

# **Theology of Medicine**

## **Introduction**

- Does the Bible forbid the use of certain or all medicines for the Christian?
- What role does a medical doctor have in the life of a Christian?
- How can the Christian make wise decision regarding medical care, taking medicines and seeking the care of a physician?
- What if a Christian is prescribed addictive drugs by his/her doctor?

## **Definition of Medicine**

- Medicine refers to any substance or preparation used for treating disease or illness. This includes drugs, potions, or other remedies aimed at alleviating symptoms or curing conditions
- Medicine is the science and practice of the diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, and prevention of disease

## **Definition of Physician**

- A physician is a medical professional who has earned a medical degree and is licensed to practice medicine
- A healthcare professional who diagnoses and treats injuries, illnesses, and medical conditions

## **Definition of a Prescription Medication**

- A prescription medication, also known as a prescription drug, is a pharmaceutical product that can only be legally dispensed to a patient with a valid prescription from an authorized healthcare professional
- A medicine is classified as prescription only because of various factors, including: the risk associated with its use, how and when it is to be taken, and the potential for misuse.

## **Definition of Addiction**

- Addiction in relation to drugs is defined as a chronic, relapsing brain disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences
- It is considered a brain disorder, because it involves functional changes to brain circuits involved in reward, stress, and self-control

### **Different Classes of Drugs (simplified, partial list)**

- Depressants: Drugs that slow or depress the functions of the central nervous system and brain (alcohol, valium, xanax, lunesta, ambien)
- Stimulants: Drugs that accelerate the central nervous system are called stimulants. These short-acting drugs cause the brain to produce dopamine, which leads to a powerful surge of energy and confidence, as well as a reduced need for sleep or food (cocaine, Adderall, methamphetamines, caffeine, nicotine)
- Opioids: Drugs that are used to suppress physical pain are called analgesics or opioids (codeine, heroin, morphine, fentanyl, oxycodone, hydrocodone)
- Hallucinogens: Drugs that alter consciousness or the perception of reality are called hallucinogens. (LSD, PCP [angel dust], high doses of cannabis)
- Antidepressants: Drugs designed to alleviate symptoms of depression, such as persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities, and difficulties with thinking, memory, motivation, eating, and sleeping (prozac, celexa, lexapro, zoloft)
- Analgesics: Pain relievers either narcotic (addictives like opioids, morphine) or non-narcotic (non-addictive like tylenol, ibuprofen)
- Antibiotics: Used to treat infections (penicillin, azithromycin)

### **Scripture Verses and Principles**

- I. The Bible speaks of diseases – some caused by sin and a fallen world, others allowed by God such as the plagues against Egypt

**Exodus 15:26** And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put **none of these diseases** upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the LORD that healeth thee.

- II. Joseph had physicians embalm his father in Egypt

**Genesis 50:2** And Joseph commanded his servants the **physicians** to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.

III. We are reminded that God is the healer of diseases although He has given man the wisdom to use medicine, perform surgeries, etc.

**2 Chronicles 16:12** And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease *was exceeding great*: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the **physicians**.

IV. Medicine is surely different today than in Bible times, but they seek medicine for healing, pain relief etc.

**Proverbs 17:22** A merry heart doeth good *like a* **medicine**: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

V. The prophets spoke of the sins of Israel and Judah as wounds with no medicines

**Jeremiah 30:12-13** For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise *is* incurable, *and* thy wound *is* grievous. *There is* none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing **medicines**.

**Isaiah 1:6** From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither **bound up**, neither mollified with **ointment**.

VI. Jesus spoke of physicians for those who were sick

**Matthew 9:12** But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a **physician**, but they that are sick.

VII. Jesus spoke of some sickness that would lead to death

**John 11:4** When Jesus heard *that*, he said, **This sickness is not unto death**, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

VIII. The gospels speak of a woman who did not get healing after going to the physicians

**Luke 8:43** And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon **physicians**, neither could be healed of any,

IX. The Samaritan provided first aid and care for his neighbor

**Luke 10:33-34** But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, And went to *him*, and

**bound** up his wounds, pouring in **oil** and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took **care** of him.

X. Paul spoke of Luke the physician being with him

**Colossians 4:14** Luke, the beloved **physician**, and Demas, greet you.

XI. Paul spoke to Timothy about a stomach issue

**1 Timothy 5:23** Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy **stomach's** sake and thine often infirmities.

XII. Revelation speaks of eyesalve for those who thought they were rich

**Revelation 3:17-18** Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with **eyesalve**, that thou mayest see.

XIII. Revelation speaks of the leaves of the trees bringing healing

**Revelation 22:2** In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the **leaves of the tree were for the healing** of the nations.

**Ezekiel 47:12** And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the **leaf** thereof for **medicine**.

XIV. Prayer should always be a priority in seeking relief from sickness

**James 5:15** And the prayer of faith shall save the **sick**, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

## Principles and Thoughts to Consider

- I. We should avoid two extremes regarding medicine – never taking medicine or going to a physician as opposed to relying on medicine and physicians more than our faith and trust in God. Seeking medical help does not mean that you lack faith in God
- II. Medicine and physicians will not be able to solve every problem; our prayers should be for wisdom using physicians and medicine, for God's touch of healing and for good decisions to be made moving forward
- III. Prescriptions and drugs may be helpful, they may be addicting after using long term, they may only treat symptoms, they may be expensive, they may have some serious side effects, and there may be alternative options  
**1 Corinthians 6:12** All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.
- IV. There may be modern medicines and methods that would violate Scriptural principles and commands (abortion, euthanasia etc.) We need wisdom in using medicine and various medical technologies, doctors and hospitals
- V. There are various medical procedures and treatments that need to be researched and prayed over before accepting (transplants, blood transfusions, various methods of testing for disease, IVF and pregnancy help, organ donors, birth control options)

What about the Greek word pharmakeia? (used just a few times in the New Testament) It is not a prohibition of taking medicine – the context indicates using potions, and magic) Just as the word drugs today can be used either in a good or bad connotation

- 1) the use or the administering of drugs – medication
- 2) poisoning
- 3) sorcery, magical arts, often found in connection with idolatry and fostered by it
- 4) metaphorically the deceptions and seductions of idolatry

**Galatians 5:19-21** Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, **witchcraft**, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

**Revelation 9:21** Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their **sorceries**, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

**Revelation 18:23** And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy **sorceries** were all nations deceived.