

the Word of God. This can be hugely beneficial as patients with an addiction need spiritual healing just as much as they need physical and emotional healing.

We also must realize that relapse for those who are in recovery is a real issue. We need to support these relapsing patients and continue to show them love. We need to help hold them accountable and encourage their attendance at Narcotics Anonymous⁵ or Alcoholics Anonymous⁶ meetings. These 12-step programs provide wonderful fellowship and support for patients with an addiction. Patients can obtain a mentor or sponsor who will help them with struggles and issues that arise. As a pharmacist, we can help patients go online and find meetings in their area.

Our patients have souls and are in desperate need of God... after all, He is the only One who can heal them both physically and spiritually. They need to know that God will forgive them when they put their trust in His Son Jesus. They need us to show them that Jesus is the only way to the One, eternal God who loves them unconditionally. We can help them become survivors and conquerors of this world (and their addiction) by becoming a part of God's kingdom forever. God doesn't ask us to do this, He tells us to do this. In Matthew 25:40 (NIV), Jesus says, "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" Let's make an impact in the opioid crisis and bring what is needed the most to these patients: Jesus Christ our Lord.

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How to Be a Faith Pharmer by Neil Gillette

We get it. We know the story of God sending His Son Jesus to die for our sins and raising Him from the dead. From the hymns of the Psalms to the accounts in the Gospels, it is no doubt that we as Christians have a duty to fulfill in this life. But the question is: What is that duty? What does it look like? How do we begin those works? For many of us, we tend to confuse the biblical definition of "duty" with our worldly definition of "duty" (e.g., the practice of being a pharmacist, physician, or

attorney). But the true definition of "duty" for a Christian is definitely not what most people think. There is a plethora of Bible verses that instruct us in what a believer's duty is, but I will only highlight a few. The two verses that come to my mind are Acts 22:15, NIV ("You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.") and 1 Timothy 4:12, NIV ("Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in

faith and in purity."). From these verses, we see that our duty is to spread God's Word and to be ambassadors of Christ, honoring our God at the end of the day. One way to do that is to incorporate our faith into our pharmacy practice. For a lot of people, this is hard to do. And that is why I felt the Holy Spirit tug at my heart to impart my knowledge and experience when I was given the opportunity to write about this. And so that is what I will do. I speak not as an authority but as a fellow



Christ-follower. I pray that my article will bring strength to those who are weak, confidence to those who are reluctant, and inspiration to those who are spiritually drained. My prayer is that we continue to follow in Christ's footsteps and grow closer to Him each day.

My brothers and sisters, being a pharmacist is a calling; but being a Christ-centered pharmacist is a purpose. As Christian pharmacists, we are called to not only heal our patients physically, but also spiritually and to lead others to Christ. Through my time in internships, I have seen pharmacists who outwardly share their undying love for God with others. And I have seen those who retreat when it comes to sharing their faith. In a world where most are sensitive to (and sometimes offended by) what we say and do this is where we need to step out in boldness and faith. It means being confident and courageous enough to lean on God and let the Holy Spirit speak through us to our patients and colleagues. In a letter to the Philippians, Paul wrote, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ...and not be frightened in anything" (Phil 1:27-28, ESV). Here, Paul shows that reading and understanding the Gospels should cause us to be fearless for the Lord. And the Gospel's worth is shown when it makes us bold, courageous, and unafraid to witness to others. So when we talk about God or pray for others, not only are we glorifying Him, but we are also putting our confidence in Him to touch those around us and move them toward salvation. This also means making the most of every opportunity to share the Word. An example of what this might look like in practice is bringing Christ into the picture during MTM or patient counseling or medication reconciliation. We know that all good things come from God, and so every encounter we have in the pharmacy or hospital is God-given. Another important thing to remember is that God is always with us in every situation. When we are out in practice, He is beside us guiding each and every one of

us. Acknowledging His presence or sharing His story with others is when we fully bring glory to His name.

Colleagues:

When it comes to our workplace, it is easy to forget God during our busy, day-to-day activities. And it is also easy (and sometimes tempting) to avoid talking about our faith among our colleagues. But, we must remind

ourselves that God requires us to share His story. The Great Commission is a command, not a suggestion! We are called to incorporate Him into all aspects of our lives. As Paul said to the Corinthians, "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor 10:31, ESV). It is essential that we maintain our focus on Who is most important in our lives. God only needs a mustard seed of faith to create wonders and change a person's heart. We should strive to find opportunities to share God, and to seize these opportunities when they arise. A demonstration of this would be promising a fellow member of the healthcare team that you will pray for them if he or she is going through a tough season in his or her life. I have found that doing this instantly brings God into the light, which then opens a door for the other person to speak about their faith or ask questions about mine. Another approach is to lead your workplace team in a short prayer before the day begins. I have found that starting the day off with a team prayer sets the tone for the rest of the day. It is similar to how those who work out in the morning find that they are more energetic throughout the day. For those who are fearful about offending others, know that it rarely happens. For the most part, people actually welcome prayer and find it heartwarming regardless of whether they are believers or not. And, in many cases, God will open their minds and hearts to seek Him. Remember that for many individuals, you are their only means of hearing and experiencing the Gospel.

Patients:

As mentioned above, we are called to ease the suffering of those who are not only physically weak, but also spiritually weak, hurting, or empty. As providers, it is important to know that God placed us in this position to reach out and help heal others. When patients come into the pharmacy or hospital, we have to understand that they are usually at one of the

lowest points of their lives. It is here when we as pharmacists can give love, care, compassion, and empathy; all of which our Lord has given us. My brothers and sisters, I have found that the perfect time to incorporate faith is at the end of my interactions with patients, (i.e., after counseling in the community setting or after medication reconciliation in the hospital). What works well for me is to ask them if I can pray for them before leaving. This is where it will take some boldness on your part. It may be a daunting task for some, but remember that your focus needs to be on God. And as stated above (and proven time after time), He only needs a tiny seed of faith to work wonders through you to others. In cases when the patient refuses or is uncomfortable with your offer to pray, simply thank them for their time and wish them well. After you (or they) leave, you can say a short and silent prayer that the Lord will bless them with good health and open their mind to His truth. But I believe you'll find that most patients will welcome you to pray for them. And both believers and non-believers will find it touching and encouraging that you have the desire to lift them up in God's name.

My friends, as I close out this article, let me remind you that life can be extremely challenging at times; but it is in those rough patches where we see God's grace and experience His goodness and His perfect peace. For many of us, being open about our faith, means stepping out of our comfort zone. And, for a lot of us, this is even traumatizing. But stepping out of our comfort zone is when we fall into our Heavenly Father's arms. By being bold in our faith, we will also grow in our faith. And we become more like Jesus each time.



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