

SPIRITUALITY, HEALTH, AND THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE IN HEALTH CARE

How our spiritual walk affects our pursuit of justice isn't an easy topic, but I will try to apply this concept in the context of health.

A healthy spiritual lifestyle cannot be achieved without total surrender to our Creator. We honor God with our body, mind, and spirit. "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you?" (1 Corinthians 6:19, NLT). The misuse of our body impedes proper communion with God. When the body is sick, the mind is distraught. "By allowing ourselves to form wrong habits, by keeping late hours, by gratifying appetite at the expense of health, we lay the foundation for feebleness. By neglecting physical exercise, by overworking mind or body, we unbalance the nervous system."¹ With our bad habits, we become unfit to educate others on the benefits of good health habits, and ultimately deny them the privilege of knowing God. That is a shame and not just.

By definition, justice is the quality of being just. Righteousness, equitableness, or moral rightness entail upholding the justice of a cause. For the cause of God, it is the consciousness of right doing, one of the best medicines for diseased bodies and minds, also the satisfaction of giving happiness to others. In the context of health, it is offering the same treatment options to two patients, even when one may have a condition as the result of personal choices and behavior while the other suffers through no fault of their own. It also means allocating resources equally among members of the population.²

The requirement of social justice is to meet the health needs of all persons. "On the fair equality of opportunity view, meeting the health needs of all persons, viewed as free and equal citizens, is of comparable and special moral importance."³

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If our Spiritual walk entails honoring God with good deeds, righteousness, and moral correctness, then we ought to pursue justice. Our pioneers believed in health and social justice. In the fight for prohibition (selling of alcohol), the president of the General Conference, George Butler, wrote the following in the 1891 *Review*: "Were we living under an absolute monarchy, all we could do would be to pray; but in this Republic we have an instrument given with which we can second our prayers, and that is, our ballot."

1. White, E. G. *Healthful Living*, ch. 10, p. 47.
 2. Introduction to ethics in Nursing, 2003. <https://nursinganswers.net/lectures/nursing/professional-values/>
 3. Norman, D., Zalta, N. Justice and Access to Health Care, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-healthcareaccess/#TheRightHealthCare>.
 4. Miller, Jared. Adventist prohibition and political involvement, 2011. <http://libertymagazine.org/article/adventists-prohibition-and-political-involvement>