The Christian Life of Florence Nightingale

Melanie Ann Estonina

Department of Nursing, Alliance University

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Dr. Elenice Lime, RN, PhD

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Florence Nightingale was a British Christian Missionary nurse who was also known as "The Lady With the Lamp"; she was the creator of modern nursing (History 2023). The nickname "The Lady with the Lamp" was created because when she was caring for soldiers during the war, she would carry a lamp to guide her all night long to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the soldiers under her care/ She created a hospital and school for nurses in the year 1860, in her attempts to revolutionize health care policies and quality of care. The schools she opened was named the "Nightingale Training School for Nurses" and the hospital she opened was named "St. Thomas's Hospital" (History 2023). She worked as a nurse in the Crimean War before establishing the school and hospital. Florence Nightingale grew up in wealth and became a successful nurse against her parents' wishes, and completely took control of the path of her life instead of leaving it up to tradition, what was expected from her, and what her parents were forcing her to do (History 2023). She received her education at the Lutheran Hospital of Pastor Fliedner in Kaiserwerth, Germany in 1844. Her passion to create rules and regulations around sanitation stemmed from her experience working at a hospital in the 1850s with a cholera outbreak, and the highly unsanitary conditions influenced her to make lasting change (History 2023). Nightingale assembled a group of 34 nurses to care for soldiers during the Crimean war (History 2023). Florence Nightingale did not allow anybody to deter her from pursuing her dream. With faith and perseverance, she not only achieved her dream but so much more. She completely revolutionized the standards of healthcare endlessly throughout her lifetime. This is seen through her many achievements and publications.

Florence Nightingale accomplished establishing rules and regulations for sanitation, creating a school for nurses, and building her own hospital. Despite the fact

everything including the tap water was unsanitary, Florence Nightingale persevered. She had all hands-on deck and had those in the infirmary who were not terrible ill, assist her with scrubbing the hospital area. She also succeeded in ensuring patients diets were adhered to by creating a “Invalid’s kitchen” which was an area of the hospital where special diets were adhered to, and meals were cooked; she set the standard for meaningful wholesome nursing care (History 2023). Florence Nightingales efforts improved the survival rate of patients admitted to the hospital from 40% death rate to a 2% death rate (Alexander 2019). The school Florence Nightingale started was within the hospital that she funded to be built; her work inspired women in her time to pursue careers in nursing at a time where women were looked down upon for working, especially women in the upper class (History 2023). Without Florence Nightingale there would be no framework on how to have a successful healthcare system based on the needs of the patient. There is so much more that Florence Nightingale contributed to beyond the funding of the hospital, her experience in the Crimean war, and the establishment of a nursing education program. Florence Nightingale also wrote *Notes on Hospitals* a book that set the standard of care that would assist to the success of a healthcare establishment (History 2023). Florence Nightingale never stopped advocating for patient rights, standards, and sanitation she wrote a total of 150 books about healthcare issues (Alexander 2019).

Not only was Florence Nightingale a successful nurse, but she was also very intelligent when it came to statistics. In 1856, she presented data to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, about healthcare conditions (Alexander 2023). The data was so accurate and compelling that the royals were inspired to create a Royal Commission whose goal was to improve health of the British Army. Florence Nightingale was the first woman on the Royal Statistical Society due to her intelligence on the subject and success with collecting health care data. In addition to the original

school she established, she also helped to create the Army Medical College in Chatham (Alexander 2023). Florence Nightingale was raised a Christian and she also served in the name of God and believed that he called her to serve others (McDonald, 2005). Nightingale believed that prayer was essential to the human existence (McDonald, 2005). Florence Nightingale practiced as a nurse under Gods laws to ensure holistic care for the whole patient seeing them as Gods children not just human beings who needed care while they are sick (McDonald, 2005). She understood that healthcare is spiritual, and without this lens, it is difficult to provide the care necessary to patients especially those on their death bed (McDonald, 2005). These views greatly contributed to her motives, and stellar care as a nurse.

Florence Nightingale is the epitome of an honorable Christian Nurse. She completely cared for her patients entirely so much, so she dedicated her life to fighting for patient rights and more human systems, regulations, and rules within the healthcare system. Florence Nightingale made history and completely went against the stigma of women, and the upper class at the time through all her accomplishments and hard work. She did not let her titles define her, she defined herself. Through her passion combined with her spirituality, Florence Nightingale set the standards for a successful Christian Nurse. Being a nurse is so much more than caring for a patient, and Florence Nightingale showed this. In realizing Nightingale brought about her care in the lens of God and his teachings, it is easy to see how and why she was such a profound nurse. When we practice in the lens of God, and with the intention to live out his word we do not fail. This is because we have the proper values and framework necessary to intentionally care for others. This is because as Christians we know that God is watching us and that we are devoted to him, and it is our purpose to live for God. By living through God Nightingale was able to make the impossible possible through her dedication, prayers, and intentions.

References

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