

# Working Toward *Shalom*

## Chapter 10 Book "Called to Care" A Christian Worldview for Nursing

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- Purpose
  - To establish a biblical understanding of health as shalom
- Objectives
  - Complete definitions of health in the nursing literature with the biblical concept of shalom
  - Describe the cultural influences on a person's understanding of health
  - List five dimensions of health
  - Explain the implications of your definition of health on your nursing practice

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- Have you met a person who views health differently than you?
- What is your view of health?

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## What is Health?

- Health portrayed in media



- Youthful experience
- Hard muscles
- Sleek bodies
- Clear skin and cavity-free teeth

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## Defining Health

- Definitions of health turn out to be important because in doing the defining, we must explore the relationship of health to other human goods; the relationship of health and responsibility, both of individuals and of the medical (or nursing) profession; and the relationship of health and those conventional modes of treating and coping with illness  
(Lammers and Verhey, 1987)

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## Health in Nursing Literatures

(mostly focusing on a state of mind)

- A dynamic process
- Determined subjectively and objectively
- A goal
- Being able to take care of yourself
- Optimal functioning in body, mind and spirit
- Integrity of self
- A sense of wholeness
- Coping adaptively
- A subjective experience
- Growing and becoming
- A broad concept

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## Different Views of Health

- WHO (World Health Organization – 1946)
  - *A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.*

Encompassing every element of human happiness - Daniel Callahan (medical ethicist)

- Postmodernism:
  - Health is expanding consciousness; health encompasses conditions that heretofore were described as illness, or in medical terms, pathology
  - The focus is a state of mind

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## Health - culturally defined

- According to Leininger: health refers to a state of well-being that is culturally defined, valued, and practiced, and which reflects the ability of individuals (or groups) to perform their daily role activities in culturally expressed, beneficial, and patterned lifeways.

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## Health is culturally defined

Malina and Rohrbaugh, biblical anthropologists attempted to understand of health in the time of Jesus:

- A person's state of being was more important than the ability to act or function

*Illness is not so much a biomedical matter as it is a social one. It is attributed to social causes, not physical ones. Because sin is a breach of interpersonal relationship, sin and sickness go together. Illness is not so much a medical matter as a matter of deviance from the cultural norms and values.*

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## Health is culturally defined

- Tony Atkins (missionary physician): *African view of health is a function of community:*

*It is an indigenous concept that acceptance within, and harmony with family and society are important elements in healing and preserving the health of people.*

*He compares: for the Jew as for many people in tribal society today, health was essentially a positive quality that derived from the fact that people existed in total harmony with the world and in harmony with God.*

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## Biblical Understanding of Health

Health is related to the concept of ***shalom*** often translated as “*peace*”

- All the elements of making a God-centered community:
  - peace, prosperity, rest, safety, security, justice, happiness, health, welfare, wholeness.

*(Wolterstorff, 1994- philosopher): Shalom is the human being dwelling at peace in all his or her relationships: with God, with self, with fellows, with nature*

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## Biblical Understanding of Health

- Revelation 21:2-4
 

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. **Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.**

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## W. Brueggemann (biblical scholar)'s perspective of health as *shalom*:

- *Health* refers to stability enough to share in the costs and joys, the blessings and burdens of the community. To be healthy means to be functioning fully in terms of the norms, values, and expectations of the community.
- *Healing* refers to the restoration and rehabilitation of persons to their full power and vitality in the life of the community. Sickness, then does not refer primarily to physical pain as much as to the inability to be fully, honorably, and seriously engaged in the community in all its decisions and celebrations.

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## Health and Healing in the time of Jesus

The interrelationship between health and salvation in the New Testament is striking

- Healing of a paralyzed man brought by friends. “Your sins are forgiven.” Then Jesus healed him physically (Mk 2:5)
  - There is a relationship between illness and a need for forgiveness.
- Healing of a woman with chronic vaginal bleeding, “Your faith has made you well” (Mt 9:22).
  - There is a relationship between faith and healing.
- Healing of ten lepers, only one returned to thank him, “Your faith has made you well” (Lk 17:11-19)
  - “well” means “salvation”
  - There is a relationship between healing and salvation.

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## Health and Healing in the time of Jesus

- Jesus' healing was to restore people to a fuller, richer relationship with God and the faith community.
- Thomas Droege (Theologian):
  - Since wholeness is more than physical well-being, the healings of Jesus also affected changes in the meanings and values of those whom he encountered. Jesus consistently called people to repentance. He invited people to turn away from those things that brought division and disintegration into their lives and to become responsible for their own health as well as the health of others.

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## Biblical understanding of health and nursing

- People are multidimensional beings in need of holistic healing; **nurses are a part of multidimensional healing community.**
- The role of a nurse does not “lie alongside” medicine and pastoral care but “within each other”
- Christian nurses recognize that the nurse and the person receiving care are members of a community and **dependent upon God.**
- Healing requires people to function harmoniously within those communities and in partnership with God.

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## Implications for nursing practice

- Pursuit of health must remain multidimensional and interdisciplinary.
- No spirit of competition but collaboration
  - in some developing countries with scarce resources and few physicians → nurses gone outside of scope of nursing practice (scope of traditional nursing practice in health care settings)
- Florence Nightingale: nursing is “personal charge of the health of others.”
  - If we are to take charge of it, we must know what it is!

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## Stoll's dimensions of health

(according to Ruth Stoll)

- **Wholeness:** the harmonious unity of the person within himself and outwardly with God and his environment
- **Transformation:** a dynamic process of internal transformations progressively reflected in the person's outward behavior.
- **Relationship:** the experiencing of loving, just and forgiving relationships with God, self and others that provide meaning and purpose in life.
- **Coping and adaptation:** a reality-oriented perspective that allows the person to adapt and cope with internal and external change and stress
- **Human paradox:** creative living with the human paradox of being and becoming, of living with sin, redemption and restoration

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## Health in nursing: physical dimension

- Health is the opposite of disease
  - disease: things that prevent the ability to function and restoration to their social environment
- Neglecting of the physical dimension of health → may lead for nurses to avoid the unpleasant work of caring for the body.
  - Physical bodies are real and subject to injury and illness

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## Health in nursing: psychosocial and spiritual dimensions

- Postmodernism turns to alternative therapies focusing on personal control and ancient spiritual wisdom
- Biblical view of health → incorporates a realistic understanding of human suffering, mortality, and the hope of eternal life;
- there are forces beyond our control such as microorganisms, genetics, environmental pollutants, violence, accidents, spiritual influences

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## Health in nursing: **A larger context**

- Health as *shalom* means to stand with those who are sick and dying and to encompass them in the fellowship of the Christian community and the presence of God.
- **Health is essentially living according to God's purposes, even in the face of suffering and death.**
  - It works toward physical dimension (Nurses work for optimal function, and comfort)
  - Harmonious relationship with God and others (Nurses work for establishing and maintaining a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and facilitating healing relationships among people).

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## Health by different worldviews

Modern	Post modern	Biblical	Nyack SON
Absence of disease-aging and death are diseases to be cured	Expanded consciousness, balanced energy, wholeness, self-actualization, harmony with nature (relativism and 'social construct')	SHALOM-God-centered community characterized by peace, prosperity, rest, safety, security, justice, happiness, health, welfare and wholeness	Perfect health is harmony with God. Health is characterized by wholeness of mind, body, spirit, and soul, not merely by the absence of disease. While health is an important goal of individuals, the importance of health to society cannot be over emphasized. Health care disparities tend to follow socio-economic gradients and require a community approach to healing. Attitudes about health, perception of good health, and measures to determine health status are culturally defined.

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