

A Health Care Reality Check

It's easy to get caught up in the political and social issues of our time. Currently, you can't turn on the TV or radio, or pick up a newspaper without being bombarded with news on the health care debate going on in Washington. Most of us probably have our opinions about the issues involved. Some might like more government control and financing of health care, and some might want less. Some might prefer that health insurance be mandatory for all, while others might like a choice in the matter. No matter what our feelings are on these and related issues, Christians need to remember to allow their thinking to be directed by their faith in God and the truths found in His word. Whatever Washington decides about healthcare, certain things will remain true.

Clean living leads to good health. The best health care plan in the world is to live like God says. He created us and surely knows what is best for us! "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and strength to your bones" (Proverbs 3:7-8).

Listening to wise parents promotes a long healthy life. Solomon said "My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart, for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh" (Proverbs 4:20-22). "Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:2-3)

Health is a gift from God. It is the Lord who blesses people with good health and well being. As was mentioned earlier, we can certainly do things to promote our health. And the Scriptures indicate that doctors and pharmaceuticals also have roles to play in keeping us healthy (cf. Matthew 9:12; 1 Timothy 5:23; Luke 10:34; Jeremiah 51:8). But ultimately it is God who blesses us with health and healing. Let's not forget that! "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases" (Psalms 103:2-3). We may have all the money in the world, but the health and strength to enjoy it is a gift from God. Solomon observes, "As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor -- this is the gift of God" (Ecclesiastes 5:19).

No health care program is going to keep you from dying. We talk about health care as if it is going to prevent people from dying. It will not. You can take all the pills you want. Exercise, eat right and avoid risky behavior, and you will still die anyway! In the end, it won't matter what health care program our nation adopts. "No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, and no one has power in the day of death. There is no release from that war, and wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it" (Ecclesiastes 8:8).

If our thinking is right, we'll be much more concerned about what happens after death than we are about what to do to prolong life -- for "it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

- by Steve Klein

Refusing to Obey Because of One's Family

Often in teaching the Word of God, we are confronted by the problems of one who will not obey the truth he has learned because of his family. He discovers his loved ones have been in error. If they are dead, he may even say, "If they are lost I don't want to be saved." Here are some things to consider. Weigh them carefully:

1. IT IS RECKLESS SENTIMENTALISM that keeps us from obeying the gospel because of our parents. Our parents cannot save us – it is an individual thing. No one can have your faith any more than they can have your health. In Ezekiel 18:20 we are taught individual responsibility before God. Father nor son can bear each other's iniquity – "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

2. IT IS A DISHONORING THING. Our parents cannot save us, but they can teach us to be honest with ourselves and with the Word of God. A refusal to do different once we have learned different dishonors our parents.

3. IT IS AN INCONSISTENT THING. What right do we have to ask the Buddhist to give up the god of his parents; or what right do we have to ask the Jew to give up the religion of his parents? What right, we say, do we have to ask such, if we are not willing to give up the error of our parents, no matter how sincere they were?

4. IT IS AN UNSCRIPTURAL THING. Read what Christ said in Matthew 10:34-39 – He says that if we love father or mother more than Him we are not worthy of Him. We must learn to love Christ more than anyone or anything else. The chief accusation of ourselves will always be that we do not love Him enough.

- by John Clark

This Is Where It Leads

A growing number of self-professed Christians are found in support of homosexuality. The increasing frequency of their pronouncements in favor of this sexual perversion is frightening.

Historically these defenders have tried to present Biblical arguments to shore up their claim that God does not condemn the homosexual lifestyle. Their efforts have been weak at best, and illogical in general. One does not have to be a Bible scholar to understand the clear and direct statements from God's Word that identify homosexuality as sin.

But now some homosexual advocates are openly stating what has been obvious from the start; that is, that the Bible condemns the sin -- but they don't care. Luke Timothy Johnson teaches at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He recently announced that he rejects what the Bible says, in favor of his own experience and opinion. "I think it is important to state that we do, in fact, reject the straightforward commands of Scripture, and appeal instead to another authority . . . We appeal explicitly to the weight of our own experience and the experience thousands of others have witnessed to . . ." (*Commonweal Magazine*, 6/11/07).

So, there you have it. If the Bible doesn't approve of what I like, what I want, what I think – just reject it! While Johnson's proclamation is more blunt than most, his sentiment is shared by many. And, it's not just about homosexuality. Name the subject, and you will find a host of 'religious' people who dismiss the Bible in favor of their own 'think so's'.

Once we leave the solid authority of God's Word – even the very first time – we have opened the door to everything else. If one thing is allowed without authority, how can we object to the next thing, and the next . . . ?

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17).

- by Greg Gwin