

The Dangers of being a health care student: Drifting and Entanglement

(Suitable for use within a group over approximately one hour, or for an individual's personal Bible reading)

Thinking about life as a student in healthcare

1. Do you think the following provides any dangers to you continuing as a committed follower of Jesus? Can you label any of these dangers?
 - a. Your current status as a health care student;
 - b. Your future as a healthcare professional.
2. Do you know anyone who has 'fallen away' or 'backslidden' in their relationship with God during their time at uni? What happened? Outline what you observed.

A case study:

Dr K was a friend of mine. He was a very vocal Christian and attended a local church around town. He was very active in creation science but was a bit of a 'loner', and was not too keen on getting involved in campus ministry or fellowship activities. I remember one day we were talking and he asked me what my greatest fear was. I answered honestly, saying something about being scared that I would let my sin get the best of me and fall away. He answered "Nope, not me. I'll never lose my faith."

A couple of years later, Dr K was dating a non-Christian woman and hadn't attended church in quite some time. He assured me his faith was still strong. After the break-down of the relationship, he really closed himself off from everyone. Today I don't know if he still considers himself a Christian; he doesn't talk about it anymore. To my knowledge, he's not involved in any Christian fellowship. I have grave fears for his salvation, whilst still trusting that God loves him and holds him in his hand. I think to myself, "If this can happen to one so strong and so convinced of his faith, surely it can happen to anyone?"

What does God have to say?

Read and consider Hebrews 2:1-4, 12:1-3.

The letter to the Hebrews was written in AD 60-70, to encourage Christians in a time of trial. It does so by focussing on the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ. While God spoke in the past through the prophets at many times and in many ways, he has now spoken to us by His Son who is the exact imprint of His nature and who upholds the universe by his words (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Hebrews Chapter 2:1-4 urges the readers of this letter (including us) to pay much closer attention to the truth of the Scriptures and especially to the truth regarding the salvation Jesus offers – lest we drift away from the Truth of the Scriptures and neglect such a great salvation.

In Hebrews Chapter 11 a comprehensive list of examples of faithful followers of God is presented...from Abel to Abraham to David. It is with these examples of faithfulness in view that we are therefore urged to (Hebrews 12:1):

- Throw off everything that hinders;
- Lay down every sin which entangles us; and
- Run the race that is before us.

1. Why is the Christian life described as a 'race'? Why might endurance be a valuable asset in this race?
2. How could looking to Jesus and his:
 - a. Power (The power that upholds Him being the founder and perfecter of your faith – Hebrews 12:2); and
 - b. Sacrifice (He endured the cross; it's pain and deep shame – Hebrews 12:2),
-enable you to endure opposition and finish the race of life as a committed follower of Jesus Christ?
3. What themes do you see in Hebrews 2:1-4 and Hebrews 12:1-3 that are similar?

Putting it into practice

1. Can you identify any of the following amongst your classmates and/or your future profession, which tempt you to be complacent about your trust (faith) in Jesus, or tempt you to consider your faith as a trivial personal preference? Consider (a)–(d) on an individual basis.
 - a. Circumstances;
 - b. Influences;
 - c. Expectations;
 - d. Social norms.
2. How could understanding God's 'Great Salvation' in Jesus Christ help you to continue to run the race of faith – the race of trusting God for your earthly and eternal security and satisfaction – as you face challenges to your faith as a healthcare student?
3. List 3 ways you can help one another as class mates to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus as you seek to run the race 'marked out' for you during the remaining years in your training. Spend time in prayer together asking God to empower you in these ways.

Bible Bites

(Suitable to be completed over approximately 20-25 minutes)

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Read Hebrews 2:1-4 (ESV),

¹Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ²For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.'

Read Hebrews 12:1-3 (ESV),

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.'

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