

Participant's Guide

Episode 24

End-Of-Life Care, Part 1

Summary

The grief and heartache in treating patients near the end of their earthly existence can at times be tumultuous and overwhelming. Yet, this difficult time affords us two wonderful opportunities: to encourage those who walk with Jesus regarding the eternity that awaits them, and to extend a final opportunity for those who do not yet believe, so they might embrace the Savior in faith. This episode includes ways we can recognize the Lord's hand near the end of our patients' earthly lives.

Speaker



Kathryn Butler, MD, is a trauma and critical care surgeon living outside of Boston. She left clinical practice in 2016 to homeschool her children and writes regularly for the Gospel Coalition and desiringGod.org on topics intersecting faith and medicine. Her book, *Between Life and Death: A Gospel-Centered Guide to End-of-Life Medical Care* (Crossway, 2019), examines end-of-life dilemmas through a Christian lens. Dr. Butler can be reached through her website www.kathrynbutler.com.

Discussion Questions

1. What from this video inspired, edified or challenged you?
2. Dr. Butler states, "A century ago 90 percent of Americans spent their last days at home among families...and in our modern era 70 percent of Americans still voice a desire to die at home among family. However, only 30 percent of us do." What are some possible explanations for this discrepancy?

3. **“Christian physicians are uniquely positioned to guide patients through end-of-life dilemmas that so cut to the heart of who we are in Christ.” Do you agree or disagree, and why?**
4. **Why might healthcare professionals be hesitant to refer patients to, or consult with, a chaplain?**
5. **Dr. Al Weir states, “Near the end of their lives they (terminally ill patients) can come to a point where they can accept deep thoughts in ways that they can’t earlier in their lives.”**
 - a. **Why might this be so?**
 - b. **Can you think of any examples of end-of-life faith conversions in the Bible? For help, see Luke 23:39-43. Any others?**
6. **Dr. Steve Sartori uses questions to help open up his patient to the need for Christ. What are some examples of questions we might utilize in a similar situation?**
7. **One of Dr. Butler’s insightful suggestions is to “address questions before patients are silenced by illness and medical technology.” Who are some of the individuals who could help to address patients’ spiritual concerns?**
8. **What is one take-home item from today’s session that you hope to implement?**

Note: Dr. Butler’s four principles, included at the end of this episode, will be repeated at the beginning of Episode 25.

Additional Resources

1. [*Medical Ethics and the Faith Factor: A Handbook for Clergy and Healthcare Professionals*](#) by Robert Orr
2. [*Hostility to Hospitality: Spirituality and Professional Socialization within Medicine*](#) by Michael and Tracey Balboni
3. [*Between Life and Death: A Gospel-Centered Guide to End-of-Life Medical Care*](#) by Kathryn Butler