

7 Things the Bible Says About Obamacare



by David Barnett

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Since the current “government shutdown” is mostly based upon disagreements on the funding of Obamacare, it is important to discuss a Biblical view of Obamacare:

The **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act** informally referred to as Obamacare, (hereafter called the ACA) requires individuals not covered by employer- or government-sponsored insurance plans to maintain minimal essential health insurance coverage or pay a penalty.

Government spending on healthcare is growing – it was about 7 percent of our GDP in 1970. It was 17 percent in 2011. It is projected to rise past 20 percent in the next ten years. At the same time, the price of healthcare and insurance we personally pay is also rising rapidly. So what are we to do? Do we go along with the good intentions of so many politicians who want to try to reduce the cost and increase the availability of health care, so that sick and needy people supposedly get more help, or do we fight this? And if we do fight it, what’s the alternative? There are at least seven important biblical factors and two solutions we should take into consideration:

I. Caring for the sick is a good thing to do.

A. God cares about the sick and needy – and we should too.

The terms “needy” and “sick” are often used synonymously in Scripture. In Biblical times, the lack of advanced medicine rendered the injured or sick unable to work and create income, so they and their families became poor. In **1 Samuel 2:8**, God describes His compassion:

“He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the garbage pile.”

Jesus, in **Matthew 14:14**

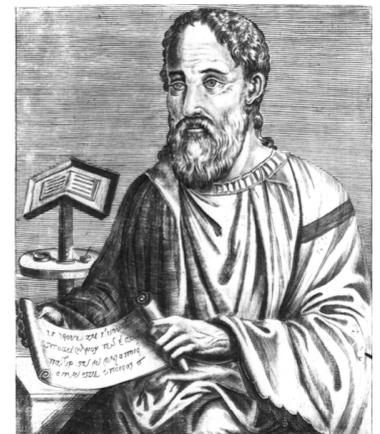
“...felt compassion for them, and healed their sick.”

Jesus then commands believers in **Matthew 10:8-9** to

“heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with skin diseases, drive out demons. You have received free of charge; give free of charge.”

God cares for those who have fallen victim to physical or economic hard times, and commands believers in Christ to be His hands and feet to minister to them.

Historically, Christians have actively cared for the sick and needy. The early church historian, Eusebius, points out for us one cause of Christianity’s rise in number of converts and cultural influence. During a plague of the early fourth century in Caesarea, Eusebius says,



...the evidence of the Christians’ zeal and piety was made clear to all the pagans. For example, they alone in such a catastrophic state of affairs gave

practical evidence of their sympathy and philanthropy by works. All day long some of them would diligently persevere in performing the last offices for the dying and burying them (for there were countless numbers, and no one to look after them). While others [ie. Christians] gathered together in a single assemblage all who were afflicted by famine throughout the whole city, and would distribute bread to them all. When this became known, people glorified the God of the Christians, and, convinced by the deeds themselves, confessed the Christians alone were truly pious and God-fearing.

– From Ecclesiastical History 9.8.13-14

Have you ever noticed a large number of hospitals have a church or biblical name? Lutheran, Methodist, and Mercy hospitals are just a few here in the Des Moines area. Why is this? Christians understood the heart of God for the sick, and started hospitals to care for the sick and needy. After the First Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., a hospital was established in every cathedral town. We should be very concerned about the sick, but we ought to also consider *who* should be caring for them, which will be discussed in section II.

B. *We should care for our own body.*

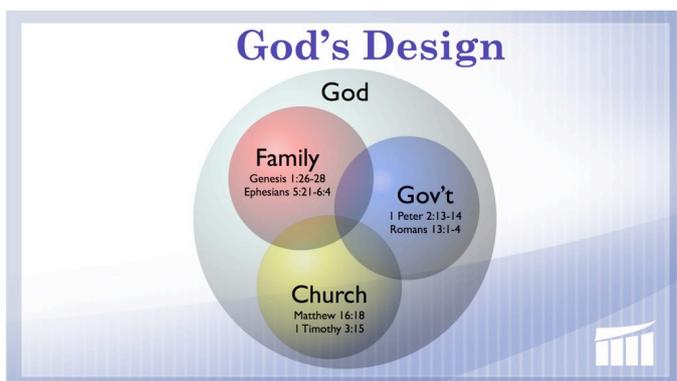
Paul asks a rhetorical question in **1 Corinthians 6:19**, accentuating his point that we ought to care for our physical bodies because they are the “temple of the Holy Spirit”. If we have a broken bone, we should find a doctor. If we are seriously ill, we should seek treatment. Paul commanded Timothy to treat his illness instead of ignoring it (**1 Timothy 5:23**). Earlier in 1 Timothy, Paul mentions that “bodily exercise profits a little” (**4:8**). Yes, Paul was contrasting the little gain of physical exercise to the greater gain of spiritual discipline, but the point stands nonetheless – physical exercise to keep our body healthy is a good thing to do. But we are also reminded that this body is a temporary dwelling that will eventually die anyway and be replaced with an eternal body (**2 Corinthians 4:7-5:10**). The goal is not to

have eternal life in this body; it is to serve God as best we can, with the strength that he gives us while in this body. We should exercise and take care of our body so that we can serve our Lord and King with it better and longer while in it!

What your lawmakers should know: *Caring for the sick is an honorable thing for a society to engage in, and healthy living should be encouraged.*

II. Caring for the sick, however, is not the role of the government

Allow me to give an illustration: Loving my wife is a good thing – but it's a role only I can fill. You can desire for her to BE loved by me, but it's not your role to love her FOR me. You can even encourage me to love her, or disciple me to be a better husband, but you can't fulfill the role that I should be filling.



The same goes for government regarding health care (among other things). The government is to protect our borders and keep us safe from foreign threats as well as protect us from domestic violence, execute justice, and encourage righteous behavior (**Romans 13:4; I Peter 2:13-14**; Preamble to the Constitution). That's their role. They can encourage churches, individuals, and companies to care for the needy, but they are not tasked with the

responsibility to care for those in need, because when they do, they can't help but intrude upon the lives of their citizens. Conversely, the Church (as an institution) shouldn't be involved with enforcing the law or protecting the borders. The Family, the Church, and the Government are all institutions which have their respective responsibilities, and they should be doing the best job possible filling those responsibilities.

What your lawmakers should know: ***The role of Government is to protect its citizens and establishing order within a society, not to care for the sick.***

III. The ACA forces compliance.

Freedom means real choices. Bondage is when you are not free to make your own decision. An addict is enslaved by their addiction. A non-believer is in bondage to sin (**Romans 6:15-23**) – they can't help themselves. The ACA claims to allow choice, but fines are imposed if you don't make the choice they want you to make (which will continually increase every year until they are more than the cost of the insurance itself). Is that really a free choice? When we do not have the real freedom to choose *if* or *how* we want to spend our earnings and care for our own person and family, we are in bondage.

God hates bondage. Scripture makes clear that bondage is a result of evil oppressors (**Exodus**) or of our own sin (**Romans 6**). Paul teaches that, if possible, we should not become slaves of men (**1 Corinthians 7:23**). In summary, freedom to make the best decisions is God's preferred situation for mankind in this post-Eden condition.

God has given mankind the privilege of being made “in His own image” and then gave us some specific responsibilities. First and foremost was to procreate and to work and provide for ourselves and our dependents. We see this in **Genesis 1:28 and 2:15**, when God put man in the Garden of Eden to “work it and watch over it.”



Proverbs 10:4 encourages productivity:

Idle hands make one poor, but diligent hands bring riches.

If we are provided care “free” of charge, it removes the dignity of creating and providing for ourselves. We can choose to purchase our own health insurance, or do without and deal with the consequences of that decision. That is freedom and liberty – the ability to make our own decisions.

What your lawmakers should know: ***Government should respect the dignity of personal responsibility.***

IV. The ACA violates religious liberty.

It is immoral and a violation of religious liberty to compel someone to subsidize an activity which they do not wish to support. The ACA currently forces Christians to violate their conscience and subsidize abortions, sterilizations, and contraceptives.

Hobby Lobby, a company who has been clear they will not participate in Obamacare because it violates their religious beliefs, has been in court battles for months as a result of the ACA refusing them an exemption on religious grounds.



God give a vivid demonstration of His thoughts on violations of religious liberty. In **Act 5**, the Apostles had been thrown into the Jerusalem prison under accusation of the Sadducees. Their trial was set for the next morning. However, when they called for the prisoners, the guards came back empty-handed! God Himself had sent an angel to release the apostles and commanded them to, "Go and stand in the temple, and tell the people all about this life." God actively assisted them and commanded them to defy the government authorities when it came to issues of religious freedom. Peter then later explained to the convened Sanhedrin, "We must obey God rather than men."

What your lawmakers should know: ***Government is not above the Christian principles upon which it was founded, and cannot force Christians to do something that violates their consciences.***

IV. The ACA is theft.

Taking money to give to another is stealing – even if it is for a good cause. The ends do not justify the means. This principle is illustrated in **1 Samuel 26:9-11**: David had two chances to kill King Saul and claim the throne, but he restrained himself and his men and said,

Do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?

Even though Saul was a bad king and it would have been "better" if he was dead, David understood that doing the wrong thing for the right reason was still the wrong thing.

Anytime money is taken from us involuntarily to fulfill purposes not expressly stated in Romans 13 and our

Constitution, it is theft, even if it is for a “good” cause of giving to others who may be in need.

What your lawmakers should know: ***It is our own responsibility to give to the sick and needy, not our government's responsibility to take money from one person to give to another.***

VI. No government program, including the ACA, can reduce the cost of medical care.

The biggest contributors to *currently* increasing medical expenses are: 1. Government regulation, 2. Government subsidies (reduces the need for competitive pricing), 3. Government requiring insurance to cover costs, which also eliminates competition and increases demand (if you can get something for “free”, you are more likely to get it just because you can). Just because medical costs are increasing, doesn't mean that MORE government oversight will bring costs down. It will actually increase them exponentially, and we will all end up paying MORE personally – just through different mechanisms than if we paid in person. The only source of income the government has is from its citizens, so our tax load will increase and it will be taken from us – either before or after we get our paycheck.



Proverbs 31:16, speaking of the capable wife, indicates that she had choices and options to consider when she wanted to buy a field. When government oversteps its bounds (as detailed in Romans 13:4), and artificially limits choices in the free market, the opportunity for choices is removed.

What your lawmakers should know: ***The only way cost reduction can be accomplished is by healthy, economical competition.***

The goal is to get to a point to where you shop for the best medical care like you shop for a mechanic. You make a few calls to get some prices, and then make a decision about who will best satisfy your needs.

VII. The ACA creates more debt

The ACA increases our national debt to a point when the ACA will be one-fifth to one-sixth of our national economy! We are currently spending as a nation more than we possess, and are in debt to other nations. God commands us to not be bound up in debt in **Romans 13:8 and Proverbs 6:1-5**, and this principle should extend to our nation.

What your lawmakers should know: ***We should not increase our national debt, even if it is for a "good" thing, unless it's necessary for national survival and for a biblical purpose (i.e. war costs).***

The solution:

I. Christians must care for the sick and needy.

What if Christians all across the nation would rise up and start caring for the needy in their own neighborhood, and giving them real, lasting solutions to their problems? The supposed need for government to step in would be eliminated,

the crisis averted. Yes, that won't happen overnight, but what can your church start doing today to be Christ's hands and feet? In the meantime, we should:

II. Change the personnel in office.

A favorite saying around our office is, "**personnel makes policy.**" Policies affect people's lives. Policies are created and enacted by people in office. If we want to change the policies, **we must change the people that occupy office** by electing people who fear God and clearly understand the principles given to us in the Bible.

Who are the best replacements? **Exodus 18:21** says the best rulers to select are "capable, God-fearing, trustworthy, and who hate bribes." John Jay, the first United States Supreme Court Chief Justice stated:

*Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and **it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.***

So we believe the best people to be running for office are the people who are leading and teaching in your church. Just as you look for and train up people to become missionaries, pastors, and Sunday School teachers, you ought to be looking for individuals who can hold public office. When you find them, The FAMiLY LEADER stands ready to help you by answering questions, giving counsel, and aiding in the training process of prospective "ministers of God" going into public service (**Romans 13:4,6**).

This effort requires the best people from our churches, and the best efforts we can give. This is not a time for Christians to abandon the people in the culture – we are to be passionate for them and love them through our words and actions! If we stand by while harmful policies are passed, or while ungodly men attain office, we are not loving people as

God commands us to do.

Here's what our President and CEO, Bob Vander Plaats says about the ACA:

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