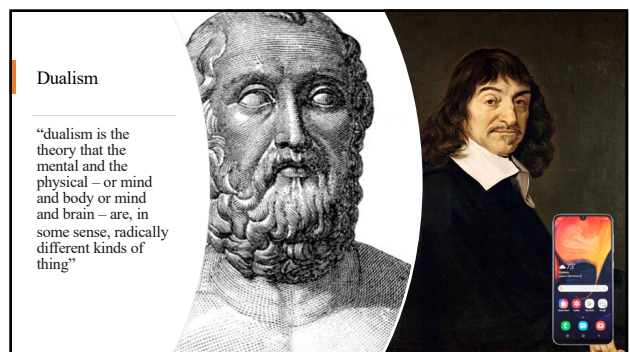
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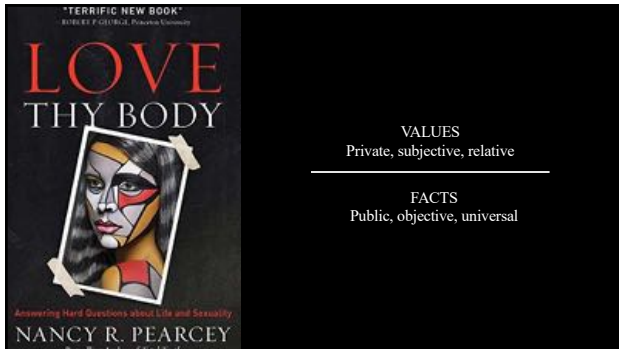
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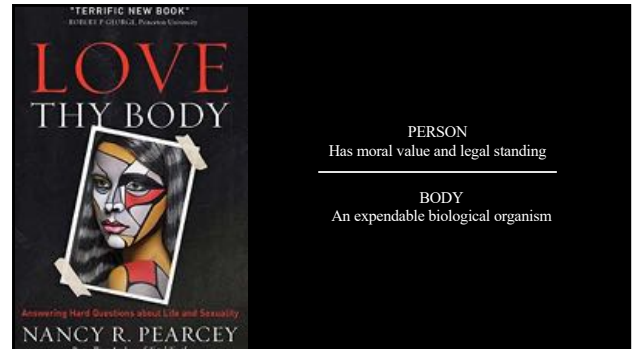


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VALUES  
Private, subjective, relative

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FACTS  
Public, objective, universal



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PERSON  
Has moral value and legal standing

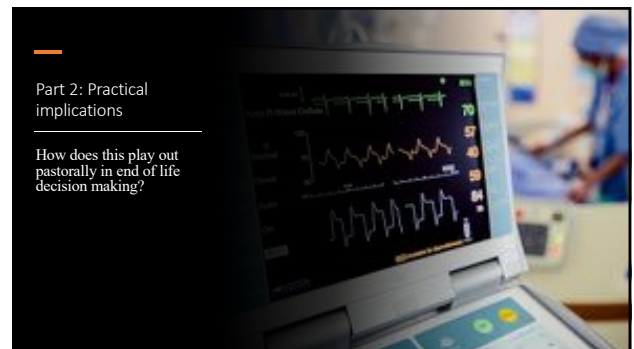
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BODY  
An expendable biological organism



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Questions  
or  
comments?

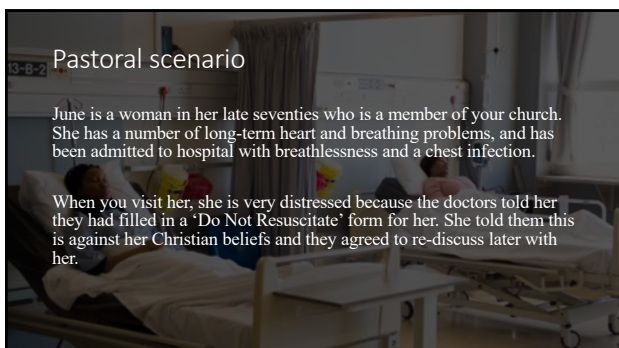


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Part 2: Practical  
implications

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How does this play out  
pastorally in end of life  
decision making?

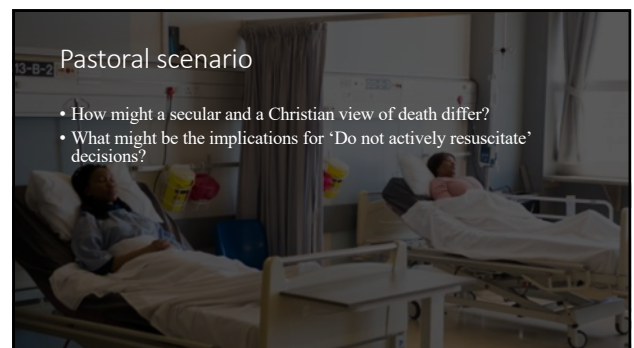


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### Pastoral scenario

June is a woman in her late seventies who is a member of your church. She has a number of long-term heart and breathing problems, and has been admitted to hospital with breathlessness and a chest infection.

When you visit her, she is very distressed because the doctors told her they had filled in a 'Do Not Resuscitate' form for her. She told them this is against her Christian beliefs and they agreed to re-discuss later with her.



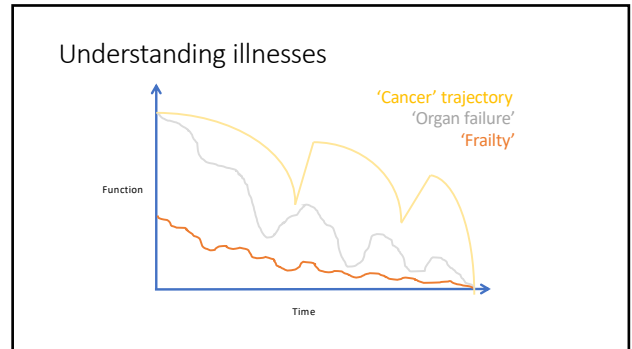
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### Pastoral scenario

- How might a secular and a Christian view of death differ?
- What might be the implications for 'Do not actively resuscitate' decisions?



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### Decisions to be made

- Embarking on burdensome treatments
- 'Ceilings of care'
- Do not attempt CPR decisions
- Stopping active treatment; moving to palliative care

### Causes of fear

- The illness itself
  - Pain/symptoms
  - Disability
  - The dying process
  - What comes next
- Over-treatment
- Under-treatment

How do we navigate these decisions as Christians?

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### Is death always a bad thing?

"You may eat freely from every tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: *for in the day that you eat of it, you will surely die.*"

Gen 2 v 16-17

"The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

1 Cor 15 v 26

Jesus and Lazarus -- John 11

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### Is death always a bad thing?

"Where, O death, is your victory?  
Where, O death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Cor 15 v 55 - 57

Simeon, *Nunc dimittis*

Luke 2 v 29

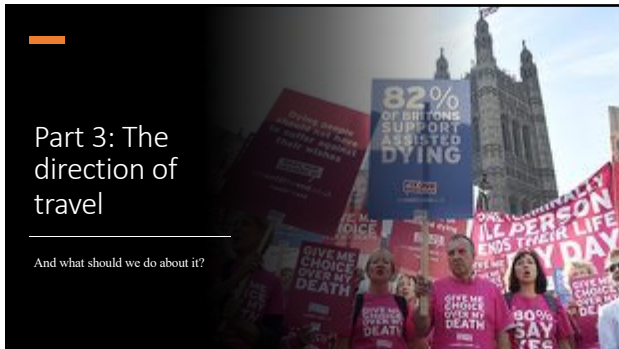
"When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous seek refuge in God."

Prov 14 v 32

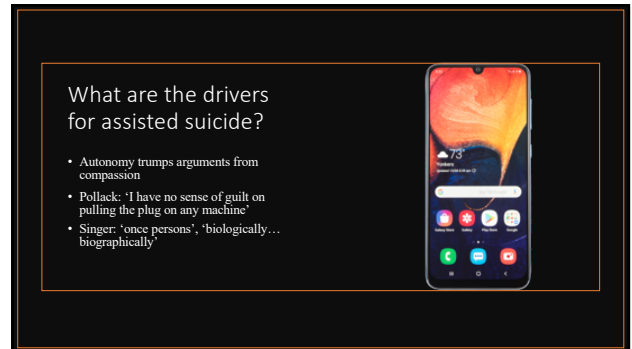
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"Don't pray for healing – don't try to hold me back from the glory"

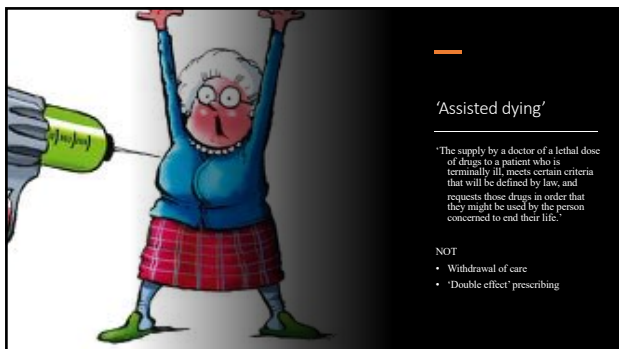
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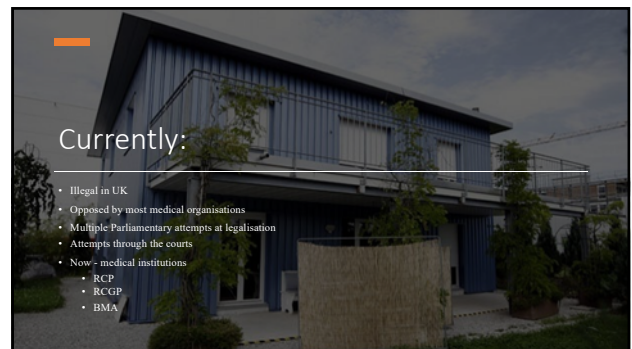
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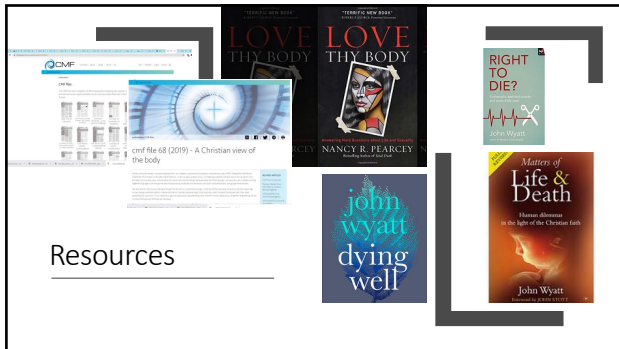
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