

Healing And Parental Autonomy

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Introduction

The children suffer the consequences of parental autonomy that rely on spiritual healing rather than appropriate medical treatment. Many children die when they receive no medical treatment because medical institutes and doctors cannot make decisions without their parents' autonomy. Conflicts appear as parents need to choose between child welfare and their practice of religion. In real life, relying merely on spiritual healing is not sufficient, and it results in the deaths of children. In the present scenario, Mike and Joanne encounter an ethical dilemma as they need to choose between their child's health or faith. Their decision to avoid James's dialysis results in his deteriorating condition. However, their faith is tested when they have to choose between a miracle or donating the kidney of their healthy son. They can either rely on miracles and hope for James's recovery or donate their kidney to Samuel (Rae, 2009).

Christian Narrative

The Bible is a collection of 66 books written throughout history and available in different formats, such as historical narratives, letters, and prophecy. The biblical narrative depends on the story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration of human beings. These concepts provide a framework for humans to distinguish between right and wrong. Christians' vision gives considerable importance to spirituality as it relies on the principles of Christianity. The narrative promotes belief in God as it impacts human life positively. God is the most powerful entity in religion, and nothing can happen against his will. The Bible emphasizes following the Christian faith, which involves religious values and principles. Ethical issues require the application of religious principles in real life, such as in the case of illness. Under the influence of Christian vision, Mike and Joanne reject the medical treatment of their child. Their decision of Mike is unjust and unethical because it results in further health damage. The Bible helps in everyday moral decisions, not complicating the situation. Christian principles emphasize making good choices, and good choices do not lead to pain or suffering. The application of the biblical views depicts determining the right actions in each situation and defining applicable rules of religion. The choice must lead to the best outcomes, indicating minimization of harm (Wolterstorff, 1994).

1.1 Creation

Christian narrative confers the belief that "God is the creator of everything that exists" (Gen1-2). The biblical quotation states that nothing can exist without God's will, including the universe, living things, and humans. The survival of human beings is only in the hands of God. Yale's theologian Nicolas

Walterstroff explains Shalom as “the human being dwelling at all his peace is his or her relationships: with God, with self, with fellows, with nature” (p.251). The narration depicts that God holds the power of creating humans.

Fall

The Bible explains the fundamental act of disobeying God in Genesis 3. Fall indicates the disobedience of Adam and Eve, reflecting that the reason for their fall was their rejection of God’s rules. The Bible associates falling or disobeying God with sin. Under the idea of shalom, death, disease, and suffering are part of human existence, and one cannot deny them.

Redemption

Redemption, according to the bibliographical context, indicates the continuous struggles and corruption of humans. The concept of redemption depicts the recovery from a mistake or sin. The Old and New Testaments mention the word redemption as Luke states, “Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people” (Luke 1:68). The concept of redemption explains the recovery from sin and return to the right path. It indicates maintaining a relationship with God and acting according to his will.

Restoration

The concept of restoration explains the way of salvation and focuses on enhancing faith in God. The idea confers the belief that God holds the power of healing and bringing health to the people. The biblical texts emphasize the promotion of the idea that God brings back people from captivity. The Bible states, “Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security” (Jeremiah 33:6). The text reveals that God holds the power to heal humans.

Physicians’ Role

The physician has a duty to save the life of a child and take appropriate actions that lead to his health, stability, and welfare, but parental autonomy has a significant role in decision-making. The doctor has a responsibility to inform the parents about the exact condition of the child and suggest adequate measures to prevent further loss. The physician also needs to inform them about the consequences of rejecting treatment. In the present scenario, the physician must convince the parents about the weaker health of James and provide reasoning for dialysis. The physician must not simply accept their decision of Mike because he can perceive the adversities associated with his unwise decision. However, in real life, the physician faces limitations as he is not able to act against his

parents' autonomy. Though he could identify the risks associated with his irrational decision of Mike, he can't take the child for dialysis without his parents' permission. Even with the physician's disagreement, Mike is capable of choosing the life of his son. It is the parent's right to consider other treatments and possibilities. The physician in such conditions can only use medical evidence to present dialysis as an effective treatment. The doctor cannot simply ignore the decision of the parents and continue the treatment that, according to him, is the best fit. Even if he recognizes the irrationality in Mike's decision, he cannot force them to undergo dialysis (Beauchamp & DeGrazia, 2004). A patient's autonomy reveals that competent authority can make the decision regarding the treatment. Physical cannot make any decision that is against the parent's autonomy.

Christian Ethical Approach

Christians use a specific methodological tool for bioethical reflection. Christian narrative suggests a connection between ethics and medicine. Their decision of Mike to reject dialysis supports the biblical principle of restoration. The Bible supports the deontological principles of ethics as it relies on the idea of differences between right and wrong. The approach emphasizes the duty and obligations of the Christians more. The principles are known through the Ten Commandments, explaining the structure of the world and the laws of nature. Ethics in the bible focuses on virtue ethics and explains that the Christian has a moral obligation to follow the commandments and to transform into God's image. In the situation of ethical dilemmas, he needs to apply the laws of nature explained in the bible.

In the present case, their refusal of Mike is the result of his Christian beliefs. Christian spirituality entails one's experiences of life and also engages in the field of science and medicine. Spirituality and Christianity resulted in the formulation of principles of bioethics, challenging the beliefs related to meaning and value. According to the principle of totality, organ transplantation is not unethical because it leads to wholeness. Organ donation is an act of love, as Jesus instructed us to love people and neighbours. The concept of a loving neighbour exhibits care towards people and humanity. Organ transplantation is not considered a sin because it leads to the survival of humanity (Rae, 2009).

Worldwide View and Christian Narrative

The solution to the ethical dilemma depends on the ideas of the Christian narrative and the way it explains health and healthcare. Ethics in Christianity serves the purpose of god's creation of humans. Some Christians believe that sickness is to test their patience and faith in God. In contrast, others believe that God created doctors and help so they must get rid of sickness. Mike displays former beliefs, and initially, he thinks that keeping his son away from medical treatment will prove his faith. Also, he thought seeking medical help would result in his failure as a Christian. However, he could reason that God advised people to help each other, and he is against pain. So, treating James will relieve him of the pain and suffering. He could also use the views of Jesus, who promoted the idea of

compassion and care toward humans (Wolterstorff, 1994).

Conclusion

Choosing between medical treatment and religion often puts Christians in a conflicting situation. The role of spirituality in deciding on the acceptance or rejection of the treatment depends on how people perceive their religious beliefs. Mike was initially unable to think about the relationship between spirituality and healthcare, which resulted in their deteriorating health of James. The deeper meaning of Christianity emphasizes helping people and protecting them from harm. The right decision for Mike would be to seek medical help. The concept depicts Christianity as promoting health and allowing actions to help avoid suffering or pain.

References

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