

Vaccine Policy

Principles of Decision

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Over the past few weeks, we have been asked repeatedly about the church's teaching on getting the COVID-19 vaccine. With Charles Whitaker not being able to give his commentary today because of his illness, I took the opportunity to take his place and let you know how we approach this possibly divisive issue among us.

We have not changed our approach at all just because it is COVID-19, or that the vaccines are different these days, or that they are relatively untested, or that they are being mandated by employers, or for any other reason. I think you'll see as we go through this explication of this policy *why* we haven't changed. The principles on how one must decide this issue remain the same. They have not changed. And note this point: The church or ministry will not mandate this issue one way or the other. Each member needs to decide for himself or herself or for his family what they will do. It is not our job to run your life and make your decisions for you. It is our job to give you true spiritual principles and let you decide.

We will give you some guidance on the issue based entirely on the Bible—entirely—which is our area of expertise. I do not have a degree in medicine. That is not my area of expertise. I am not an immunologist. I don't even go on the Internet to search out health issues very much. I may go there to find out "this could be happening," but I am certainly in no way a Google expert on health. You will have to get health or medical advice from experts in that field, if you can find them and if you know whether they are telling you right from wrong. There are a lot of people out there saying a lot of very different things on both sides of the fence, and it is hard to decide which is right.

We, however, will speak from our area of authority: the Holy Bible, Scripture, the Word of God. Then it is up to you, within your relationship with God, to decide what you will do. Then, I hope at that point we are all mature enough spiritually not to judge one another for the conscientious

decisions that we make. Think of this as kind of a modern “meats offered to idols” problem that we have to work through as a church—and we may come up with different answers for ourselves, but we must still treat each other as children of God.

Vaccines and immunizations are areas in which the Bible is *completely* silent. You will not find one word in the Bible that has to do with those two very related issues. The word “vaccine” or “vaccination” cannot be found in Scripture. Nor can “immunization” or “immunity” or “side effect” or “mRNA” or even “hypodermic needle.” Those things are not in the Bible. We cannot go to a specific verse and say, “thus saith the Lord; you shall (or you shall not) take this vaccine.” It just is not there. This kind of medicine was never contemplated by people in the time the Bible was written. It was thousands of years before any of this came into being. So, we are left to decide the matter based on faith and the biblical laws and principles that may apply to the issue.

These are the things we know from God’s Word that we can apply to vaccinations and immunizations:

1. God is our Healer. It says that very plainly in Exodus 15:26. He says right there in that verse that He will keep disease from us if we diligently heed His voice. It is part of the promise. He uses the term, “the diseases of the Egyptians,” but in principle, it applies just the same to us. In Psalm 103:3 (one of my favorite scriptures), He tells us that He promises to heal, as a benefit, all of our diseases, just as He forgives all of our sins. He tells us, when sick, to go to the elders of the church to receive anointing with oil (James 5:14). The very next verse promises that “the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.” Peter tells us, “By His stripes you were healed” (I Peter 2:24). These are all scriptural promises urging us to possess and employ faith in God to heal us. Look at the example of the Head of the church, our Savior, Jesus Christ: He went about all Judea and Samaria and Galilee... what did He do? He healed people in compassion. He will do that for us as well. He was very willing. People said, “Are You willing to heal me?” And He said, “Yes, I am willing.”
2. We should practice all the health laws the Bible supplies: eating the foods God approves, taking care of our bodies, not abusing ourselves

one way or another, quarantining ourselves when contagious, keeping clean, being moderate in our food and alcohol intake, and so forth. We should do our part to stay healthy. We should not give in, as we often do, to things that are going to make us sick. A healthy body has the strength and often the immunity to take care of disease on its own.

3. We know from the sixth commandment that murder is sin. So, any kind of health or medicinal aid that includes abortion means we could become involved at that point in murder. Therefore, any vaccine or immunization that contains fetal cells derived from an abortion makes the recipient a party to murder, even as far removed as a fifty-year-old cell line. It really doesn't matter. You will have to decide if a vaccine being tested using aborted fetal cells comes under the sixth commandment as well. That one is a little less sure. But the brethren I've talked to have concluded that it does, and I concur. We don't want to have *anything* to do with the abortion industry or any kind of abortion at all.
4. Any vaccination or immunization that contains unclean substances (as listed in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14) should not be taken. God says, "Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They are unclean to you" (Leviticus 11:8). In several following verses, He calls them "abominations to you." As our Creator, He knows what is best for us. He made our bodies. He knows how they work. He knows what fuel they need. He knows that if they are going to last, they need good food, the food that He supplies, and we should honor that. We should obey Him very carefully in these matters. Joe told me one vaccine supposedly contains a secret ingredient. Who knows what is in that secret ingredient because it's secret—they have not told us. Why would we take a vaccine when we really do not know what is in it? I will just leave it at that. Maybe that secret ingredient has fetal cells; maybe it has unclean foods. I don't know—it's secret! We cannot really make a positive decision about taking something like that if we are not sure what we are putting into our bodies.
5. God warns in Revelation 9:21 and 18:23 of the "sorcery" of unrepentant mankind by which the merchants deceive the nations. Paul also lists "sorcery" as one of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:20). The word in Greek is *pharmakeia* (*Strong's* #5331). It is where we get our words "pharmacy" and "pharmaceuticals." It literally means "the use of medicine, drugs, poisons," which were often used in occult rites. What

has happened is they have taken the full effect of using drugs and medicines and poisons and such in witchcraft or in invoking the pagan gods, and they named it "sorcery." But it is sorcery that contains drugs of some sort. The New Testament never uses this word positively. It is always in a negative sense, as a sin.

I don't want to say, though, that all drugs are totally a sin. If nothing else, we need to be *very* cautious when dealing with drugs and pharmaceuticals because, whether they are natural (like opioids or marijuana) or whether they are of human design (with chemicals that they put together), they are physically and potentially spiritually dangerous, especially those that alter the mind or are addictive. We cannot completely condemn the use of modern pharmaceuticals. Some drugs may indeed be necessary. For instance, a Type-1 diabetic needs insulin. If they don't get that insulin, they die very quickly and with great discomfort because they don't have it. But God's warning, by using this term *pharmakeia* in these negative senses, is definitely, "proceed with the utmost caution."

The decision really comes down to faith. Do you trust God, or do you trust in man? He tells us plainly in several places *not* to trust in man or in princes (that means our leaders), but to place our trust in Him. Why? Because He wants only our good. We can trust Him because He has never done anything bad. He is not sinful. He does not have ulterior motives. He wants what is best for us, and we surely don't know what our leaders' motives are—not in this country, not in a long time. We cannot be Pollyana-ish and think they are doing something good for us. What did Ronald Reagan say? The scariest thing in the world is to have a guy come to your door and say, "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help." We have to understand: Human nature is in those leaders, and they have motives that we don't have any idea about. So we need to trust Jesus Christ.

The ministry of Jesus Christ should *always* recommend faith in God. That's what we do! That is what we are here for; we have been called to do that, and that is what we will do. We always will recommend faith in God.

But ultimately, *you* must make the choice because making faithful choices is what creates the righteous character that God wants to build in His children. If I make that choice for you, then it is my character, not yours.

