

## Step Two

# Learn the Limits of Modern Medicine

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### **Big Word for This Session: SEEK**

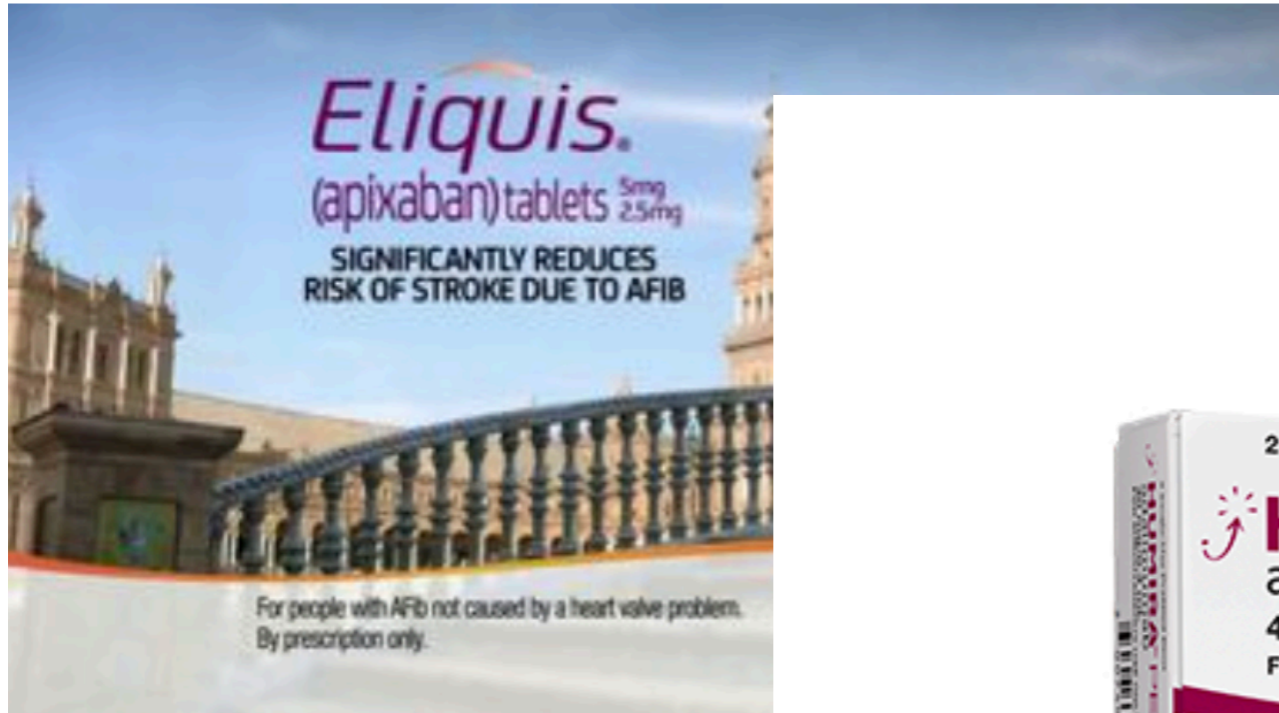
The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed  
by the Spirit is life and peace.

— ROMANS 8:6-7, NIV

Far better to take refuge in God than to trust people.

— PSALM 118:8, MSG

1. What are some ads you have seen that make big promises?



rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, and ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

*For years, Humira has been far and away the most advertised drug in the U.S., but 2019 topped all previous years. (AbbVie)*

# 70% Of News Advertising Now Belongs to Big Pharma

By [Christina Morales](#) | Sep 20, 2018

Nine out of the 10 largest revenue-generating pharmaceutical companies spend more on advertising than they do on research and development.



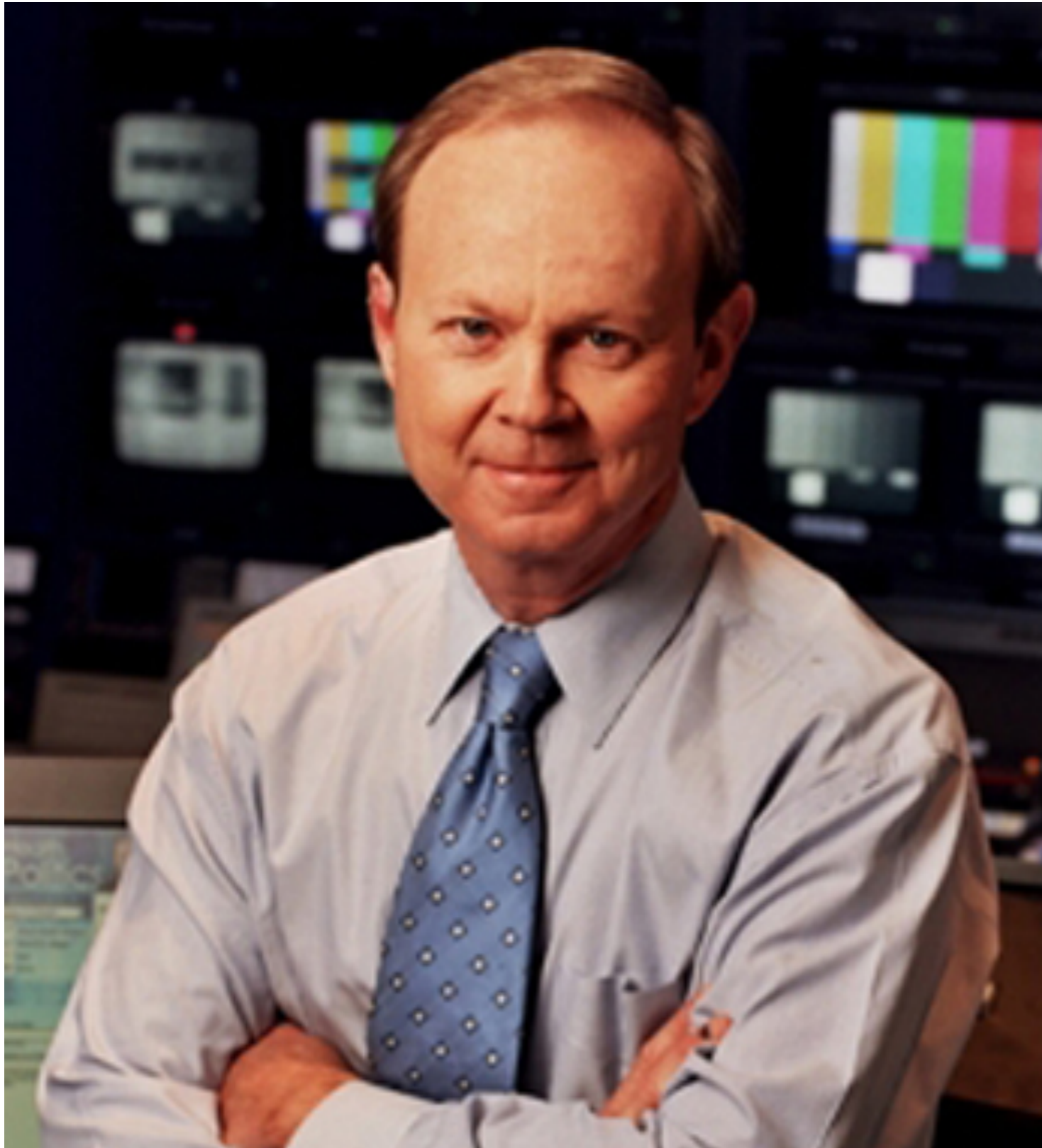
It's personal. My niece, Ashley Rickner, took Humira for Eczema. You all know the long list of side effects which includes cancer.

Diagnosed May 30, 2013  
with acute lymphoblastic leukemia —a type of cancer of the blood and bone marrow  
— the spongy tissue inside bones where blood cells are made.

Dead June 7, 2014  
This after a full court press (most days in hospitals) of all that modern medicine had to offer in New Orleans then months in Houston at MD Anderson where she died in the ICU of liver failure.

She was 31.





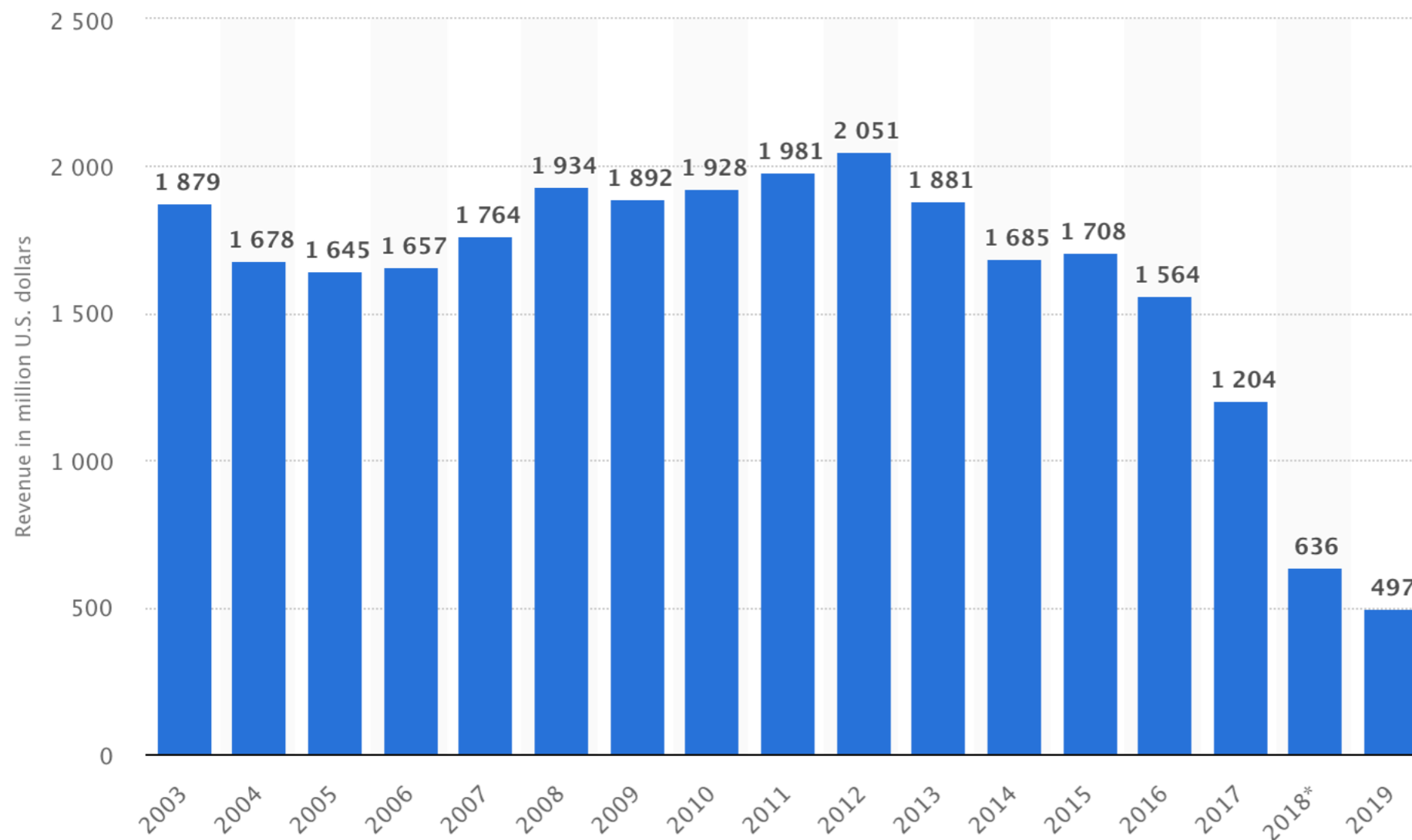
Americans' appetite for legal drugs is close to insatiable. 4.5 billion prescriptions are filled each year in the US.  
-Dr. Mike Magee

Fast fact: Dr. Magee told Pfizer to stop using the term “impotence” and call the problem “erectile dysfunction”.

Thus 22 years ago a star was born.

## Worldwide revenue of Pfizer's Viagra from 2003 to 2019

*(in million U.S. dollars)*



By naming a condition a disease big money flows to it and those who have it get to be the victim.

In 1956 the American Medical Association named alcoholism a disease. The US Office of National Drug Control Policy tries to discourage use of “addict, addiction, alcoholic.” We are to call the condition, “severe alcohol use disorder.”

This offloads personal responsibility and makes the one with the disease a victim and the center of attention.

## ADHD

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder gets drugs for kids and more time to take a test.

Did you know? Obesity was named a disease in 2013.

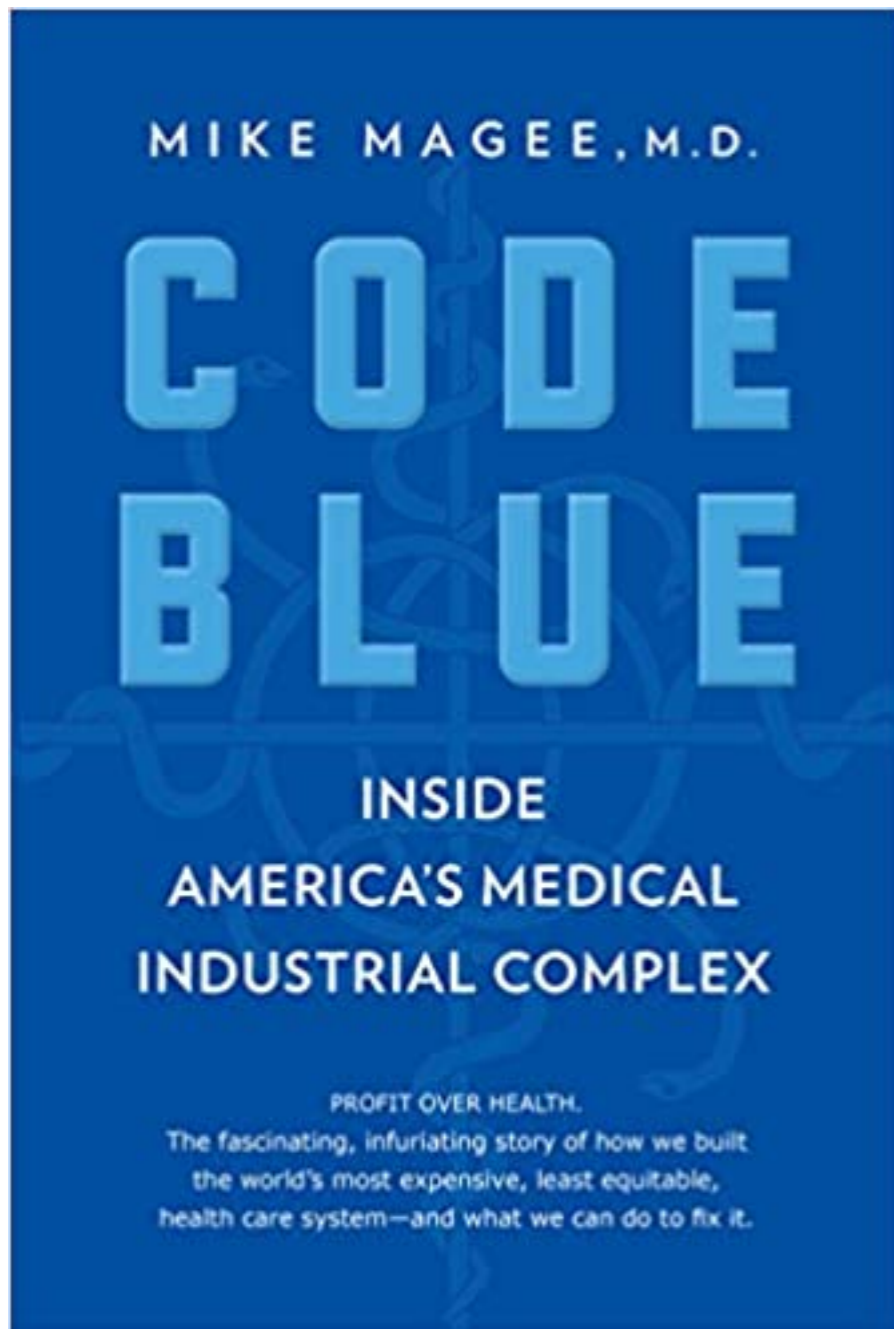
“Every institution that impacts your health makes more money when you are sick and less when you are healthy—from hospitals to pharma to medical schools, and even insurance companies.”

–Casey Means, MD

*I'm A Doctor, You Shouldn't Always Trust Us*

January 8, 2024 The Free Press





Healthcare has lost its soul...all business all of the time.

The MIC (Medical Industrial Complex) is about the health of the industry not the health of all Americans.

Disease societies thrive on Big Pharma. Both want us taking drugs not healed.

Big Pharma believes there's always a fix where benefits outweigh the risks.

We have medicalized behavior (i.e. alcoholism/obesity)  
and  
We have medicalized the natural aging process

We are increasingly being urged to take medicine for conditions that here-to-fore were not labeled diseases. For example, osteopenia (low bone mass), over-active bladder, sarcopenia (low muscle mass), pre-hypertension, pre-diabetes, and “borderline-high risk” cholesterol.

A patient cured  
is a customer lost.



FIRST DAY OF MED SCHOOL

## 2. How should we think about the ads and all that modern medicine has to offer?

Bring healthy skepticism and serious curiosity to medical advice that will have a major impact on your life! Ask questions!

“Don’t be so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”

Romans 12:2 (MSG)

Too many of us  
are sleep walking in our post-modern,  
post-Christian, hyper-medicalized world  
saying yes to what others say yes to and trying to  
go along to get along.

Example: Everyone needs an annual checkup.  
Who says? Everyone says, it's common sense!

One primary care physician friend of mine disagrees.

Video clip from FAQs: *Why wouldn't I want everything medicine has to offer?*

My answer?

**Some things are worse than death.**

My friend Ron learned and lived the side effects of what doctors gave him... extreme fatigue, belly fat, joint and muscle pain, muscles turned to flab, which affected his balance, instability in walking and standing, sleeplessness, depression, anxiety, cognitive damage and more.



I spent time with him after he had fired his oncologist. He was only seeing a NP for pain. Never gained back the muscle lost due to treatment.

Ron was a best-selling author and one of my amazing mentors through four decades who taught me even through his serious illness and death. He said, make sure you keep telling people, “Doctors don’t have to live with what they do to us.”

Looking back, the oncologist was totally focused on doing his treatment; where Ron was focused on enjoying his life, even if it meant fewer years.



“Over-treatment penetrates most corners of medicine.”

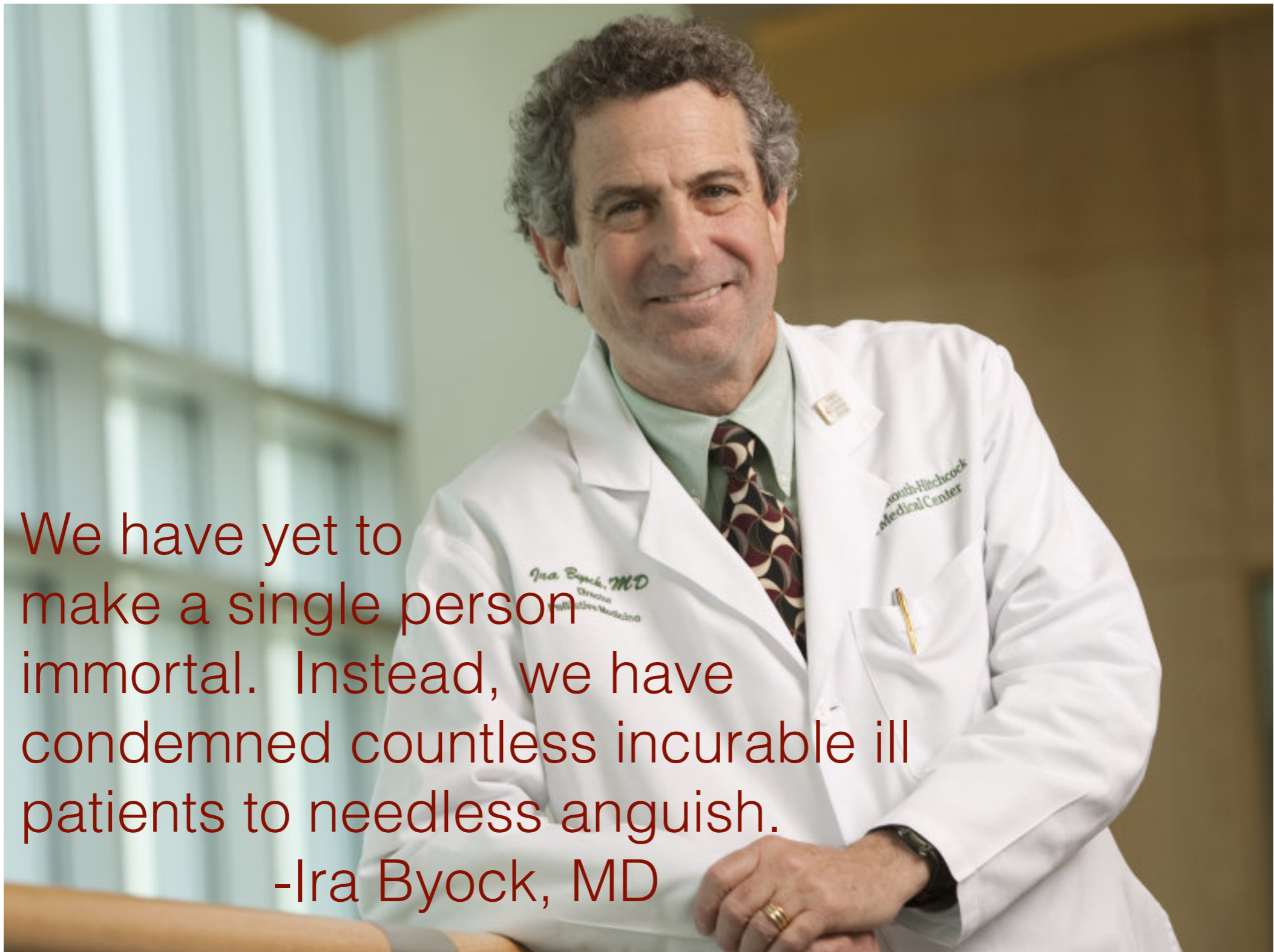
-Marty Makary, MD

*The Price We Pay*

Too bad my friend Ron figured out too late that he was being over-treated.

Remember Ashley?





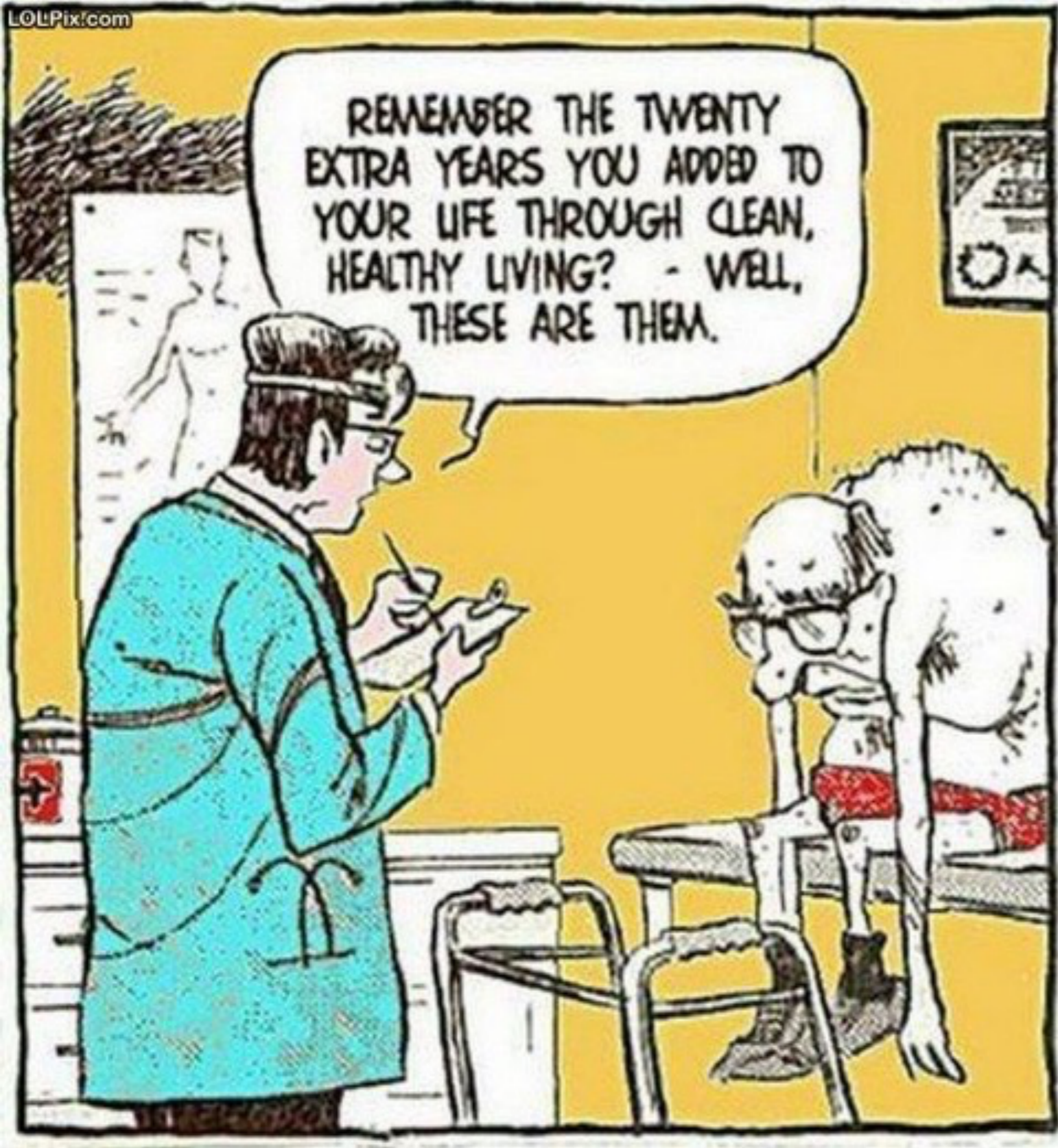
We have yet to  
make a single person  
immortal. Instead, we have  
condemned countless incurable ill  
patients to needless anguish.

-Ira Byock, MD

A portrait of Diane Meier, MD, a woman with shoulder-length brown hair and bangs, wearing a dark blue collared shirt and a pearl necklace. She is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a light-colored stone wall with horizontal lines.

“Healthcare assumes you want physical immortality.”

Diane Meier, MD



Plus pharmaceuticals, plus devices, plus CPR, plus, plus, plus, plus, plus, plus, plus all that the \$4.5 trillion medical industrial complex has to offer.

There is an end to modern medicine.

Medicine cannot give us what  
we need for a peaceful death.

From Reading 2

Christopher Bogosh is a nurse and a pastor who has spent years taking care of dying patients. He writes in *Compassionate Jesus* that Christians worship at the altar of medicine because. . . .

- We are afraid to die.
- We are addicted to this world and love our lives and the people in it.
- We are are absorbed in worldly attitudes about modern medicine without questioning its value, truth, ethics, or goals.
- We see modern medicine as neutral.
- We have a low or confused view of God's providence.

“The ‘theology’ of medicine does not believe in your soul.”

Here’s why he says this: Today there are three dominant worldviews.

- Naturalism/Realism/Materialism. The visible is all there is.
- Pantheism. All things are god and ultimately are of one substance.
- Theism. God is all-knowing and all-loving.

3. In which worldview do you think modern medicine “hangs out”?

How does this worldview limit modern medicine?

Recall Betsy’s story.

How did we come to where we are now?



## Spirituality and Medicine

Hospitals rose up within  
spiritual communities  
in the Middle Ages  
(AD 476-1550)

Bodily Care Centered  
on Spiritual Care  
(Sometimes diseases were  
attributed to sin.)

The oldest known icon of Christ Pantocrator—Ruler of the Universe. 6th-century

## Spirituality and Medicine

High Middle Ages to Renaissance, 1300-1600s

- Rise of empirical inquiry
- Growth of sciences
- Dualism argued by Descarte, 1596-1650, to mean that mind and body are completely different from one another and each could exist by itself.



Raphael. The School of Athens. 1509-1510.



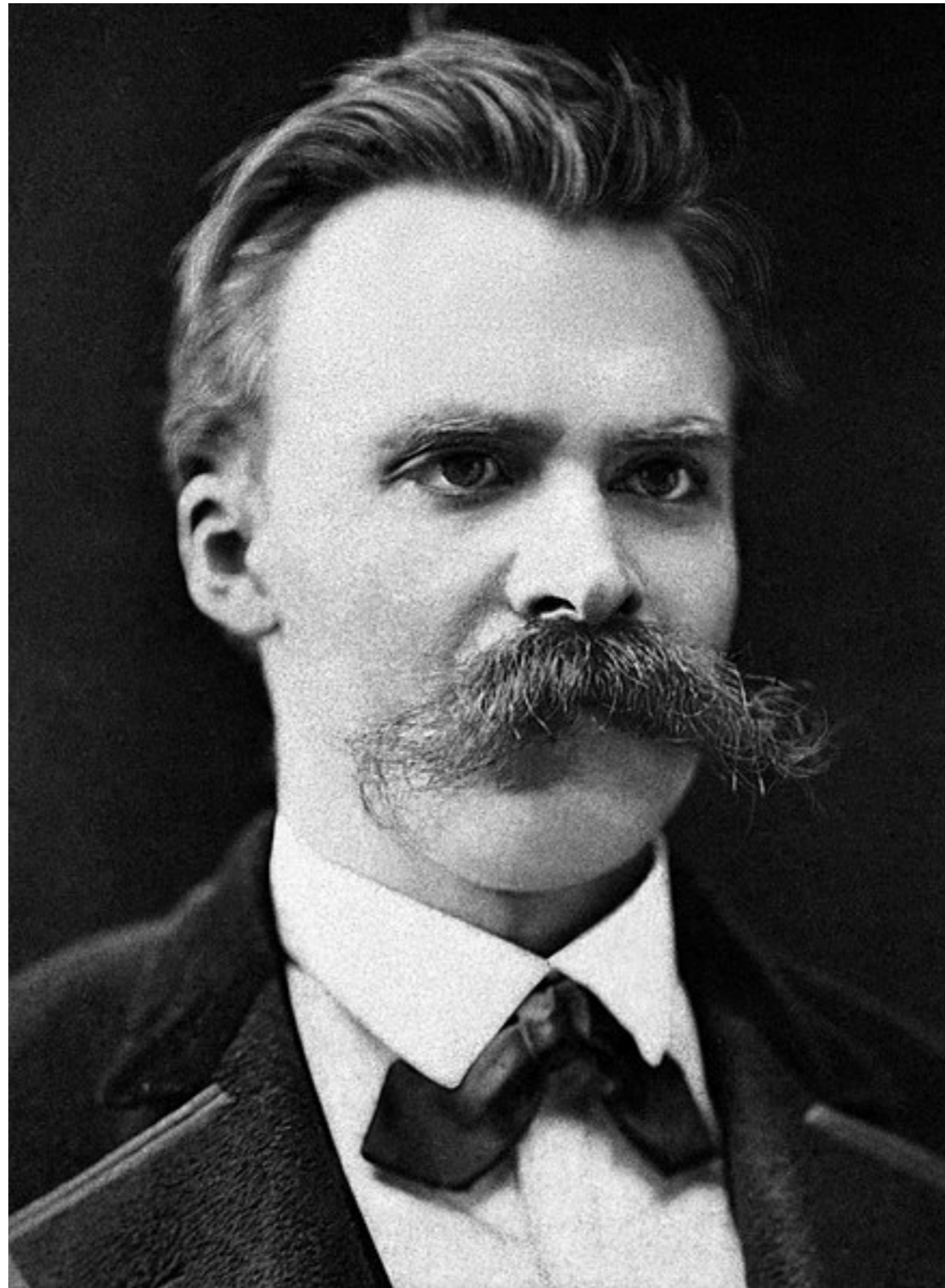


## Spirituality and Medicine

Enlightenment to Post Modernism,  
1700-present

- Growth of materialism and reductionism
- Empirical method is the primary source of truth for humanity
- Medicine grows in material focus

We began the tossing out of our faith in faith in the late 1600s, when Isaac Newton, 1642-1726, invented calculus and then took his newfound notions of infinity and applied them to space and time. Page 33



Friedrich Nietzsche, 1844-1900,  
wrote first in 1882, "God is dead."

## America in 2023

“We live in such a secular culture that the air we breathe is godless—Christians absorb this.”

John Piper writing in his book,  
*Reading the Bible Supernaturally*

We absorb materialism/naturalism/atheism



“Christian faith is lost/ignored/hidden in the trappings and decorum of a secular medical system..”

–Kathryn Butler, MD  
*Between Life and Death*

What trappings  
and decorum?

## Dr. Butler writes that we know these things are true about modern medicine:

1. It creates an illusion that it knows all and can fix all.
2. It is used to halt/stop/interrupt how nature afflicts the body.
3. Effort to extend life seems to leave no space for accepting death.
4. Good intentions can result in the slow collapse of one organ system after another.
5. The culture of American medicine is focused mainly on saving life or extending life.
6. Physicians are trained to keep us alive no matter what that life looks like.
7. It is harder for physicians to step back and let nature take its course than to keep on with the next treatment.
8. Physicians default to deliver aggressive treatments.
9. The ICU literally takes our voice away; it inserts a tube to support mechanical ventilation obstructing vocal cords.
10. Medical technology can transmute death from a finite event into a prolonged and painful process.
11. This technology inflicts suffering.
12. Those who depend upon faith to guide their decisions seek more aggressive care at the end of life than do others.

Note: God's Word does not require us to lengthen our dying.

Too much faith in science/modern medicine means what?

We will learn it means unnecessary suffering.

However...

Research shows that Christians  
put too much trust in physicians who  
mostly ignore spiritual care.

### Religious Coping and Behavioral Disengagement: Opposing Influences on Advance Care Planning and Receipt of Intensive Care Near Death

Paul K. Maciejewski, PhD,1,2 Andrea C. Phelps, MD,2,3 Elizabeth L. Kacel, B.A.,2 Tracy A. Balboni, MD,2,4 Michael Balboni, M.Div, Th.M., 2,5  
Alexi A. Wright, MD,2,3 William Pirl, MD,6,7 and Holly G. Prigerson, PhD1,2,3,8

Our findings here and in our prior report suggest that positive religious coping influences decisions to undergo ineffective (i.e., not curative), yet physically burdensome, medical procedures that still result in death...Positive religious coping, with its commitment to the belief that **God is in control of one's life, leads to what EOL experts consider negative outcomes**, i.e., less advance care planning and more aggressive, non-curative, burdensome EOL care. Conversely, behavioral disengagement, with its implicit acceptance that death is impending and inevitable, leads to what EOL experts consider positive outcomes, i.e., more advance care planning and less aggressive, EOL care.

Psychooncology 2012

## Association between religious coping and use of intensive life-prolonging care near death among patients with advanced cancer

Andrea C. Phelps, MD Paul K. Maciejewski, PhD Matthew Nilsson, BS Tracy A. Balboni, MD  
Alexi A. Wright, MD Elizabeth Paulk, MD Elizabeth Trice, MD, PhD, Deborah Schrag, MD, MPH  
John R. Peteet, MD Susan D. Block, MD Holly G. Prigerson, PhD

**These results suggest that relying upon religion to cope with terminal cancer may contribute to receiving aggressive medical care near death.** . . .religious cancer patients were less likely to understand the definition of a DNR order and were more likely to think a DNR order was morally wrong.

Intrinsic to positive religious coping is the idea of collaborating with God to overcome illness and positive transformation through suffering. Sensing a religious purpose to suffering may enable patients to endure more invasive and painful therapy at the EOL. Alternatively, religious copers might feel they are abandoning a spiritual calling as they transition from “fighting cancer” to accepting the limitations of medicine and preparing for death. **Religious patients might thus equate palliative care to “giving up on God [before he has] given up on them.”** Qualitative studies commonly report spiritual reasons for preferring life-sustaining treatments, including a belief that only God knows a patient’s time to die. Finally, high rates of intensive EOL care among religious copers may be attributable to religiously-informed moral positions that place high value on prolonging life. . . .

**Patients with unrealistically optimistic expectations of survival prefer and receive more aggressive EOL care.**

JAMA 2009

Do we conflate our pro-life position with pro-medicine?

When clinicians engage in spiritual care seriously ill patients receive more days with Hospice care, fewer aggressive interventions and die less often in the ICU.

When spiritual support comes from religious communities there is less Hospice care, more aggressive interventions and more deaths in the ICU.

-Tracy Balboni, MD

**HUGE PROBLEM**

Most physicians will not engage in spiritual care i.e., baptism in the ICU.



We believe in miracles or we would not be Christians.  
The incarnation and the resurrection are frankly all that  
really matters to us. We are wrapped in miracles.

**Of course we believe in miracles.**

What if the miracle is not what we think it should be?

But seek ye first the kingdom of God,  
and his righteousness;  
and all these things shall be added unto you.  
Matthew 6:33

Seek God and get what?  
**All things!**

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want....even in death,  
I shall not fear...and I shall  
dwell in the house of the Lord forever.  
Psalm 23

Claim God and get what?  
**To live with God now and forever!**

What does this mean to you?

“Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” Joshua 1:8

Meditate on God and get what?  
**Success and Prosperity!**

“Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water which yields fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.” Psalm 1:1-3

Meditate on God and get what?  
**Results and the fountain of youth!**

You write in your own words the message  
of these verses...

Meditating on God's creation and God's word  
shows me that God keeps his promises  
and the big one is that my life is meaningful,  
forever young and forever safe.

I will not wither, fade, die, be removed, lose a leaf, nor do  
anything but prosper.

Matthew 6:10 says, “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

6. How do we get God’s will?

**ASK!**

7. What is God’s kingdom?

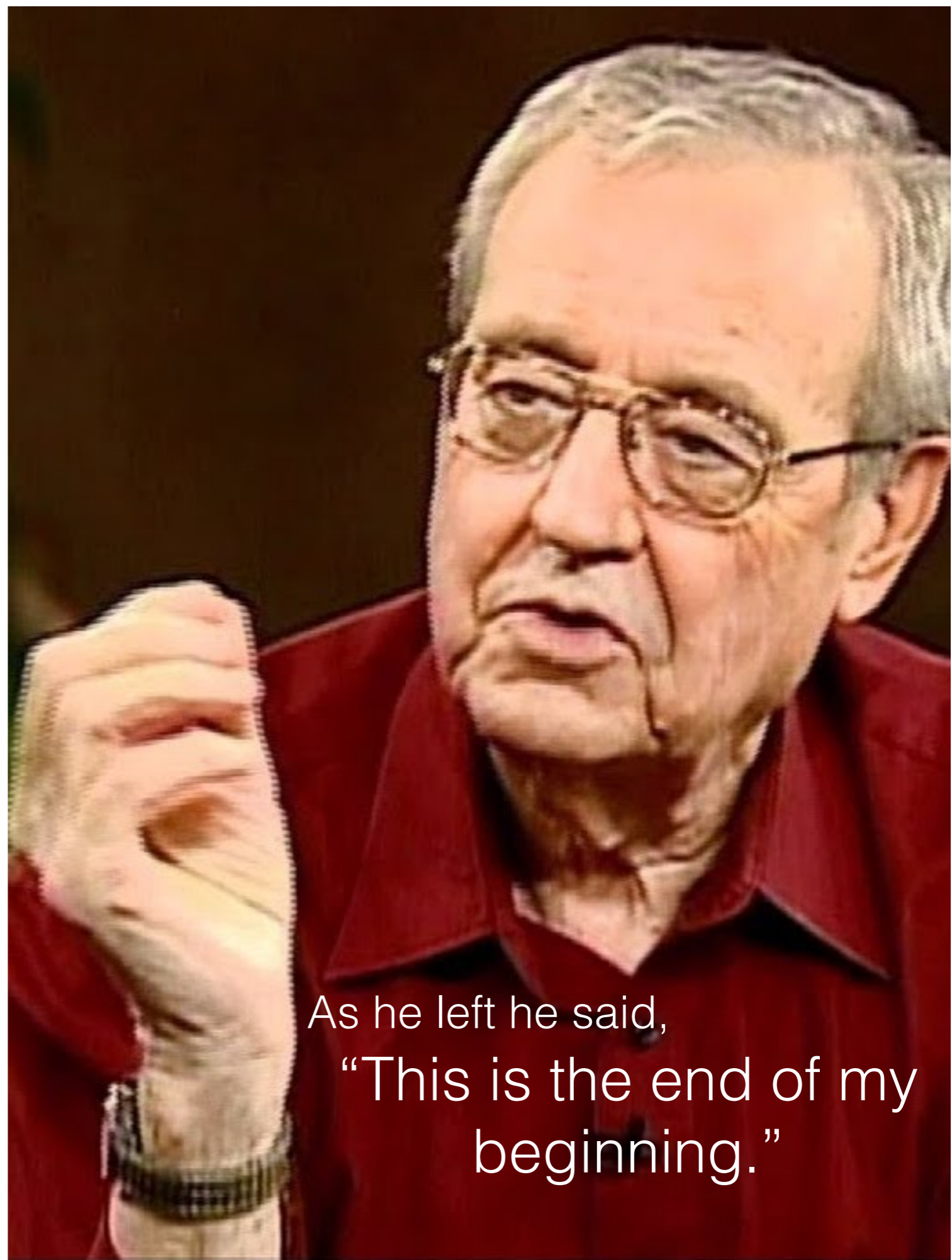
Where his work is done, he is praised, loved, worshipped, on the throne.

You determine if this includes your heart.  
This is personal.

8. What does Dallas Willard say we are?

“We are never-ceasing spiritual beings with a unique eternal destiny to count for good in God’s great universe.”

Dr. Willard died in 2013 at the age of 77 a few months after announcing publicly that he had stage four cancer.



As he left he said,  
“This is the end of my  
beginning.”

## 9. How does this definition of humankind help us understand the Word of God?

Genesis 1:1 - Revelation 22:21

All point to resurrection, restoration, a forever with God

10. If we are theists, not naturalists, or if we are Christian and not agnostic, what is Jesus saying when he tells the devil, “Man does not live by bread alone”?

**Not one physical thing can give me all I need.**

Matthew 4:4. Jesus had been fasting for forty days, and the devil himself shows up and tells Jesus to turn the stones into bread. Famously, “Jesus told him,

‘No! For the Scriptures tell us that bread won’t feed men’s souls: obedience to every word of God is what we need’” (TLB).

Or you may know the translation,

“Man shall not live by bread alone” (KJV).



To me, this means we can't depend upon the physical to make our life work. Yes, we need food and water. Yes, we like chocolate, too. Jesus seems to be boldly warning us not to depend upon what we think makes us healthy.

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## 11. What is bread a metaphor for?

**Bread = Money.** We can't buy happiness or a cure, if a cure doesn't exist.

**Bread = Modern Medicine.** Medicine will only provide limited solutions.

**Bread = A beautiful house.** Things break.

**Bread = The right clothes.** They go out of style.

**Bread = A busy schedule.** A temporary sense of self-importance.

What else should we add to the list?

How did we get to where Jesus is last not first?

12. Jesus said,

“The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

What does this mean?

13. What does this mean to you and how could this change your view of sickness?

God is in me, with me, for me.

Sickness is part of our broken world but will never be the end of my story.

How do we swim upstream in our secular soup day in and day out?

## History shows the march toward secularism.

Newton 1693 |  
science explains

Darwin 1859 |  
no need for God

Nietzsche 1885  
God is dead

Let's go back to Newton and the change that happened when science took over defining our lives. When there were so few explanations of how things work, we depended upon God to direct, inspire, and provide. Now we simply don't need God until we get to the end of our rope—or in the case of this study, the end of modern medicine.

We have to seek God, because God wants us to want him. He wants us, loves us, sees our potential but he will not force himself on us. If he took away our free will, he would be taking away what makes us in his image. His Spirit, put in us by God himself, has to rise up and take over. We have to ask it to move us, lead us, coach us, comfort us, teach us. This is the Spirit Isaac Newton killed off, kicking the door open for the scientists to rule the world, thereby paving the way for the gods of medicine to grab hold of our hearts.

14. Do we find the Kingdom of God in modern medicine?

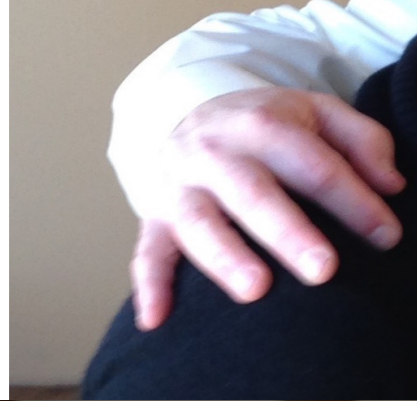
Can't remove God from science.

God is science.

Everything good,  
including modern medicine,  
comes from God.

We cannot depend upon, or expect modern medicine alone, to save us from the heartache of this life and the diseases we've piled upon ourselves since creation.

At the same time, God is medicine.



A few of the wonderful physicians who helped me write.



“Hospitals have been called the modern equivalent of Renaissance cathedrals, which were important commercial centers as well as places of solace and hope in the face of death.

That would make Johns Hopkins the Vatican of hospitals.

-Sharon Brownlee

Overtreated: Why Too Much  
Medicine Is Making Us Sicker and Poorer

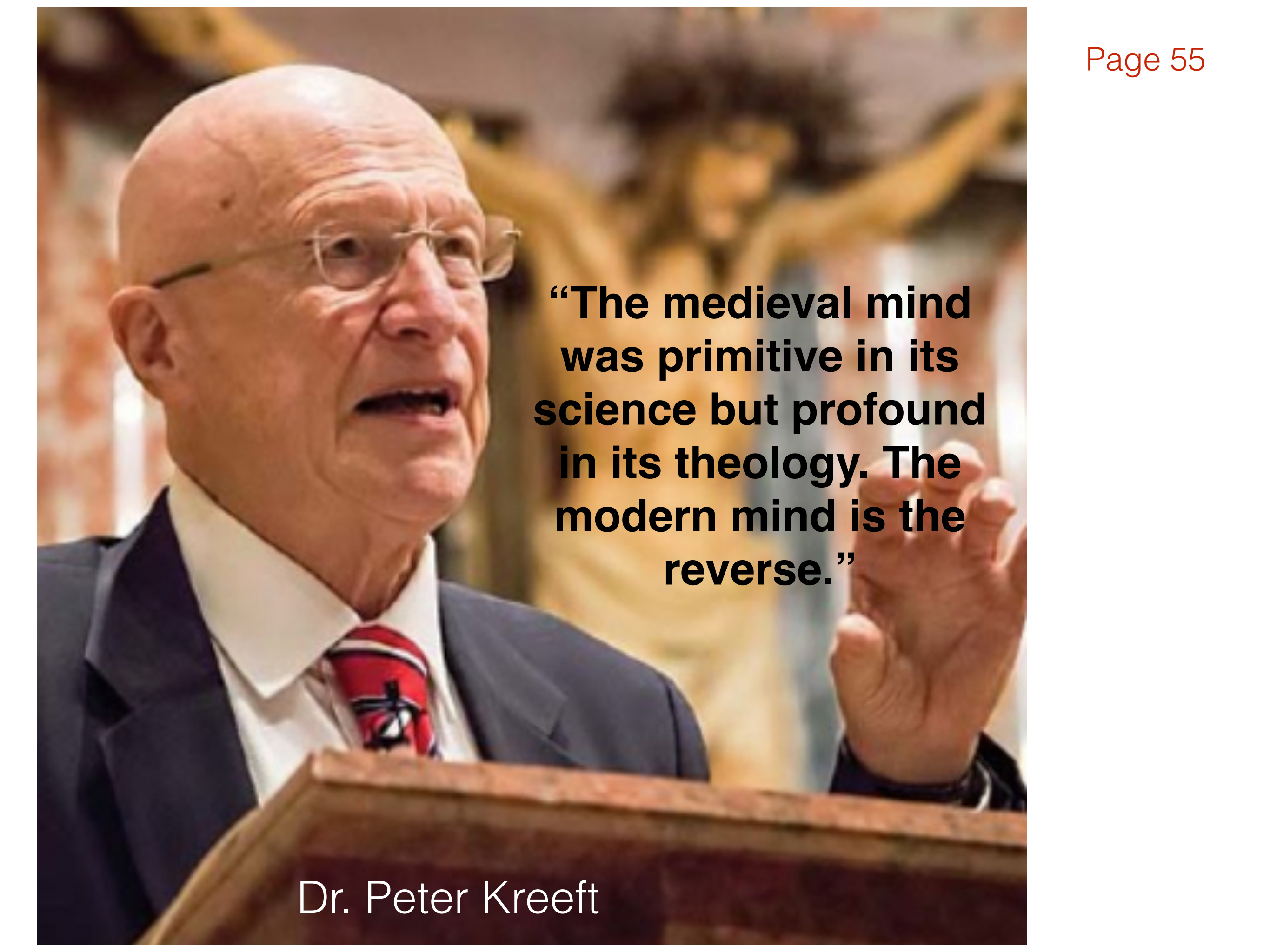
14. Do we find The Kingdom of God in modern medicine?

**Of course!**

**Hearing aids, eye glasses, pain relievers,  
new joints, antibiotics.**

How does this affect the way you think about what is being offered to you by medicine?

C. S. Lewis helps us when he says, “Humans are amphibians—half spirit and half animal. As spirits they belong to the eternal world, but as animals they inhabit time.”

A photograph of Dr. Peter Kreeft, a bald man with glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie with a black and white emblem. He is speaking at a wooden podium, gesturing with his right hand. The background is a blurred interior with warm lighting.

**“The medieval mind was primitive in its science but profound in its theology. The modern mind is the reverse.”**

Dr. Peter Kreeft



15. Do you think your theology is primitive?

16. How is it that we are so good at living lives that skim the surface?

Could it be our  
simplistic/stuck-in-time-and-space/live-on-baby-food/cozy/comfy spiritual lives?

17. Here's a theologically mature statement:

**Physical health should not be our primary goal.**

How do we know that this is true?

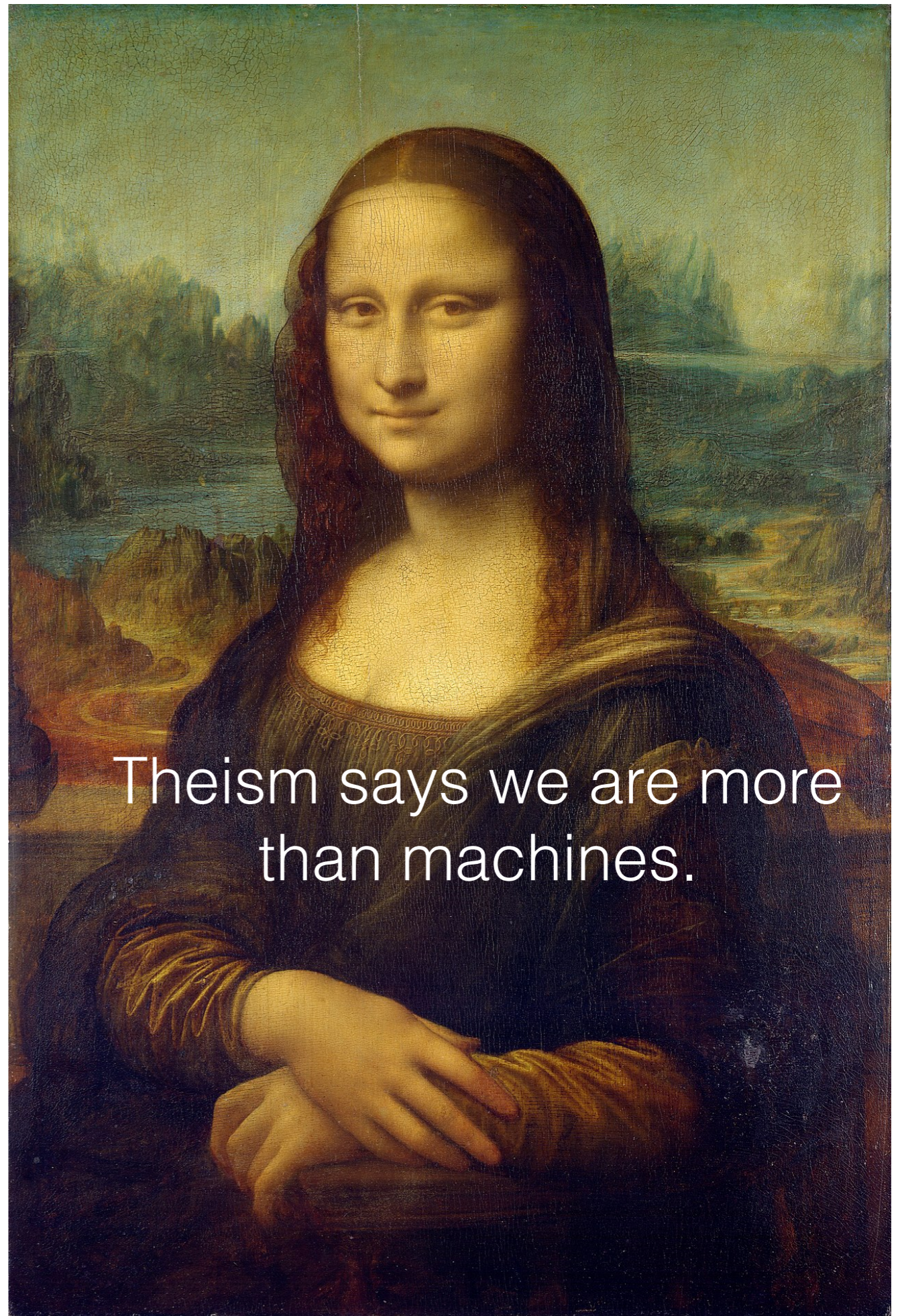
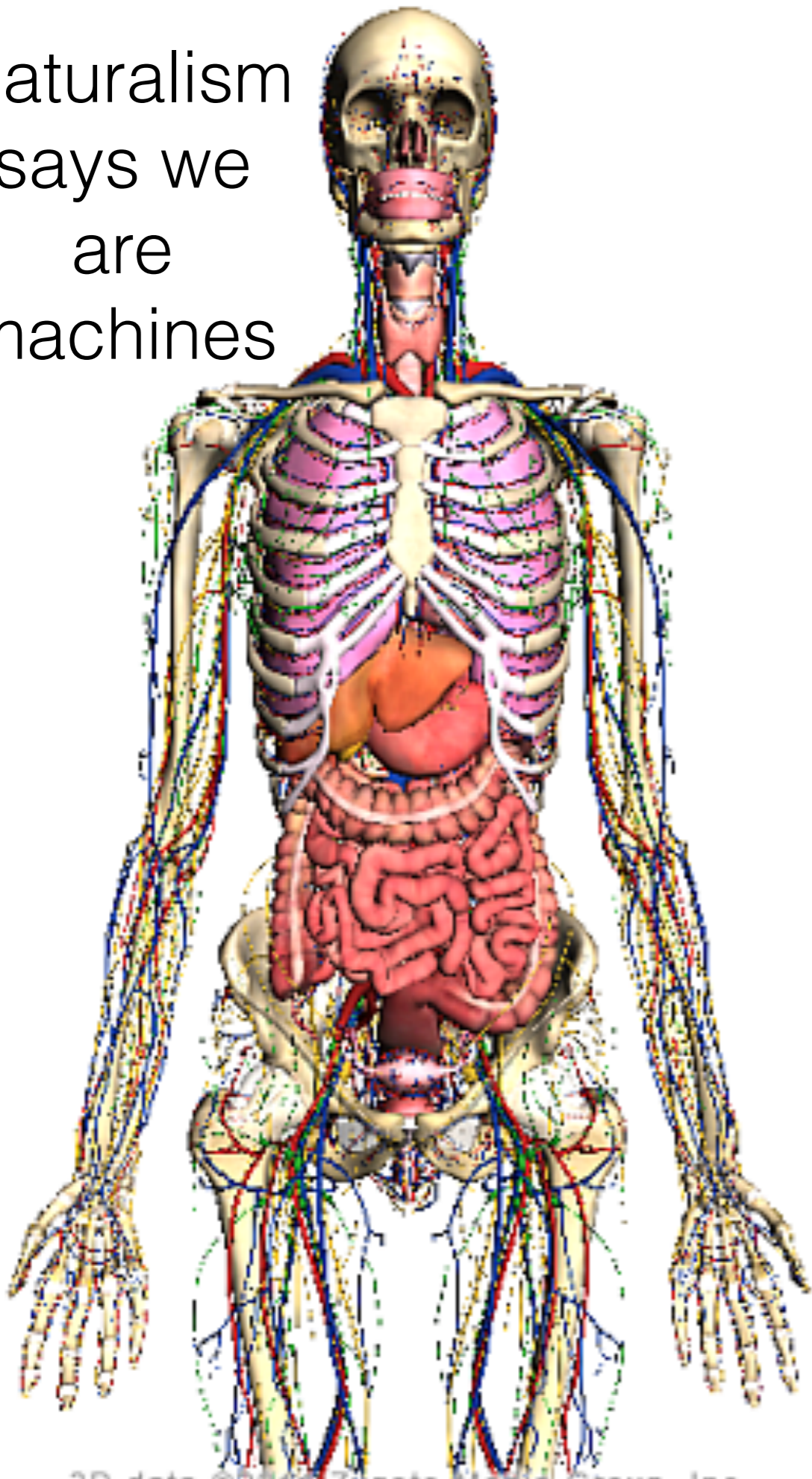
All of us will experience the falling away of our physicality no matter what we do or what we agree to have done to us. Better to focus on our spiritual health.

18. What advice does Tim Keller give us for dealing with our addiction to this life and all that modern medicine has to offer?

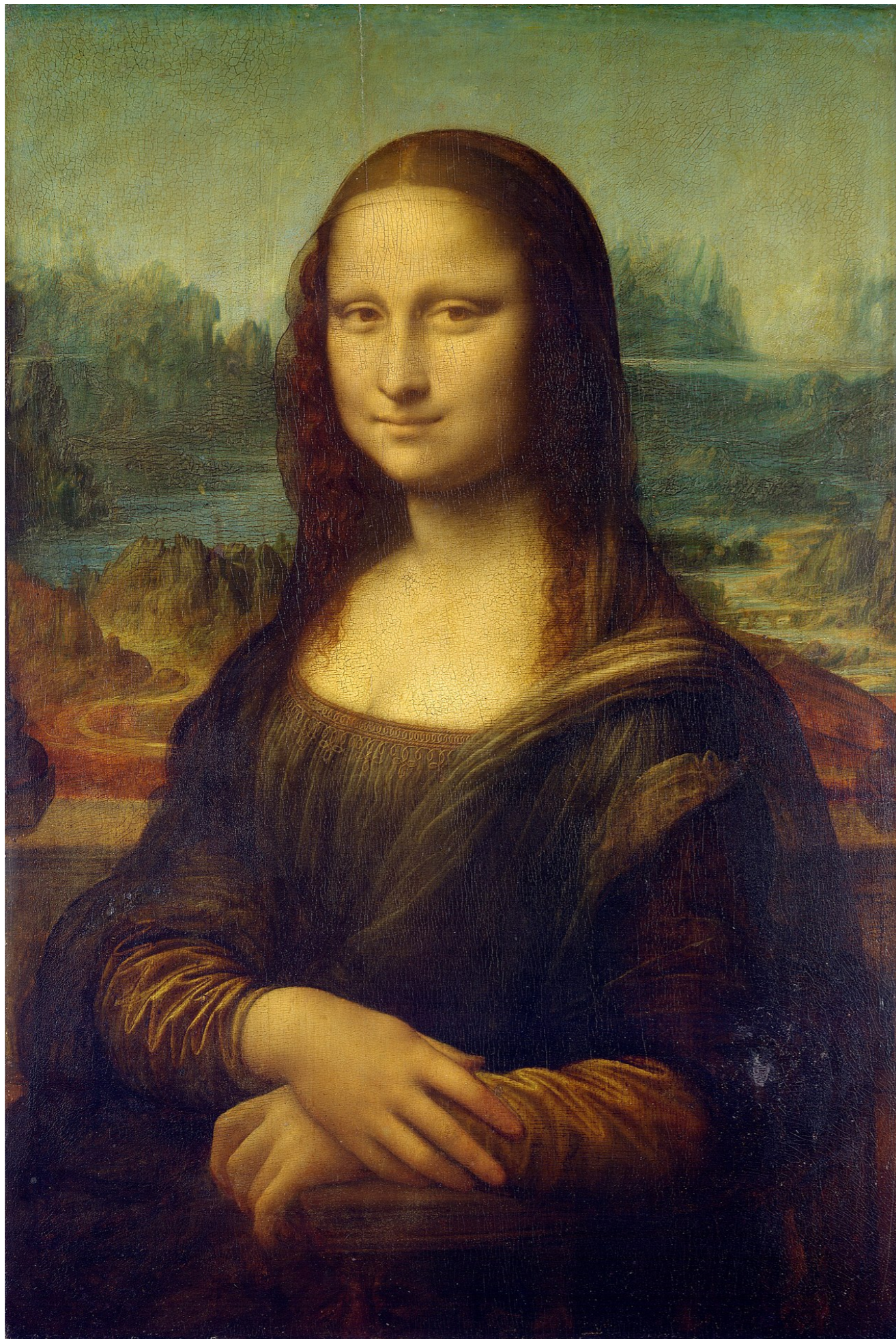
Someone read from page 42. Middle of second paragraph from the bottom, start with: Think!

NOTE: Dr. Keller died at the age of 72 on May 19, 2023. In May 2020 he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He said he had great doctors and that he was being attended to by The Great Physician. His last words were, "I can't wait to see Jesus. Send me home."

Naturalism  
says we  
are  
machines



Theism says we are more  
than machines.



We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

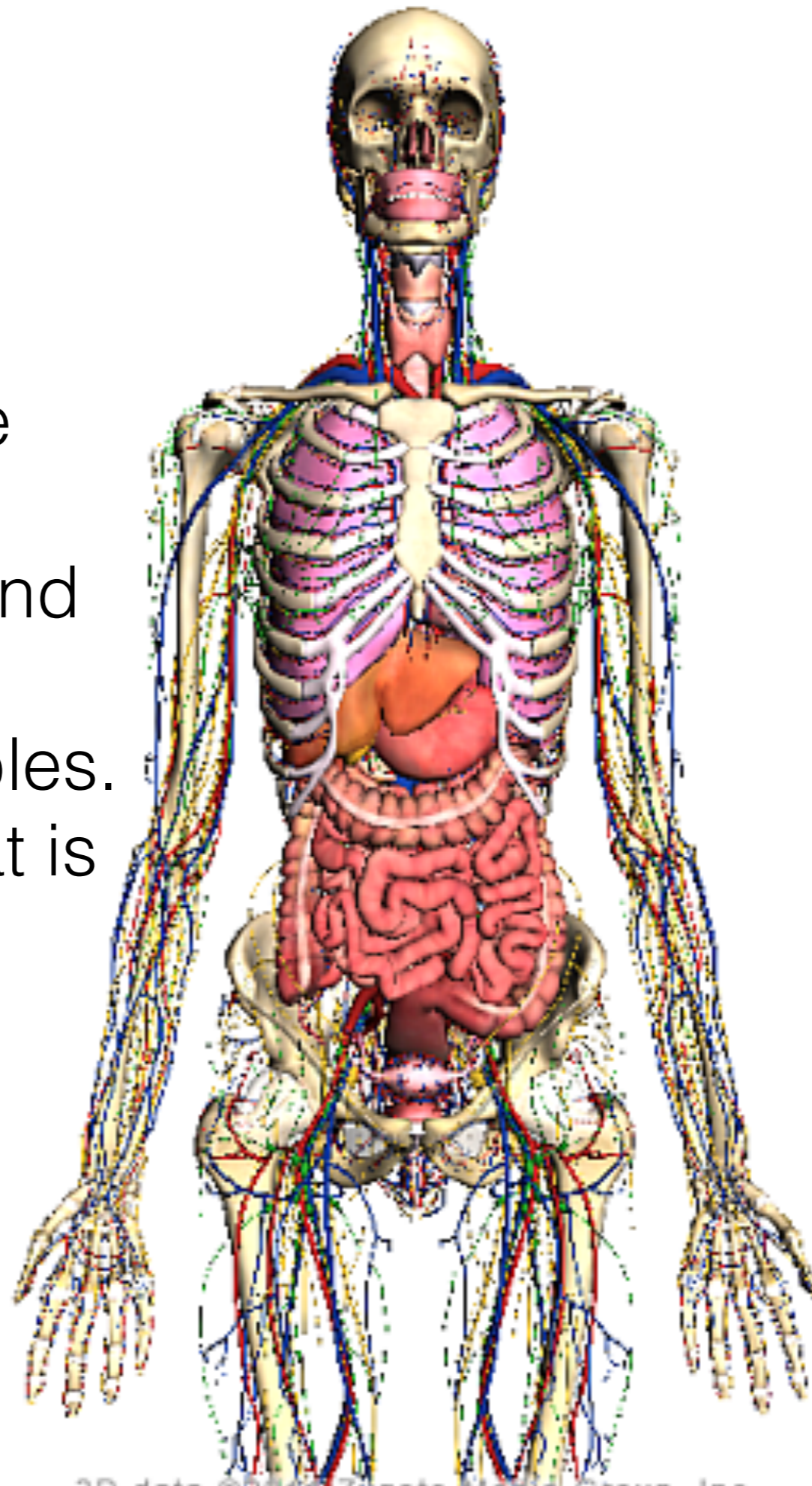
2 Corinthians 4:18

“In science we  
have been  
reading only the  
notes to a poem;  
in Christianity  
we find the  
poem itself.”

We are now understanding what C.S. Lewis  
said in his book, *Miracles*.

It's the machine  
that quits. It's the  
machine that is  
stuck in this time and  
space. It's the  
machine that crumbles.  
It's the machine that is  
a clay jar.

2 Corinthians 4:7





The part of us we  
can't see is the part  
of us that lives forever.  
And, we are promised a  
new and glorious body  
at the restoration.

How do we live in the Kingdom NOW?  
**Choose to live now beyond space and time.**

(Colossians 3:3)

We do this perfectly when we sleep.  
Every time we go to sleep we practice dying.

This is why sleep is so restorative.  
We are resting in the arms of God.

# Before our next session.

Let's look at page 56.

Flip over to page 109 and 113.



Father, help us see what you want us to see.

Dispel any fears or anxieties we have  
about our own death and the  
deaths of those we love.

Set us free!

In Christ's name we ask. Amen