

PHYSICAL ILLNESS AND BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Medical Issues in Counseling

September 6, 2015

Definitions

- ▣ What is a medical issue?
 - 1) Any problem arising from the dysfunction of, damage to, absence of or distortion of some physical part or parts of the human body, AS WELL AS
 - 2) Any hardship or diminished capacity brought about by the natural functioning of the human body or some physical part or parts of it, AS WELL AS
 - 3) Any physiological disruption resulting from distress or disorder in the immaterial parts of a person.

Definitions:

Types of Medical Issues

- ▣ As implied by the divisions in the previous slide, there are various categories of medical issues.
 - Medical issues may arise due to purely physical causes (cancer, accidental amputation, indigestion).
 - Medical issues may be symptoms of the proper working of the body (e.g. labor pains).
 - Medical issues may be caused by spiritual realities (Psalm 38:3).

The Source of Medical Issues

- ▣ The curse (Genesis 2:17, 3:19b; Romans 5:12)
 - Disease and death
 - Mistakes causing physical injury or damage
- ▣ Personal sin (e.g. Proverbs 14:30)
 - Sinful action by another person
 - Sin which harms one's own body with outside action
 - Sin which disrupts the normal function of one's physiological processes

Why Might the Sovereign God Allow Medical Issues

- ▣ We cannot fully know the secrets of His will. However, He has made some things known to us.
- ▣ List adapted from The Christian Counselor's Medical Desk Reference, Robert D. Smith, MD
 - God might be punishing the unbeliever (e.g. Leviticus 24:23).
 - God might be seeking the repentance of the believer (e.g. Numbers 21:5-7).
 - God might be bringing the natural consequences of sin (e.g. Galatians 6:7-8; Proverbs 26:27).
 - God might be identifying a spiritual issue by manifesting physical symptoms of it (e.g. Psalm 38:3).

A Faithful Response to Medical Concerns

- ▣ We glorify God that He shows His greatness amid our weakness (cf. John 9:3, 11:4).
 - Psalm 6:2-3
 - ▣ Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I *am* pining away; Heal me, O Lord, for my bones are dismayed. And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You, O Lord – how long?
 - Psalm 6:8-9
 - ▣ Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, For the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord has heard my supplication, The Lord receives my prayer.
 - Psalm 20:7
 - ▣ Some *boast* in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.

A Faithful Response to Medical Concerns

- ▣ Take up God's grace to repent, solidify character, and obey
 - 1 Corinthians 10:13
 - ▣ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.
 - Romans 5:1-5
 - ▣ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

A Faithful Response to Medical Concerns

- ▣ Take up God's grace to obey
 - Romans 8:28-29
 - ▣ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

A Faithful Response to Medical Concerns

- ▣ Remember how fleeting life is
 - Psalm 90:2b-3
 - ▣ Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. You turn man back into dust And say, “Return, O children of men.”
 - James 4:14
 - ▣ Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

A Faithful Response to Medical Concerns

- ▣ Continue to serve
 - Job 2:10b
 - ▣ “Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
 - Philippians 4:12-13
 - ▣ I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

A Faithful Response to Medical Concerns

- ▣ Pray with renewed fervor
 - We believe that our lives are dependent on God, but do we pray like it?
 - *Sickness, infirmity, etc. is a reminder to depend on the Lord as we should.*
 - John 15:5
 - ▣ “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”
 - Philippians 4:6
 - ▣ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

General Principles for Medical Decision Making

- ▣ We seek the well-being of each person in all respects using every God-honoring means (3 John 2).
- ▣ We may try to avoid death (1 Corinthians 15:54-56), but we do not view it as ultimate (1 Corinthians 15:57), controlling (Hebrews 2:14-15), or hopeless (Philippians 1:21-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14).
- ▣ We honor God as the One Who rules life and death (1 Samuel 2:6; Job 1:21; Hebrews 9:27) by accepting both on His terms.
- ▣ We do not excuse disobedience on account of medical issues (2 Corinthians 12:9-10), but we are also compassionate to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

Your Questions

