

Participant’s Guide

Episode 26

Wise As Serpents, Innocent As Doves

Summary

When Jesus sent the disciples out to proclaim the kingdom of heaven, He instructed them to be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16b, ESV). Like the disciples, we in healthcare also at times face opposition in seeking to communicate spiritually with our patients and colleagues. How can we best apply this admonition from Jesus in our calling as healthcare professionals?

Speaker

A person in a suit and tie

Description automatically generatedDr. Brick Lantz graduated from Stanford University with a degree in human biology. In 1981, he followed that with medical school at the University of Oklahoma and orthopedic residency at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. After residency, Dr. Lantz pursued two sports medicine fellowships: the first at the Orthopedic & Fracture Clinic with Slocum Center for orthopedics and sports medicine in 1989, and a second at the Australia Institute of Musculoskeletal Research where he trained under one of the world's most foremost experts, Drs. Merv Cross and Leo Pinzceski. Dr. Lantz has been a surgeon at the Slocum Center for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine since 1990 and is currently a senior partner there. He has been the Board President of the Slocum Research & Education Foundation for more than 20 years, whose mission is to advance musculoskeletal care across the lifespan through research, education and collaboration. Dr. Lantz is a dedicated humanitarian, coordinating or participating in trips to disaster zones and impoverished regions internationally to offer free surgical orthopedic care to those most in need on nearly every continent. Dr. Lantz may be reached at [BrickLantz@comcast.net](mailto:BrickLantz@comcast.net).

Discussion Questions

1. **What from this video inspired, edified or challenged you?**
2. **As we seek to represent Christ and communicate His love to our patients and others, is conflict inevitable? Why or why not?**
3. **Early in this episode, Dr. Lantz confesses, “When opposed, my competitive nature is to win.”**
   1. **What is at the heart of a desire to “win” a discussion with a non-Christian?**
   2. **How can we present gospel truth without appearing prideful or insensitive?**
4. **In Matthew 5:44, Jesus tells us to pray for our enemies. In Romans 12:14, the apostle Paul exhorts us to “…bless those who persecute you…” (NASB). What are some possible results of our prayers for those who are not yet walking with Christ?**
5. **Dr. Lantz states his need to “…analyze (my) heart before responding in a negative manner.” Jeremiah describes our hearts as desperate and deceitfully wicked (Jeremiah 17:9), and Solomon calls us to “Guard your heart with all diligence, for from it flows the springs of life” (Proverbs 4:23, BSB). What are some practical ways we can guard our hearts?**
6. **Dr. Lantz states, “Forgiveness is so important for our relationships and for our testimony.”** 
   1. **If we refuse to forgive someone for something they have said or done to us, how might this affect our attitude toward them?**
   2. **How does our willingness to forgive others affect our gospel testimony?**
   3. **What is the most compelling reason why we should seek to extend forgiveness towards others? (See Matthew 6:12.)**
7. **“Our mission field is our medical practice. Our medical practice is our mission field.”**

**Agree or disagree? Why?**

1. **Dr. Cathie Scarbrough believes that most of us “tend to be more doves than serpents.” (See Matthew 10:16.)** 
   1. **What do you think she means by this?**
   2. **If this is true in your approach to spiritual care, why might this be, and what can be done to attain better balance between the two?**
2. **Bob Mason compares how a healthcare professional might address their patient’s physiological needs with how they might approach a patient’s spiritual needs. What are some ways you could address a patient’s spiritual state regarding:**
3. **Diagnosis –**
4. **Informed consent –**
5. **Proposed “treatment” –**
6. **Dr. George Gonzalez, when asked to comply with a patient request for treatment outside of biblical norms, might initially refer to empirical studies demonstrating the potential harm of the requested treatment.** 
   1. **Dr. Gonzalez refers to himself as a “professional healthcare advocate.” What does this phrase communicate above and beyond being a “healthcare provider?”**
   2. **How could this approach open the way for future discussions that move from empirical truth to sharing biblical truth with the patient?**
7. **What is one take-home item from today’s session that you hope to implement?**

Additional Resources

1. *Gray Matter* by David Levy, MD
2. *God in the ICU: The Inspirational Biography of a Praying Doctor* by Dave Walker, MD
3. *Medicine, Religion and Health: Where Science and Spirituality Meet* by Harold Koenig, MD