

Lesson 9: The Medical Industry and Alternative Medicine

This final lesson is where the three topics converge—government, economics, and medicine.

Medicine has become big business—*so big*, the costs tempt some to socialize it and others to distrust it completely.

Those who resist socialization and fear big government often seek out alternative medicine and movements.

Examples: chiropractic, homeopathy, and various home solutions—homeschool, home birth, and home funerals.

Question – *What are some important things Christians should remember about Big Medicine and its alternatives?*

Beware of the Insider-Outsider Dichotomy

Insiders – the socially accepted position, often with government approval and well-funded institutions

Outsiders – either the outcasts or the upstarts, both held suspiciously by society at large

Examples: City vs. Country, White-Collar vs. Blue-Collar, State-Institution vs. Home

Beware! Identifying with a party tends towards pride (1 Cor. 3:4)—as does knowledge (1 Cor. 8:1).

Pride is ultimately comparative (C. S. Lewis)—and manifests itself in feelings inferiority or superiority.

Illus. Holy jeans at a suburban church; comments against the professors, but research hospitals and roads

How are insider pride and outsider pride similar and different?

Both compare themselves to the other side and claim superior knowledge, but in different ways.

Insider	Outsider
Feels superior with direct comparison “Crowd...does not know the Law” (Jn. 7:49) Arrogant Aggression → Social Engineering	Feels superior with indirect comparison Gnostic allure: “deep things of Satan” (Rev. 2:24) Arrogant Aloofness → Conspiracy Theories

Because Christians are outsiders, let’s address some of their concerns with Big Medicine:

Big Money – one-sixth of the US economy

Does the Hippocratic Oath still apply to vested interests, when millions of dollars back a treatment?

Illus. Angioplasty manufacturer – only once heard an intrinsic motivation

Money could suppress the cure for cancer, but it could also exploit it—capitalism works both ways.

Note: Big Medicine has limited dollars—e.g. hospital ethics committees risking one over another.

Many hospitals have conglomerates with medical teams and specialists in an economy of scale.

Big Claims – medical studies are statistically-based, not anecdotal (one miracle story or one horror story)

Illus. Opioid epidemic owed its origin to the misuse of a letter to the editor (Sam Quinones, *Dreamland*).

Big Waste – due to government dollars (money supply!), lawsuits (no failure allowed!), and insurance protocols

Illus. Louisville hospital emergency room vs. high-tech treatments; obstetrician malpractice insurance

How much is due to a rejection of death (half die in hospitals?) vs. Jesus’ hour and Paul’s run race?

Big Conspiracy – suspicions of corruption in high places, as if all news is propaganda

Illus. American Psychiatric Association (1973) – changed status on homosexuality (Jeffery Satinover)

Bigger conspiracy—*Satan* (Eph. 2:3)—works in governments (Dan. 7-12) and among the Gnostics!

Beware! We are not to regard conspiracies as *scary*—only the Lord of Armies is *holy* (Isa. 8:12-13).

Christians belong to the Kingdom of God—and “the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof” (Ps. 24:1).

Therefore, “all things belong to you, and you belong to Christ” (1 Cor. 3:22-23; cf. 10:25-26; 1 Tim. 4:1-5).

Do not choose sides, but seek what is good in all corners—second opinions, listen well, perhaps both treatments.

Why?

Often Big Medicine has a tested treatment (e.g. radioactive iodine in treating thyroid cancer).

Often traditional means still work well (e.g. topical application of colloidal silver—is it *natural* medicine?).

Often new medicine comes from non-conventional insiders (cf. Tiner, *Exploring the History of Medicine*).

Often we make decision out of a party spirit, proudly seeking to prove our point or keep our righteousness.

Have *faith* that God will lead you and then focus on *love*, whatever is the best care for your loved one!

In addition to alternative medicine, consider this alternative to health insurance—Christian coops.

Instead of insurance, a Christian opts for “self-pay” and receives checks directly from other Christians.

Costs are kept down through healthier lifestyles and prompt payments (hospital discounts).

Networking provides shared information, doctors, innovation, and prayer—bearing burdens (Gal. 6:3).

God be praised for His people persevering in following His principles!