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Your Body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit": 1 Cor 6:19–20 and Christian Attitudes toward Healthcare

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Abstract

Healthcare is an important part of human life, yet Christians sometimes have different views about medical treatment, preventive care, medication, and the role of prayer in dealing with sickness. Some Christians emphasize divine healing, while others accept modern medicine as an important means through which God provides healing and care. This paper examines 1 Cor 6:19–20 and its implications for Christian attitudes toward healthcare. The study argues that Paul's teaching about the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit provides an important theological foundation for responsible care of the human body. Using an exegetical and theological approach, the paper examines the historical and literary context of 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 and relates Paul's teaching to contemporary healthcare. The study finds that the passage primarily addresses sexual immorality and Christian holiness, but its wider theology of bodily stewardship has implications for healthcare. Caring for the body, seeking appropriate medical attention, preventing illness, and maintaining healthy practices can be understood as expressions of responsible Christian stewardship. At the same time, healthcare should not replace Christian faith, prayer, and dependence on God. The paper recommends an integrated approach in which prayer, faith, medical knowledge, compassionate care, and responsible bodily stewardship work together.

Keywords: Body, Holy Spirit, healthcare, healing, Christian spirituality.

Introduction

Health is one of the major concerns of human beings. Every society develops different ways of responding to sickness and maintaining human health. In the contemporary world, modern medicine has provided many methods of preventing, diagnosing, and treating diseases. Hospitals, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, laboratories, medicines, surgery, vaccination, and other medical services have become important parts of healthcare.

However, the relationship between Christian spirituality and modern medicine has sometimes been questioned. Some Christians believe strongly in divine healing and may see dependence on medical treatment as a sign of weak faith. Others combine prayer and medical treatment, believing that God can work through medical professionals and scientific knowledge. These different attitudes raise an important theological question: What does the New Testament teach about the Christian's responsibility toward the human body, and how can this teaching inform Christian attitudes toward healthcare? One important passage for addressing this question is 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (ESV). Paul writes: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." The immediate context of this passage concerns sexual immorality. Paul teaches the Corinthian believers that their bodies belong to God and must not be used for sinful purposes. Although Paul was not writing specifically about hospitals, medicine, or healthcare, his understanding of the body has important implications for Christian attitudes toward health and bodily care.

The problem addressed in this study is that some Christian attitudes toward sickness and medical treatment may create tension between faith and medicine. In some cases, individuals may reject medical treatment because they believe that seeking medical help demonstrates a lack of faith in God. In other cases, people may depend entirely on medicine while neglecting the spiritual dimension of human existence. These attitudes raise the need for a balanced New Testament understanding of the body, health, faith, and healthcare. Although 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 does not directly prescribe medical treatment, its teaching that the body belongs to God provides an important theological basis for considering the Christian's responsibility to care for the body. The challenge is to apply Paul's teaching to contemporary healthcare without changing the original meaning of the passage.

The main aim of this paper is to examine 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 in its historical and literary context, explain Paul's understanding of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and explore the implications of this teaching for contemporary Christian attitudes toward healthcare, particularly the relationship between faith, prayer, medical treatment, and responsible care of the human body. This paper therefore examines 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 and considers how Paul's theology of the body can contribute to Christian thinking about healthcare today.

Literature review

Fee (2014, pp. 250–265) discusses Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20, where the apostle challenges the misuse of the body and emphasises that believers belong to Christ. Fee explains the significance of the Holy Spirit's presence in the believer's life and the relationship between this presence and Christian conduct. Fee's interpretation is important because it shows that the body is not spiritually insignificant. Paul's statement that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit challenges any understanding of Christian spirituality that treats physical existence as unimportant. The body is involved in the believer's relationship with Christ, and its use must reflect Christian faithfulness.

In relation to healthcare, Fee's interpretation provides a theological basis for arguing that Christians should take the body seriously. Although Paul was addressing sexual immorality rather than medical treatment, the principle that the body belongs to God can inform Christian decisions about health and bodily care. Christians may therefore regard appropriate medical attention, responsible health practices, and concern for the wellbeing of others as consistent with the wider theological principle of honouring God in the body (Fee, 2014, pp. 250–265).

Thiselton (2000, pp. 474–479) examines the meaning of the temple metaphor and its relationship to the believer's identity in Christ. He explains that Paul's reference to the body as a temple points to the significance of the Holy Spirit's presence in the believer's everyday embodied life. Thiselton's contribution is important because it connects spirituality with physical existence. Christian faith is not limited to prayer, worship, and inward religious experience. It also influences how believers live and behave through their bodies. The body is therefore part of Christian moral and spiritual responsibility. This interpretation has implications for healthcare. If bodily life has theological significance, Christians have reasons to take physical wellbeing seriously. Seeking medical attention when necessary need not be regarded as a rejection of faith. Rather, the responsible care of the body may be understood as one way of respecting the life entrusted to human beings by God. However, Thiselton's exegesis should not be presented as a direct command to use modern medicine; the healthcare application is a contemporary theological inference from his interpretation of Paul's teaching (Thiselton, 2000, pp. 474–479).

Garland (2003, pp. 150–151) explains the significance of the body in Paul's argument and the reason believers cannot treat their bodies as though their actions have no spiritual consequences. Garland's contribution is that Christian freedom does not mean that believers can use their bodies without responsibility. Paul's teaching connects bodily conduct with belonging to Christ. The body

is therefore important to Christian identity and ethical living. This interpretation contributes to the healthcare discussion by providing a basis for considering how Christians use and care for their bodies. Responsible choices about health may be understood as part of a wider commitment to honour God. Nevertheless, healthcare decisions should not be reduced to moral judgments about whether a person has taken sufficient care of the body. Illness may occur even when people act responsibly, and some health conditions are beyond individual control. Garland's interpretation therefore supports the principle of bodily responsibility, while compassion must guide its application to sick people (Garland, 2003, pp. 150–151).

Hays (1997, pp.45) helps readers understand that Paul's ethical instructions are not isolated rules; they arise from the believers' relationship with Christ and their responsibilities as a Christian community. Applied to 1 Cor 6:19–20, this perspective means that glorifying God in the body involves more than making claims about spiritual experience. Christian faith must influence conduct. The believer's body and everyday actions are part of the life that is offered to God. For the present study, Hays's approach is useful because healthcare involves both personal responsibility and concern for other people. Christian attitudes toward healthcare should therefore consider not only individual decisions about treatment but also the responsibility of churches to support sick people, promote compassion, and protect human dignity. This is an application of Hays's broader approach to Pauline ethics, rather than a claim that he specifically interprets 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 as a teaching about modern medicine (Hays, 1997).

Rosner (1994, p. 129) discusses the problem of a low view of the body among some Corinthian Christians and explains how such an understanding could contribute to sexual misconduct. Rosner's contribution is significant because it places the body within Paul's wider moral and theological framework. Paul challenges attitudes that separate spiritual identity from bodily conduct. The body matters because it belongs within God's purposes for human life. In relation to healthcare, this interpretation challenges Christians to avoid treating physical existence as unimportant to faith. It provides a basis for discussing responsible care of the body, although it does not directly establish a medical policy. The theological application is that respect for the body and concern for human wellbeing are compatible with Christian discipleship. Rosner's discussion also reinforces the importance of interpreting the passage first within its original context of sexual ethics before applying it to contemporary questions of health (Rosner, 1994, p. 129).

Park and Rosner (2025, pp.66) review scholarship on Paul's use of temple language in 1 Corinthians. Their study explains the importance of 1 Corinthians 6:19 within the wider argument of the letter, especially the relationship between the body, holiness, the Holy Spirit, and glorifying God. Their review shows that scholars have debated whether Paul's reference to the body emphasizes the individual believer, the Christian community, or both. This is important because the passage should not be interpreted only as an instruction about an individual's physical health. Paul's argument also concerns Christian belonging, holiness, and the relationship between believers and Christ. For healthcare, this scholarship encourages a broader approach. Christian responsibility should include personal bodily care and the community's responsibility toward those who are sick. Churches can express their understanding of the body as belonging to God through compassionate support, responsible health education, and encouragement to seek appropriate medical care. These healthcare implications are a contemporary application of the biblical themes identified by Park and Rosner, not the direct subject of their survey

Historical and Literary Context of 1 Corinthians

The First Epistle to the Corinthians was written by Paul to the Christian community in Corinth. Corinth was an important commercial city in the ancient world and was characterized by cultural, religious, and social diversity. The Corinthian church experienced several problems involving Christian conduct, divisions, sexual morality, worship, spiritual gifts, and relationships

within the Christian community. In 1 Corinthians 5–7, Paul deals extensively with matters relating to sexual morality. Chapter 6 specifically addresses lawsuits among believers and sexual immorality. In verses 12–20, Paul challenges the idea that Christians have unlimited freedom concerning their bodies.

Some Corinthians apparently used arguments about Christian freedom to justify certain behaviors. Paul responds by emphasizing that Christian freedom does not mean freedom to engage in behavior that contradicts one's relationship with Christ. It is within this context that Paul declares: "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19). Therefore, the immediate subject is sexual holiness rather than healthcare. Any application of the passage to healthcare must respect this original context.

Thus, Christians are to refrain from doing harmful things to our bodies, and Christians are to glorify God in our bodies because our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. Our bodies are an important aspect of being created in the image of God, and we should use our bodies to glorify God. This means that we should practice healthy eating habits, drink more water and exercise regularly to keep our temple in the best shape we can in a fallen world. Additionally, Paul identifies that we need to avoid sexual immorality, in particular, and anything that could harm our bodies, in general. God created your body with a specific purpose and design, and Christians should do their best to refrain from putting harmful substances (like tobacco, excessive sugar and excessive fatty foods) into our bodies to keep them a suitable temple for the Holy Spirit. Too many of us make an exception for self-control in the area of physical health. Training your body has some value. Paul explains to his young mentee Timothy,
While bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 1 Tim 4:8.

Some Christians understand this verse to mean that bodily training has no value, but that practicing godliness is all that matters in the Christian life. Christian Gnosticism seems to be at the forefront of reinterpreting this passage of Scripture. But Paul indicates that bodily training does have some value, and that godliness should also be considered a high value for Christians who desire to be faithful followers. If you are able to train your body well, you will be better prepared and disciplined to train yourself in godliness.

In Nigerian society, it is easier than ever to eat unhealthy foods, not exercise and fill our bodies with harmful substances. A majority of Americans do not exercise regularly nor take the time to prepare healthy meals because these acts take discipline and self-control. I would argue that those who are able to train their bodies might be in a better position to train their souls for godliness. In other words, if you can exhibit self-control and discipline in taking care of the created body God has given you, you might be better equipped to practice self-control and discipline in the pursuit of godliness with the aid of the Holy Spirit that dwells within you.

Practice what you preach with your body.

Christian stewardship involves the responsible care of the body, which is part of God's creation. Paul identifies self-control as one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23. This virtue involves the ability to regulate one's desires, emotions, and actions in ways that reflect Christian values. Harmon and Sloat explain that self-control is the ability to restrain desires and emotions. In the context of Christian healthcare, this principle encourages believers to develop healthy habits and avoid behaviours that may harm their physical well-being. However, self-control should not be understood as a guarantee against sickness, nor should illness be treated as evidence of spiritual failure.

The biblical understanding of self-control has practical implications for eating habits, physical activity, rest, and other aspects of daily life. Christians are encouraged to practise moderation in eating, choose nutritious foods when available, and engage in physical activity

according to their abilities. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2026) explains that a healthy diet should be adequate, balanced, moderate, and diverse. It recommends a varied diet that includes fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and other nutritious foods. These recommendations support the argument that caring for the body requires informed and responsible daily choices. From a Christian perspective, such choices can be understood as practical expressions of gratitude for the gift of life and a commitment to responsible stewardship.

Physical activity is another important aspect of caring for the body. The WHO (2020) recommends that adults undertake at least 150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity each week, while recognising that any amount of physical activity is better than none. This recommendation provides a 4more precise and evidence-based alternative to suggesting that every Christian must spend thirty to sixty minutes exercising every day. Activities such as walking, gardening, household work, and other suitable movements can contribute to physical well-being. Christians should therefore 4be encouraged to remain active a4ccording to their age, health condition, and physical ability.

Nevertheless, responsible Christian teaching must recognise that not everyone has the same capacity or opportunity to maintain particular health practices. Disability, chronic illness, age, poverty, limited access to nutritious food, and unsafe environments may affect an individual's ability to exercise or maintain a balanced diet. The WHO (2026) acknowledges that access to healthy diets is influenced by economic and social conditions. Consequently, Christian stewardship should not become a means of blaming people who are sick, overweight, disabled, or unable to afford certain foods. Rather, believers should be encouraged to do what is reasonably possible within their circumstances while receiving appropriate medical care when needed

This so important because we preach to the culture around us that we have self-control to refrain from the passions and desires of our flesh, but too many of us make an exception for self-control in the area of physical health. How can we exhort people to have self-control in s4piritual matters when we stand in front of them overweight, out of shape and with no self-control in physical matters? Additionally, if you are a good steward of your body, your physical health will give you more energy and endurance to make culture and share Christ with your neighbours.

For many people, controlling physical appetites is easier than fighting sin. For such people, if they are unable to practice self-control in the relatively easy matters of eating and exercise, then they may be unable to practice self-control in the more difficult areas like “sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these” Gal 5:19–21. Let’s practice what we preach when it comes to self-control with both our bodies and our lives.

Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 6:19–20

i. **Your Body (τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν, *to sōma hymōn*):** The Greek phrase τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν (*to sōma hymōn*) means “your body.” The word σῶμα (*sōma*) refers to the body, while ὑμῶν (*hymōn*) means “your.” In 1 Corinthians 6:19, Paul teaches that the body of the believer has spiritual and moral significance because it is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. He does not present the body as something unimportant compared with the soul. Rather, his argument shows that Christian faith affects how believers use and care for their physical bodies. Fee (1987) explains that Paul's argument gives the physical body an important place in Christian existence because the body belongs to Christ and is involved in the believer's relationship with God. Similarly, Thiselton (2000) emphasises the importance of the body in Paul's understanding of Christian identity and conduct. Paul's teaching challenges the idea that the body can be used without regard for God's purposes. In the context of healthcare, this understanding provides a theological basis for responsible bodily care, including appropriate

medical attention, preventive health practices, and avoidance of harmful behaviours. Although the immediate context concerns sexual immorality, the theological principle can also inform broader Christian attitudes towards physical well-being.

ii. **A Temple of the Holy Spirit (ναὸς τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, *naos tou hagiou pneumatos*):** The Greek phrase ναὸς τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (*naos tou hagiou pneumatos*) means "a temple of the Holy Spirit." The word ναός (*naos*) refers to a sanctuary or temple, especially the sacred dwelling associated with a deity. The phrase τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (*tou hagiou pneumatos*) means "of the Holy Spirit." Paul uses this temple image to explain the significance of the believer's body in relation to God's presence. The expression is especially important because Paul states that the Holy Spirit dwells in believers. In the wider biblical tradition, the temple represents a place associated with God's presence and worship. By applying this image to the believer's body, Paul emphasises that the body has a special relationship with God. Fee (1987) explains that the presence of the Spirit gives the believer's body a distinctive place in Christian life. Garland (2003) also interprets Paul's argument in relation to the believer's belonging to God and the moral responsibilities that follow from that relationship. The description of the body as a temple does not mean that the human body is itself divine or that illness makes a person spiritually unclean. Rather, it means that the body has value within God's purposes and should be treated with respect. Applied to healthcare, this principle encourages Christians to avoid the deliberate abuse of their bodies and to take reasonable steps to protect their health. Seeking medical treatment when necessary can therefore be understood as consistent with responsible Christian stewardship.

iii. **You Are Not Your Own (οὐκ ἐστὲ ἑαυτῶν, *ouk este heautōn*):** The Greek phrase οὐκ ἐστὲ ἑαυτῶν (*ouk este heautōn*) means "you are not your own." The word οὐκ (*ouk*) means "not," ἐστὲ (*este*) means "you are," and ἑαυτῶν (*heautōn*) means "of yourselves" or "your own." Paul uses this expression to challenge the idea that believers can use their bodies without considering their relationship with Christ. This statement must be understood within Paul's argument about Christian identity and belonging. The believer's body is not independent of Christ's lordship. Fee (1987) explains that Paul's teaching connects the believer's bodily existence with belonging to Christ. Thiselton (2000) similarly shows that Paul's argument challenges an understanding of personal freedom that ignores Christian responsibility. Christian freedom, therefore, does not mean that every bodily desire should be satisfied without restraint.

iv. **You Were Bought with a Price (ἠγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς, *ēgorasthēte gar timēs*):** The Greek phrase ἠγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς (*ēgorasthēte gar timēs*) means "for you were bought with a price." The verb ἠγοράσθητε (*ēgorasthēte*) is the aorist passive form of ἀγοράζω (*agorazō*), meaning "to buy" or "to purchase." The word τιμῆς (*timēs*) means "price" or "cost," while γὰρ (*gar*) means "for" or "because." The passive form indicates that the believers were purchased; they did not purchase themselves.

In this context, Paul refers to the redemptive work of Christ. The expression "bought with a price" presents Christian belonging as the result of God's saving action through Christ. The believer's body must therefore be understood in the light of this new relationship with God. Fee (1987) explains that Paul's statement reinforces the argument that Christians belong to Christ and should not use their bodies in ways that contradict their Christian identity. Garland (2003) likewise connects the language of purchase with the believer's obligation to live in accordance with God's purposes.

The implication for healthcare is that bodily care can be viewed as part of Christian responsibility. Christians are encouraged to make decisions that respect life and promote physical well-being. This may involve seeking medical treatment, observing reasonable health precautions,

maintaining personal hygiene, and making appropriate choices concerning nutrition and physical activity. Such practices are not a means of earning salvation. Rather, they are possible expressions of gratitude for God's saving grace and responsible use of the life entrusted to believers.

"Glorify God in Your Body" (δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν, *doxasate dē ton theon en tō sōmati hymōn*): The Greek phrase δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν (*doxasate dē ton theon en tō sōmati hymōn*) means "therefore glorify God in your body." The verb δοξάσατε (*doxasate*) is an imperative meaning "glorify" or "honour." The expression τὸν θεόν (*ton theon*) means "God," while ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν (*en tō sōmati hymōn*) means "in your body." This command brings Paul's argument to its conclusion by showing that the believer's body should be used in ways that honour God.

Fee (1987) explains that Paul's instruction is closely connected with the believer's belonging to Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Thiselton (2000) also emphasises that Paul's teaching gives bodily conduct theological significance. Glorifying God is therefore not limited to prayer, worship, or other activities performed within the church. It also involves the way believers live, make decisions, and relate to their physical bodies.

In relation to healthcare, glorifying God in the body may include responsible nutrition, appropriate physical activity, sufficient rest, good personal hygiene, and seeking professional medical assistance when necessary. Nevertheless, glorifying God does not require Christians to achieve perfect health, since sickness can occur despite responsible living. Nor does it mean that people with disabilities or chronic illnesses glorify God less than others. The central principle is that believers should care for their bodies responsibly according to their abilities and circumstances.

Christian Spirituality and Modern Medicine

Christian spirituality involves a person's relationship with God, expressed through faith, prayer, worship, moral living, and trust in God's presence and power. Modern healthcare, on the other hand, involves the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and management of diseases through medical knowledge, professional skills, and appropriate interventions. Although spirituality and medicine approach human well-being from different perspectives, they do not necessarily contradict each other. Koenig (2012) observes that religion and spirituality can influence how people understand illness, cope with health challenges, and make healthcare decisions. This suggests that spirituality is an important consideration in discussions of healthcare, particularly among people whose religious beliefs shape their understanding of health and healing.

From a Christian perspective, prayer and medical treatment can be practised together. A Christian may pray for healing while consulting a doctor, trusting God while taking prescribed medication, or seeking spiritual support while undergoing surgery or rehabilitation. Such an approach recognises the importance of faith without dismissing medical knowledge. Puchalski et al. (2014) emphasise the importance of addressing spiritual concerns as part of whole-person care. Their work supports the view that healthcare should recognise patients' spiritual concerns alongside their physical, psychological, and social needs. However, spiritual care should respect the beliefs and choices of individual patients and should not replace appropriate medical treatment.

Christian theology can also understand medical professionals as people whose work contributes to the preservation and restoration of human life. In Colossians 4:14, Paul refers to Luke as "the beloved physician," showing that the New Testament acknowledges a person associated with the medical profession. Although this reference does not provide a complete theology of modern medicine, it offers a useful biblical point of connection between Christian faith and medical practice. Consequently, Christians may regard the work of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals as consistent with the responsibility to care for human life. Medicine does not have to be viewed as a replacement for God; rather, medical knowledge and professional care can be received with gratitude while believers continue to exercise their faith.

The concept of stewardship provides an important theological basis for discussing healthcare in relation to 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. Paul describes the believer's body as a temple of the Holy Spirit and states that believers were bought with a price. His immediate argument concerns sexual morality, but his teaching also establishes the theological importance of the body in Christian life. Fee (1987) explains that Paul's argument is rooted in the believer's belonging to Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Garland (2003) similarly connects the passage with the responsibility to live in ways that reflect this relationship with God. These interpretations provide a basis for considering responsible bodily care as a wider application of Paul's teaching. Christian stewardship does not mean that believers can prevent every illness through good behaviour. Rather, it encourages them to take reasonable steps to care for their bodies and to seek appropriate assistance when necessary. In practical terms, this may include seeking medical attention when sick, using prescribed medication responsibly, participating in recommended preventive healthcare, maintaining personal hygiene, eating a balanced diet when resources permit, obtaining adequate rest, avoiding harmful substance use, engaging in appropriate physical activity, and caring for mental and emotional well-being. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) identifies regular physical activity as an important contributor to health and well-being, while the WHO (2026) emphasises the importance of a healthy diet in reducing the risk of malnutrition and non-communicable diseases. These recommendations provide public-health support for the practical application of responsible bodily care. Stewardship also involves concern for other people.

Christian responsibility should not be limited to personal health but should include supporting sick people, showing compassion to those living with disabilities, and respecting the dignity of patients. Puchalski et al. (2014) argue for a whole-person approach to healthcare that recognises the spiritual dimension of human experience. This perspective is relevant to Christian healthcare ethics because it encourages attention to the patient's wider needs rather than focusing exclusively on physical symptoms. Nevertheless, stewardship must not be used to blame sick people for their conditions. Illness may arise from genetic factors, infections, environmental conditions, ageing, social inequalities, or other circumstances beyond an individual's control. The WHO (2026) also recognises that economic and social conditions influence people's ability to maintain healthy diets. Therefore, responsible Christian teaching should combine personal responsibility with compassion, access to healthcare, and support for vulnerable people. The purpose of stewardship is to encourage responsible care, not to suggest that good health is proof of strong faith or that sickness indicates spiritual failure.

An important issue in some Christian communities is whether prayer and medical treatment can be practised together. Prayer is central to Christian spirituality because it expresses dependence on God, hope, thanksgiving, and the desire for healing. However, prayer does not necessarily require the rejection of medical treatment. A balanced Christian approach can recognise the importance of prayer while accepting appropriate medical assistance.

James 5:14–16 provides an important New Testament text for this discussion. James instructs the sick person to call the elders of the church, who are to pray over the person and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. The passage emphasises communal prayer, faith, and spiritual support during illness. Davids (1982), in his commentary on James, discusses the passage within the letter's wider concern for faith expressed through practical action and the life of the Christian community. The text should therefore be read carefully: it gives a clear place to prayer and pastoral care, but it does not explicitly command believers to reject physicians or other forms of medical treatment. Other New Testament passages also show that practical responses to bodily needs have a place in Christian life. In Colossians 4:14, Luke is identified as a physician, while 1 Timothy 5:23 contains Paul's practical advice to Timothy concerning his stomach and frequent illnesses. These passages do not amount to a comprehensive medical policy, but they caution against assuming that Christian faith must always be separated from practical measures addressing physical needs.

Together with James 5:14–16, they provide a biblical basis for considering prayer and practical care as potentially complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

Koenig (2012) explains that religious beliefs may influence patients' coping strategies and healthcare decisions. This makes it important for healthcare professionals to understand patients' spiritual concerns without making assumptions about their beliefs. Where patients desire prayer, pastoral support may be offered alongside appropriate clinical care, provided that it respects the patient's wishes and does not interfere with treatment. Puchalski et al. (2014) similarly support the inclusion of spiritual concerns in whole-person care. These perspectives suggest that Christian spirituality can contribute to emotional support, hope, and meaning during illness without being presented as a substitute for evidence-based medicine.

This approach avoids two extremes. The first is treating medical science as though spiritual concerns have no meaning for Christian patients. The second is rejecting legitimate medical treatment on the assumption that consulting a doctor, taking medication, or undergoing surgery necessarily demonstrates a lack of faith. Christian faith and responsible healthcare can coexist. Christians may pray for healing, consult qualified medical professionals, follow appropriate treatment, support those who are sick, and trust God while recognising that medical outcomes are not always predictable. Such an approach respects both the spiritual convictions of believers and the importance of responsible healthcare.

Implications for Christian Healthcare Practices

i. Christians Should Value Human Life: The body belongs to God and has dignity. Christian healthcare should therefore protect and respect human life. Christians Should Not Despise Medical Professionals: Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, laboratory scientists, therapists, and other healthcare workers provide important services to society. Christians can appreciate their work while maintaining their faith in God.
ii. Christians Should Combine Prayer with Responsible Action: Prayer should not become an excuse for refusing appropriate care. Likewise, medical treatment should not prevent Christians from praying and depending on God.
iii. Churches Should Promote Health Education: Churches can contribute to healthier communities by providing accurate health information, encouraging appropriate medical care, supporting vulnerable people, and challenging harmful beliefs about sickness.
iv. Churches Should Support the Sick: Jesus' ministry demonstrates compassion toward suffering people. Christian communities should therefore visit, encourage, pray for, and practically support people who are sick.
v. Christians Should Avoid Blaming the Sick: Sickness should not automatically be interpreted as punishment for sin or evidence of inadequate faith. Such attitudes can produce shame and discourage people from seeking appropriate care.
vi. Christian Healthcare Should Recognise the Whole Person: Human beings have physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. Christian healthcare and pastoral care should therefore recognise the importance of holistic wellbeing.

Findings

The study makes the following findings:

i. 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 primarily addresses sexual morality and Christian holiness, not modern medicine.
ii. Paul's teaching gives the human body significant theological value. The body belongs to Christ and is associated with the presence of the Holy Spirit.
iii. The passage provides a theological basis for responsible bodily stewardship.

iv. The New Testament presents prayer and divine healing as important dimensions of Christian responses to sickness but does not require Christians to reject every practical means of healthcare.
v. Christian spirituality and modern medicine can be understood as complementary rather than necessarily contradictory.
vi. Churches have an important role in supporting sick people, promoting responsible health practices, providing spiritual care, and challenging harmful interpretations of sickness.

Recommendations

i. Based on the findings, the paper recommends that:
ii. Christian teaching should present a balanced theology of health. Churches should teach both dependence on God and responsible care of the body.
iii. Prayer should remain an important part of Christian care. Christians should continue to pray for healing while recognising legitimate medical interventions.
iv. Medical treatment should not automatically be presented as a lack of faith. Christians should be encouraged to seek appropriate professional healthcare.
v. Churches should cooperate with healthcare professionals. Such cooperation can improve health education and support for church members and surrounding communities.
vi. Christian leaders should avoid blaming sick people. Sickness should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of sin or weak faith.
vii. Christians should practice responsible bodily stewardship. The teaching that the body belongs to God should encourage healthy and responsible living.
viii. Healthcare should be holistic. Physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of human wellbeing should receive appropriate attention.

Conclusion

1 Cor. 6:19–20 provides an important New Testament theology of the human body. Paul's immediate concern is sexual purity, but his broader understanding of the body has implications for Christian attitudes toward healthcare. The body is not insignificant in Christian theology. It belongs to Christ, is associated with the presence of the Holy Spirit, and should be used to glorify God.

Consequently, Christians have theological reasons to take responsible care of their bodies. Seeking appropriate medical attention, following professional healthcare advice, practicing preventive care, and supporting the sick can be understood as expressions of responsible stewardship.

At the same time, healthcare should not replace Christian faith. Prayer, trust in God, compassion, and spiritual support remain important aspects of Christian responses to sickness. The New Testament therefore provides a basis for an approach in which faith and responsible medical care are not treated as opposing realities.

God has created us body and soul. All human beings are created in the image of God, and by this doctrine all people are valuable to God. As Christians, we understand that we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and all of our lives belong under his Lordship. Therefore, we should honor God in all aspects of our lives, and this includes taking care of our bodies. Christians should be better stewards of our bodies because we know that they are temples, valuable and a testimony of our relationship to Christ for others to see.

The Christian's responsibility is not simply to pursue physical health at all costs but to glorify God in the body. In this sense, modern healthcare can become one important context in which Christians demonstrate stewardship, compassion, wisdom, and love toward themselves and others.

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