

SHOULD THE CONSECRATED USE MEDICINES? R2009

This question naturally suggests itself. We are neither commanded nor forbidden to use medicines. In our consecration we gave up human advantages coming to us as to all believers through Christ in exchange for the spiritual advantages offered us. Hence all *restitution* blessings and privileges we are debarred from *asking; although God, for his own wise ends, sometimes grants his "new creatures" special favors and manifestations of an earthly sort in their hours of need; even though they do not ask for them.* – See [Matt. 26:53,54](#); [Acts 12:6-11](#); [14:19,20](#); [Phil. 2:27](#).

It should be noticed, however, that (aside from Christ's work of redemption and restitution) condemned men are privileged to use such natural means as they can command, in food and medicines, for the relief of their ailments and the sustenance, as long as they may be able, of their condemned and dying bodies. And these privileges consequently the saints retain and possess, even after having exchanged the earthly advantages through Christ, for the heavenly advantages.

Nothing, then, in their covenant of full consecration, prevents the saints more than unbelievers from using natural means for their relief. We have the liberty to do so whenever our judgment indicates the expediency. And though we are not informed that our Lord used medicines, we should remember that he was perfect, and had only such pains and aches as he himself *took* from others. However, he certainly illustrated the principle of making use of natural means, not asking divine power for relief, by resting when weary instead of praying for supernatural restoration; and when hungry and thirsty he ate and drank instead of praying for strength and refreshment otherwise. So, too, it was with the apostles as far as we may know from the meagre scraps of history of their private affairs furnished us in Scripture. Paul tells us ([2 Cor. 11:27,30](#)) of his weariness and pains and hunger and thirst and cold and nakedness, and says he gloried in these marks of his faithfulness, but mentions not one word about praying for the removal of these by divine power; nor does he record one answer of such a prayer as a mark of favor with God. On the contrary, in the single instance he mentions of having prayed for physical restitution (the restoration of his sight), he does tell us that the Lord refused his request, telling him it was best for him so – the grace sufficient being in spiritual and not earthly favors above those of natural men. – [2 Cor. 12:9](#).

When Paul was thus needy at times, what did he do? Did he pray God to feed and clothe him? No; he well knew that God had promised that no good, needful thing should be withheld, so long as he was his servant. He did not ask God to create money in his pockets, nor to send some kind hearted person, not too lazy to work, with a basket of dainties for him to eat, while he studied or prayed? No! that was not Paul's sort, else he would not have been selected as "a chosen vessel" to bear the Lord's truth. When he was hungry Paul neither went out and begged

nor staid indoors to pray for the things needed, but went to work at his trade, – tent-making, teaching publicly and privately as opportunities offered; unwilling to ask aid even of the **believers** whom he served; though he well knew that they were negligently losing, both the privilege of giving to his support and the spread of the truth, and also losing the valuable instruction which he could have imparted during those hours necessarily devoted to secular labor.

We remember, too, Paul's advice to Timothy regarding medicine – to take a little wine (**as a medicine**, not as a beverage) for his indigestion and "often infirmities." And this we find in perfect harmony with Paul's own course and that of our Lord, and therefore certainly a safe guide to us respecting our Father's will.

But, says one, even if it be right to use simple remedies, such as may come under our observation, – would it be **right** to spend the Lord's money (as all the money which the consecrated have is the Lord's) upon physicians? We answer that our Lord and the disciples spent consecrated money for bread, which is the medicine needed when hungry. And we presume Timothy, following Paul's counsel, spent some consecrated money for the medicinal wine. Our Lord and the apostles did not commend medicines and physicians, and doubtless the art was so crude as to be unworthy of commendation; yet they were not condemned, and it was acknowledged that the sick need a physician. ([Matt. 9:12.](#)) But in all this we would not be understood as advocating drugs and doses; – moderation should be used in all that we do, that whether we eat or drink or take medicine or whatever, all may be done with reason and to the glory of God. Probably as many die of too much as of too little medicine. We should not fill ourselves with medicine nor with wine nor be gluttonous with food; but be temperate in all things.

We cannot for a moment concede as the superiors or equals of our Lord and Paul, in faith or divine favor, some who in our day claim to live by faith, "working not at all;" who do little to weary or pain themselves, and who rejoice that they have no such experiences as Paul had with hunger and cold, and thirst, and nakedness, as marks of special faith and holiness and divine favor. We believe that many such are sincere children of God, deceived on this question by following their own feelings and inclinations rather than carefully studying the perfect examples of God's will in this matter, furnished in Scripture. – See [2 Thes. 3:8-10,11-15.](#)

In view of the Scripture teaching, we must therefore advise the consecrated to walk in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus and those who followed him most closely; ignoring in this as in other things their own preferences as to how they would **like** to think about it, and how they would **like** to do and have God do in such matters. Let us fully submit our wills and methods to God's plan and arrangement as expressed and illustrated in his Word. As "new creatures" we may ask freely and persistently for all spiritual blessings and graces, and unselfishly for all our

necessities *promised*. Then, sure that such will come, we should seek for them and acknowledge them with thankfulness, by whatever agency or channel sent.

But in earthly matters we must be very careful: let us ask for nothing beyond our actual needs, as God (not we) sees the necessity and expediency – thankful always for the "bread and water" promised, as well as for every additional comfort. Realizing always God's superior wisdom and boundless love for us, we should fear to take our interests in any degree out of his hand. Thus we may always live rejoicing, realizing that, whatever may befall us, all is working out for good to us. We may need an acquaintance with pain, or to come into perplexity and almost to want, in order to have needful experience or testing or chastisement. And we should learn to search for and appreciate the lesson or chastisement quickly, and prove ourselves apt pupils in the school of Christ.