



Christian HealthCare

NEWSLETTER

MEMBER LETTERS:

It is a great blessing to have others praying for us

My sweetheart and I are so thankful for Samaritan Ministries. It is a great blessing to have others praying for us and the opportunity to pray for others. It is also a blessing to Biblically care for the needs of others and know that our shares are going to things and people that we can support, not to things which would violate our faith if we knew what insurance companies were supporting. Samaritan Ministries has kept us from being overcome by the burden of debt because of our needed surgeries. Thank you so much.

*Pastor Dexter and
Maribeth Taylor,
Port Corners, New York*

In the midst of having a baby it was a huge blessing to know our bills were being shared, but abundantly more important, we were greatly blessed to know so many people were lifting us and our baby up in prayer.

*Ryan and Harper Guerra,
Winfield, Illinois*

Fixing the Internet

by Tom Giovanetti, President of the Institute for Policy Innovation

Our government leaders in Washington have certainly racked up an impressive string of successes. At last the Middle East is stabilized, and the threat of terrorism has been extinguished. The economy is growing robustly, foreign companies are reincorporating in the United States to take advantage of our more hospitable tax and regulatory structures, and everyone who is able to work has a wide choice of rewarding employment options. The national savings rate is up, the budget is balanced, and we've actually begun to pay down the national debt.

Now Washington is turning its attention to one of our few remaining problems: solving the puzzle of why the Internet has been such a massive disappointment.

By now it's obvious that the Internet simply hasn't lived up to its potential. The Internet was supposed to create new opportunities for Americans to build communities with one another and, indeed, with the world. It was going to give us access to formerly inaccessible sources of information and knowledge and facilitate collaboration among scientists, researchers, and creators.

We were teased with the idea that online educational options would develop, and that it would be possible to take classes and perhaps even earn a college degree remotely over the Internet. We were told that the Internet could

become a significant engine of commerce, with businesses selling their products on it, and consumers actually being able to do their Christmas shopping from the comfort of their living room.

We were even told that the Internet would become available on a variety of convenient portable devices—that we would become untethered from our desks and could access information, news, and commerce as we walked down the street, or even as we flew across the country.

How hollow those promises sound today!

Fortunately, federal officials are finally coming to grips with our Internet problem, and promising to take action. They have deduced from the Internet's many

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The *Christian Health Care Newsletter* is published monthly by Samaritan Ministries International, a 501(c)(3) charity. Subscriptions to the *Christian Health Care Newsletter* are available to non-members for a suggested donation of \$12 per year. The information provided is for educational purposes and is not meant as medical advice.

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Sharing Summary from February

Shares:	\$11,228,328	Personalized prayer requests of the members with Needs are in the Prayer Guide. Please use your version of the Prayer Guide to support the members assigned to you.
Needs:	\$11,685,882	
In Negotiation:	\$ ---	
New Needs:	1,777	
Total Needs:	3,164	
New Rewards:	106	Member Households: 42,818 (as of 1/23/15)
Miscarriages:	48	
Final Rewards:	6	

Contact Us: 877-764-2426 samaritanministries.org/members

Questions about?	Email	Phone Menu
Your medical need	needs@samaritanministries.org	1 - 1
Shares you are sending or receiving	shares@samaritanministries.org	1 - 2
Your membership	membership@samaritanministries.org	1 - 3

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Remember:



SEND A NOTE—
Burdens can be lightened emotionally as we encourage one another in the Lord.



PAY YOUR SHARE—
Burdens can be lightened physically as we do our part to financially meet others' needs as they would in our time of need.



ALWAYS STAY ALERT IN PRAYER—
Burdens can be lightened spiritually as we unite to call upon the God of the impossible.

The indispensable nation

by Rob Slane

“Les cimetières sont pleins d’hommes indispensables. (The graveyards are full of indispensable men)” —Charles de Gaulle

Like so many other great quotations, the origin of this one is disputed. Yet whether de Gaulle was the source of these words, or only using his own rehashed version of an old quote, it is a sobering reminder that no matter how important a person appears to be, “All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return” (Ecclesiastes 3:20).

The tendency to think that we are indispensable seems to be ingrained in the human heart. The president of a nation might well think he is indispensable, yet he will leave office. A company CEO may well think that if it weren’t for him, the organization would have no chance of prospering, yet he will one day resign or retire.

But it is not only the “big” people who can think like this. The temptation is there in the “little” people, too. I might believe that within my household, I am indispensable. What would they do without me? Well, there are plenty of fathers in the grave who had untimely deaths and could teach me the answer to that!

The word indispensable really means “essential” or “crucial,” so an indispensable person is someone others just “couldn’t do without.” But the Bible teaches that this is true about One Person only:

“He is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or domin-

ions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:15-17).

This being the case, claims of indispensability are basically idolatrous. It is idolatry to put an inordinate trust in an individual who—no matter how good or great—is sinful, weak, and who will ultimately die. But the problem does not rest only with individuals. To paraphrase de Gaulle:

“The history books are littered with the corpses of indispensable nations.”

Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the Old Testament. Take Isaiah’s prophecy against Babylon:

“Now, then, hear this, you sensual one, who dwells securely, who says in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me. I will not sit as a widow, nor know loss of children.’ But the two things will come on you suddenly in one day: Loss of children and widowhood. They will come on you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries, in spite of the great power of your spells” (Isaiah 47:8-9).

Babylon had come to believe her own propaganda. In her own eyes, she was untouchable and therefore indispensable. What would the world do without her? Yet in God’s eyes she was anything but untouchable, and so He showed her reality regarding her indispensability.

The same is true of the prophecy against the king of Tyre and his kingdom in Ezekiel 28:

“Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you make your heart like the heart of a god, therefore,

behold, I will bring foreigners upon you, the most ruthless of the nations; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor. They shall thrust you down into the pit, and you shall die the death of the slain in the heart of the seas” (Ezekiel 28:6-8).

Again we see a king and a nation that has come to believe its own propaganda. Tyre was indeed glorious, but instead of attributing that glory to God, both king and kingdom proclaimed themselves to be above all others.

So when we hear politicians using words like “indispensable,” or “exceptional” (in the sense of being above all other nations, rather than in the sense of being exceptional at something), we ought to react with shock and dismay.

In recent years, some politicians seem to have made it a point of honor to make claims of indispensability. In 1998, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said:

“If we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall, and we see further than other countries into the future, and we see the danger here to all of us.”¹

Although the phrase seemed to drop out of favor in the last few years of the Bush government, it has been brought back with a vengeance by President Obama, who has used it many times. For example, in an address at West Point he said:

“When a typhoon hits the Philippines, or schoolgirls are kid-

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John and Catherine Plasterer

Greater Baltimore Jail and Prison Ministry

by Jaclyn Lewis

John Plasterer always wanted a house and a hobby farm out in the country to give his kids the same childhood that he'd enjoyed. But he says, "God had better plans."

Instead, God enabled John to follow his passion for farming by "sowing the seed of the Word" as a full-time missionary to both the adult and juvenile inmates of the

Baltimore City Detention Center. John leads this ministry with the support of his wife, Cathy, and the help of his five children: Stephen, Susan, Emily, Hannah, and Elizabeth.

We asked John a few questions about his life and ministry, and we hope you will be blessed to read his answers as he tells you, in his own words, about how God led him to work with inmates in Baltimore.

How did you become a Christian?

I grew up in a good Christian home where the entire family attended church regularly, my father read the Bible to us daily, and all of us read the Bible on our own daily. At the age of nine, after listening to an "Unshackled" radio drama, I realized that I was a sinner and that Jesus suffered and died for my sins, not just for other people's sins.

Did you ever have any doubts about your faith?

Although I never stopped the Bible reading and church attendance, I adopted some godless philosophies, such as belief in evolution, that undermined my faith.

After graduation from high school I worked for a while, but longed for a deeper relationship with God and knowledge of how to witness to others.

I decided to enroll in a one-year program at Word of Life Bible Institute. This year of intensive study helped me sort through and correct some of the things that had undermined my faith, and I began to think Biblically in all areas of my life. The Christian service that was part of the program caused me to grow deeper in my faith. I was especially interested in learning how to explain the Gospel of Christ's death and resurrection to people who do not know Christ.

After completing Bible college, what was the transition into full-time missionary service like?

After one year, the school teaching job that I worked after graduating ended because of low enrollment. I did a variety of jobs to support my wife and children while still considering missions opportunities and looking for a way to move out of the city to a more rural setting.



During a time of unemployment, I sought out some of my mentors in street evangelism and worked with them for a day of ministry. That day was so invigorating that I began working on starting a street evangelism ministry in Baltimore and teaching children in Bible clubs and neighborhoods using a chronological approach.

God had closed the door to many of the mission opportunities I had pursued, but providentially opened the door for the street evangelism endeavor by enabling me to gradually transition from my job into full-time ministry. I was able to reduce the hours of my work week to four days, and later to three days per week, and still provide for my family financially while beginning the inner-city children's work.

The transition to full-time ministry came when several church groups asked me to assist them as they planned to come to Baltimore on a mission trip to conduct a week-long outreach in a neighborhood. I sought the direction of the elders of my church, because I had come to the conviction that any career ministry worker should in some way be an outgrowth of and accountable to a local church, since that is the God-ordained structure of ministry.

I left my part-time job to pursue this opportunity, not knowing if it would be just for the summer or longer term. Some other Christians had heard about my work and began supporting it while I still worked a part-time job. Once I was working full-time in this ministry, God's people supported me to a greater extent.

That was March 1999, and I have been able to remain in full-time evangelistic ministry since that time.

What is a “chronological approach” to teaching the Bible, and why did you decide to use it?

I learned from tribal missionaries that starting with teaching the story of creation, the fall of man, and the other Bible history stories clearly defines who God is and why the promised Savior was needed. I have since learned that this chronological approach works well with all people, even highly-educated adults and people who have been exposed to nominal Christianity but have no real faith or relationship with God.

In teaching chronologically, I try to follow the example of Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Who started with Moses and all the prophets and expounded to the disciples all the things concerning Himself (Luke 24:27).

How did God lead you into jail ministry?

My involvement in jail ministry began as a Bible study. Ironically, I had called the jail and, after a long run-around, I was told they had enough people doing ministry already. Not long after that, a chaplain called our church from the same jail, asking me to visit an inmate from the neighborhood around our church and invite him to come to church upon release.

When I arrived, I discovered I had already met the man from my street ministry; he had lived in a drug house near our church. He never did come to our church, but the chaplain invited me to begin a Bible study in the jail.

That first Bible study gradually led to all the other activities that today are a full-time jail ministry.

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Why SMI?

Our decision to join Samaritan Ministries was prompted by our insurance company's decision to expand family plans to cover “domestic partners.” We looked around for something more Biblical and were delighted to find Samaritan Ministries.

Not only does Samaritan not support immoral behavior, but it provides a practical way to demonstrate the love of Christ by sharing in the medical needs of other believers. This is especially important to us now because it is consistent with our prior decision to rely on God rather than government.

Voluntarily refusing government handouts is a testimony to many of the men in and out of the jail. Reliance on government programs brings people into bondage to and dependency upon ungodly people. Many people violate the rules or their conscience just to receive some government benefit. Government benefits also tend to stir up people to covet other people's wealth. Everyone wants more from the government than they have paid for in taxes.

When I needed hernia surgery, I had three men from my church tell me about the unsuccessful surgeries they had. I was very grateful for the freedom to research and choose the kind of surgery that was best, and travel to a clinic for a better price. The notes and gifts received after my recent hernia operation were also a great encouragement. ♦

As I started that first Bible study, I discovered that, in spite of what I was told, there was a need for more Bible studies. Some officers asked me to visit their dorms, too, and within weeks I was visiting each of the five dorms in that building every week for Bible study.

Was it difficult to leave children's street ministries?

On several occasions in those early years, I discovered that an inmate in my Bible study was the father of a child I knew from my ministry in the projects. This gave me peace in transitioning out of street and children's ministry, because I was reaching street people in the jail and reaching children by restoring fathers to their homes as godly leaders.

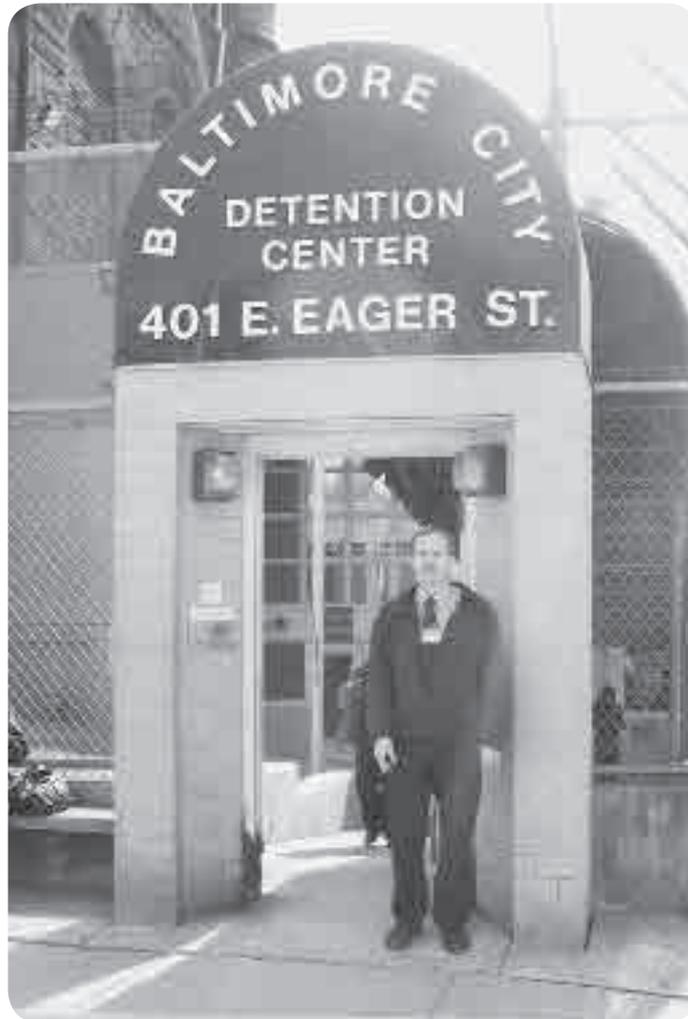
I have since observed that the inmates who come to Christ in repentance and faith nearly always are burdened about their families as a first priority for getting things right.

Besides the need for Bible studies, what was another need you discovered among the inmates?

Nearly all of the men who came to the Bible study needed Bibles. The jail authorities permitted me to bring in Bibles each week and some devotional reading materials to leave with the men. Many men were saying that they had already been there for six or eight weeks in the booking and intake building with no access to

Bibles or teaching. This is regarded as a transitional area and therefore very few classes are offered there, but I asked permission to distribute Bibles to the incoming inmates.

When I was finally granted per-



mission a year later, an officer said, "Oh, we have not had Bibles here for about a year." I carried in one box full of Bibles; men in a dorm came over and took them so quickly that sometimes two men grabbed the same Bible. The officer there said, "You can't come in here and give out Bibles unless you have enough for everyone; it might cause a fight."

The following week I returned with three large boxes of New

Testaments on a luggage carrier and gave out all of them. I returned the following week with three more boxes of New Testaments, and the same officer that had told me to bring in enough for everyone told me to stop bringing in so many Bibles. Eventually I discovered that about 100 Bibles per week was sufficient for the constant flow of inmates into the institution. God raised up donors to supply this constant need for Bibles.

I have often been blessed to find men who have read through the entire Bible while incarcerated, sometimes in a matter of months. It is also a blessing to discover men who have come to faith in Christ as Savior through reading things, and sometimes through other inmates. The Bible reading coaching from my parents at home and the chronological Bible teaching I learned to use in my Bible clubs proved very effective in encouraging those reading through the Bible. Chronological teaching also equips the believers

to defend the faith against errors propagated by other religions.

What is some of the fruit you've seen through jail ministry?

It is especially encouraging to me to see men transformed by Christ who have been labeled as hopeless. There are several individuals who for years had been constantly in and out of jail who have been out walking in freedom for years because of

Christ. Others have re-established family relationships that had been shattered.

Prison and jail ministry was nothing I ever imagined I would do; I just took advantage of the opportunities as the Lord brought them to me. God has enabled me to fulfill my desire for farming through sowing the seed of the Word, and I have come to understand that a hobby farm in the country would have been a distraction.

Has it been difficult raising your family in Baltimore?

Although at times the undesirable aspects of the city and the evil I witness in the jail wear on me, the Lord has given me peace in this setting. My children help as well in the ministry, filling the gap wherever help is needed. Presently my daughters do almost all of the work with my student database such as recording grades and assigning and mailing courses.

I have also experienced God's hedge of protection about myself and my wife and children as we have been relatively untouched by the evil that surrounds us. When news headlines reported a federal investigation in 2013 that exposed a conspiracy between officers and gang members in the Baltimore City Detention Center, many people asked if I felt safe there. My motto has been Psalm 116:6-7, "The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. Return to your rest, O my soul, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you."

God has also blessed our relationship with many of our neighbors so that our children learned to serve people in ways that they might not

have learned in a more rural setting.

How might Christians start serving prisoners in their local area?

Every jail has opportunities for churches to come in to minister to inmates. Jails and prisons are required by law to make "reasonable accommodation" for the inmates' free exercise of religion. Many jails have strict rules about bringing in books and pamphlets, but nearly all jails and prisons will allow inmates to receive Bibles and attend some kind of religious service.

If you attempt to teach or distribute Bibles there and are turned away, be patient and persistent. Correctional institutions, by necessity, take on a culture like little totalitarian societies. Anyone serving there should keep in mind that these institutions exist to attempt to manage unruly people. The rules in correctional institutions often seem strange or unreasonable to outsiders but usually exist for very good reasons.

If the jail or prison administrators are being unreasonable, the inmates have ways to defend their rights such as filing grievances, but volunteers should pray for the authorities and refrain from bucking the system. ♦

My wife and I have found Samaritan to be an answer to our prayers in many ways. First, we feel blessed that we can help others who have medical bills each month. We are usually in good health, but unfortunately, have found ourselves with needs also. I was blessed that I was able to have cataract surgery and that it was successful, and now I can see so much better. I thank God for having His hands on me during the surgery, and I thank Him for the help from others.

*Frank Cox
Firestone, Colorado*

Our daughter, Rachel, responded well to antibiotics and recovered quickly from pneumonia. The shares we received met the financial need but the notes attached were precious to us. It is humbling to know God's people have been lifting our family up in prayer. We shared the notes with Rachel and our other five children as proof that the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16). We feel blessed to have been on the receiving end.

*Stephanie Hutchison
Riverton, Wyoming*

It is a great blessing every time an envelope is opened! We are incredibly blessed by the Godly people involved in this ministry. The encouraging words and financial provision are a sweet gift from the Lord!

We are so thankful for all the Samaritan members and staff who make this ministry possible.

*Jenny Wilkinson,
Dalbo, Minnesota*

Natural Astaxanthin

by Bob Capelli with Gerald Cysewski, Ph.D.

reviewed by Ed Hill

Have you ever watched salmon swim upstream against strong currents and waterfalls to reach their spawning grounds, swimming almost continuously for a week or more? *Natural Astaxanthin* explains that their bodies are loaded with the most powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory that has yet been discovered. It is astaxanthin that gives their flesh the beautiful reddish color. They get it from the microalgae *haematococcus pluvialis*, which is part of their diet. When the algae's cells are under stress, such as lack of food, water, intense sunlight and heat, or bitter cold, they produce astaxanthin as a defense mechanism. This allows the cells to survive for up to 40 years in a dormant state, until conditions improve and they go back into their green, motile stage.

This amazing substance is now being grown in microalgae farms and produced as a supplement. *Natural Astaxanthin* was published by one of the world's leading producers, Cyanotech, to bring together the most up-to-date information. Co-author and Cyanotech Chief Science Officer Gerald Cysewski holds a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from the University of California at Berkeley and has spent 35 years researching microalgae. The book cites more than 200 studies to support the claims that astaxanthin is a powerful antioxidant useful for treating a wide range of conditions and supporting optimal health. Researchers believe it works by con-

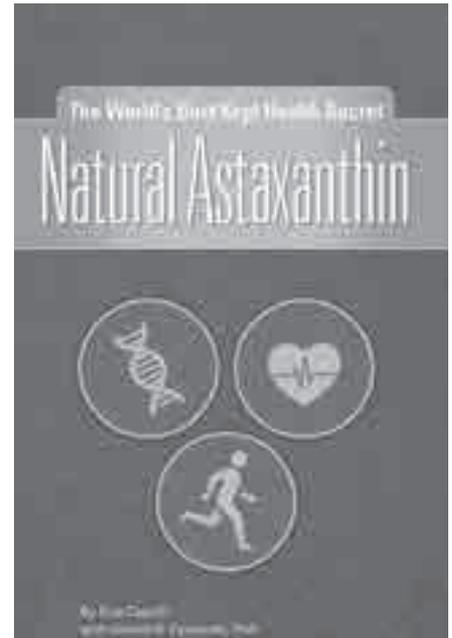
trolling deadly "silent inflammation," an underlying cause of heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and many other life-threatening diseases.

Additional claims supported by research and testimonials are that astaxanthin:

- reduces aches and pains from arthritis, joint soreness, and tendonitis
- gives energy, increases strength and improves endurance
- works as an "internal sun-screen" and improves the skin as an "internal beauty supplement"
- improves the body's immune system
- protects the eyes and brain from damaging free radicals and oxidation
- supports cardiovascular health

Dr. Joseph Mercola, one of the world's most widely-followed physicians with a daily e-newsletter reaching millions of people, calls astaxanthin "the #1 supplement you've never heard of that you should be taking."

Natural Astaxanthin explains that free radicals are highly unstable molecules, ready to react with anything they can, resulting in "oxidation." Once oxidation begins, it can produce a chain reaction that generates more free radicals. Oxidation in the body is similar to what happens to metal when it rusts. Rust can destroy a strong piece of metal in just a few years. But this can be prevented by painting it. In a similar way, our bod-



Cyanotech 2012, 202 pages. PDF: bit.ly/astabook

ies can use antioxidants to neutralize free radicals and render them harmless. Oxidation and free radical damage shows up when we age, as lines, wrinkles, dry skin, and even skin cancer, as well as loss of muscle tone. Internally, oxidation can damage DNA, and wreak havoc on all of our internal organs. Our bodies produce antioxidants to handle the small amounts of free radicals produced by digestion, breathing, functioning of the immune system, etc. But our bodies face an onslaught because of pollution, contaminants in our environment, vigorous exercise, eating the wrong foods, and stressful lifestyles. As a result, unless we supplement our diets with powerful antioxidants, they simply cannot keep up. The authors suggest that we can insure proper antioxidant protection by eating a good diet each day, with at least nine servings

of organic fruits and vegetables. They recommend taking spirulina to augment this. And they recommend taking the most powerful antioxidant known—astaxanthin.

Besides being the least expensive, astaxanthin has several other qualities that make it better than the others. Unlike several well-known antioxidants, astaxanthin can cross the blood/brain and blood/retinal barriers to protect the brain and eyes from many serious conditions, such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and other forms of dementia, macular degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and other eye ailments. Astaxanthin can protect all parts of the cells, both the fat soluble and water soluble parts. And because it can reach every cell, it can provide antioxidant protection throughout the entire body.

In addition, astaxanthin is a safe, natural anti-inflammatory. A health questionnaire taken by 247 astaxanthin users found that over 80 percent of back pain and osteo- or rheumatoid arthritis sufferers reported improvement. Astaxanthin was also reported to improve symptoms of asthma and enlarged prostate.

Another survey found that 88 percent who suffered from sore muscles or joints found that astaxanthin reduced their aches and pains.

Another survey six years later found that of the respondents who reported suffering from joint, muscle or tendon pain, 84 percent found that astaxanthin helped them. Eighty-three percent experienced less pain, while 60 percent had increased mobility. Seventy-five percent said astaxanthin works the same or better than over-the-counter pain meds. Sixty-four percent said it works the same or better than prescription anti-inflammatories such as Celebrex or Vioxx. Apparently, astaxanthin works about as well as anything on the market for inflammation. But don’t expect it to work quickly—results are usually seen in two to four weeks, but may take six weeks. But a key difference is that astaxanthin has no known side effects or contraindications.

Another very significant benefit may be astaxanthin’s ability to combat “silent inflammation.” The number of diseases linked to silent inflammation is staggering: heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, and more. We can feel perfectly healthy while silent inflammation slowly ravages our bodies, creating the diseases that will ultimately kill us.

Dr. Barry Sears, president of the

Inflammation Research Foundation, wrote that Americans have the highest levels of silent inflammation in the world, with over 75 percent of people afflicted. He says there is no drug that can reverse silent inflammation, but there are anti-inflammatory diets and supplements that can.

A 2006 human clinical study analyzed the effects of astaxanthin on blood C-reactive protein, a marker for silent inflammation levels. On average, the treatment group experienced a 20.7 percent reduction in CRP levels in just eight weeks, while the placebo group saw an increase. In another study of CRP, after three months, 43 percent of the treatment group experienced enough of a reduction in their CRP levels to drop them from the high risk category for silent inflammation related disease, into the average risk group.

A study of carpal tunnel syndrome sufferers reported a 27 percent reduction in daytime pain after four weeks and a 41 percent reduction after eight weeks. Similarly, the duration of daytime pain decreased by 21 percent and 36 percent respectively. This study as well as extensive anecdotal evidence from CTS sufferers shows astaxanthin may be a viable alternative to surgery.

A study of 21 rheumatoid arthritis sufferers showed a reduction in pain scores by 10 percent after four weeks and more than 35 percent after eight weeks. The placebo group’s scores remained relatively constant.

Dr. Andrew Fry, director of the Exercise Biochemistry Lab at the University of Memphis, conducted a three-week study of 20 young men who regularly train with weights. The placebo group had significant joint pain in the knees immediately after a strenuous knee workout, and also

Supplement	How many times weaker than Astaxanthin	How many mg to equal 4 mg of Astaxanthin	Suggested Retail Price*
Astaxanthin			\$0.33
Alpha Lipoic Acid	75 times weaker	300 mg	\$0.51
Green Tea Catechins	550 times weaker	2200 mg	\$5.23
CoQ10	800 times weaker	3200 mg	\$21.30
Vitamin C	6000 times weaker	24,000 mg	\$7.19

*Price comparison based on Natural Astaxanthin Bioastin by Nutrex Hawaii, Solgar Alpha Lipoic Acid 200 mg veggie caps, Vita Nutrients 80% Green Tea Catechins 275 mg 60 caps, Solgar CoQ10 30 mg 60 soft-gels, Solgar Ester C 500 mg 100 tabs.

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Are you ready for your final exam?

by Jenny Dean Larson

What's this all about? A final exam? Today? How did I miss that? I'm not ready!

I've felt "not ready" numerous times ever since I entered into this world. When I was born I was blue in my face because I was lacking oxygen. And since then, I've undergone no less than 13 surgeries.

At age three I had an inguinal hernia, and then a femoral hernia in the same place a year later. At age five a lump developed on the left side of my face, which was diagnosed as a type of rare cancer called Rhabdomyosarcoma, which required another trip to see more doctors. That was the start of all my tests.

Upon having an MRI done and taking a biopsy of the lump, my mom was informed that I had a malignant stage 4 cancer tumor. I soon started radiation to shrink the tumor. After the radiation was over, I was scheduled to have my first surgery done to remove what was left of the tumor. In an attempt to get the entire tumor, they severed my facial nerve and took out my entire left jawbone. The doctor who did the initial surgery told us that I would never smile again, as a result of the nerve being severed. In order to get rid of the rest of the cancer that hadn't been removed from my body, I started chemotherapy. I lost all of my hair, which was devastating to me.

Because of all the research, chemo, and experimental things I was having done on me, I was very weak and frail. I couldn't even straighten my fingers out enough to hold the Uno cards in the playroom

or in my hospital bed. Plus, I had to use the palm of my hand to push the elevator buttons.

But my trials weren't over! When I was 10, I somehow came down with spinal meningitis and encephalitis, only to be hospitalized once again for an extended amount of time. Numerous times I seriously thought about suicide and brainstormed ways of doing it. My life seemed like one big problem. At the same time, there seemed to be more to life than just the physical part; I just didn't have answers for the "test questions" life was putting in front of me.

During my senior year of high school I began reconstructive surgeries at Mayo Clinic, where the doctors performed three surgeries over the course of six months to rebuild the left side of my face. At the time, I was thinking that if I could look the way I did before everything happened, or if I had never had cancer, then I would be happy, and I dwelt on the thought of being beautiful. My world screamed "beauty is everything." Instead, because of the surgeries, I looked like a chipmunk my entire senior year!

Truthfully, though, I was becoming aware at that time that I also had blemishes on the inside of me. Throughout high school, I had cheated to get good grades in order to please my parents and get recognition from teachers. I had also been selfish and un-relational towards a foreign exchange student that had lived with my family. The dilemma of my external sicknesses only mirrored my internal issues of the soul.

My self-worth had been based on achievement, but that desire had left me drained.

All of this culminated in an intense need to come clean. Finally, at a college retreat, I made the decision to acknowledge my faults and failures to the One who "wrote the test"—God! The Bible said that if I would confess my sin, He would be faithful to forgive me (1 John 1:9). I did and He did. Someone else passed my "test" for me, and it was all legal!

That's exactly what the Bible says: The wages of sin is death, but God made (Jesus) take on my sin (Romans 6:23), and because of His innocent sacrifice, my sin debt was paid (2 Corinthians 5:21). That's why I turned around in my life and put my trust in Jesus alone to save me from my sins so that I could spend eternity in heaven with God. I turned from trying to hide my faults to confessing them, and from wanting to control my life for my purposes to giving it to Him for His. What I experienced at that retreat is what the Bible calls being "born again." Since then, I have had a power within to let go of bitterness, hate, rage, and hurts from others. A huge weight has been lifted!

I ended up having another surgery, unexpectedly, one year into college. This one was for lockjaw, as the bones that were used to reconstruct my jaw (taken from other bones in my body) began to fuse. And then another surgery a year and a half later to remove two millimeters of bone to allow me to open my mouth just wide enough to be able to eat!

But now I no longer live to seek or

Final Rewards

proclaim my own beauty or pride, nor do I feel the need to. Jesus said, “What do you benefit if you gain the whole world (fame, honor, glory), but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul (Matthew 16:26)?”

I know that one day, I will face God’s final exam. It has been appointed for every person to face judgment (Hebrews 9:27). But for me, I will no longer face it for passing or for failing. Jesus passed the exam for me already; I am more than forgiven (John 5:24).

Which brings me to you. You, too, have a “final exam” coming. Are you ready? Will you pass? The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of God’s examination standards (Romans 3:23). Jesus died for your failures so that you may pass into eternity with His perfect record. Through a simple yet genuine prayer to Jesus to save you and come into your life, you too can pass the most important exam of your life. ♦

Jenny Dean Larson, of Decorah, Iowa, wrote the article above. She went to be with the Lord on November 25, 2014, at the age of 29, after suffering a seizure.

Please pray for Jenny’s parents, James and Julie, her two brothers, Joshua and Jacob, and the rest of her family during this time of grief.

James and Julie Larson

10443 Apple Rd
Postville, IA 52162-9047

Elise (3) and Enoch (1 mo.)

Einwechter, daughter and son of Jonathan and Monique, passed into the arms of Jesus on February 24, 2014, following a tragic automobile accident.

Please pray for Jonathan and Monique and their sons, Jonathan (3) and Titus (2), as they continue to both celebrate Elise and Enoch’s lives and mourn their loss.

Jonathan & Monique Einwechter

390 Hoffman Dr
Pikeville, TN 37367-0500

Here are excerpts from the programs for their memorial service:

Susan Elise Einwechter

Our dear little girl went home to be with her Lord and Savior Monday evening, February 24, 2014. She was such a joy in our house—singing, skipping, dancing, and giving frequent hugs and kisses. She loved to talk about Jesus, “read” the Bible, pray, and be a little mother to her younger brothers. The future was filled with great plans: she always talked of growing up like mommy, getting married in a pretty white dress, and having a husband and many babies. In the kitchen, she loved to help cook and wash dishes, and, if that didn’t need to be done, she would often clean up her own play house. She and Jon David were quite the pair, always running around playing. She dearly loved all three of her younger brothers, her mommy, and her daddy.

On Monday morning, while traveling in the car, she confidently told a friend she was going to heaven. And she did—within 18 hours. We deeply love and miss you, Elise! But we know you’re in Jesus’ arms now being cared for!

“And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 3:15

Enoch James Einwechter

Our darling Enoch went home to be with the Lord Monday evening, February 24, 2014. His sweet, quiet disposition and wide-eyed inquisitiveness at the world around him endeared him to all he came in contact with. He was adored by his older siblings who loved to hold him and smother him with kisses. Enoch was just beginning to smile before his untimely death. We treasure the precious 39 days that we had with him, and mourn the loss of a future lifetime—watching him learn to sit, crawl, and then walk. He was still young enough that we had only heard him coo once or twice, but we were looking forward to hearing his joyous little baby sounds, and then watching him learn to talk. Our baby will never experience little boyhood nor grow into manhood, but we praise God for the gift of each day we had with him.

In naming him “Enoch,” we were inspired by the brief summary of the life of Enoch found in Genesis, and the testimony that he walked with God. We desired this for our son. We never could have imagined how prophetic his name was:

“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” Genesis 5:24

Even if we had been given the choice to avoid this pain by not having Elise and Enoch as part of our family, we still would have chosen them because of the joy they brought into our lives. The precious time we had with them has been worth all this pain! May Jesus Christ be praised!

failures that the problem derives from several factors:

- Not enough federal regulation.
- Not enough government ownership of broadband.
- Not enough Internet taxation.
- Not enough United Nations governance.
- Not enough government surveillance.

So the current administration is taking aggressive action on all these fronts. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is going to undo clearly mistaken Clinton-administration policy and begin regulating the Internet under the FCC's massive Title II regulatory authority, which has fallen into disuse since the days of analog telecom monopoly. Fortunately, these old regulations can be dusted off and repurposed, giving a number of federal bureaucrats useful work administering reporting requirements, price controls, and tariff authority.

As a side benefit, this reclassification will give the federal government authority to apply many new taxes and fees to Internet service. You know all those taxes and fees you don't understand on your phone bill? It's reassuring to know that they will now turn up on your Internet bill as well.

The administration is also promising to exert its authority to declare null and void the laws of 19 states that regulate the ability of cities to use taxpayer dollars to build broadband networks and thus compete with the evil, greedy private sector. All of us who want a vibrant, functional Internet should cheer the visionary assertion that old, outdated constitutional distinctions between federal and state authority

are at least partly to blame for the failure of the Internet.

It's a global village, of course, and so another factor behind the failure of the Internet is undoubtedly lack of United Nations governance over its core functions. The good news is that the administration is taking action there as well, cleverly turning over the Internet's core functions to the corrupt and unaccountable ICANN, which in a short time and after a scandal or two should lead to direct U.N. governance through its International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Finally, all signs point to ever-growing federal surveillance of Internet traffic. It's impossible, of course, for American citizens to have the necessary trust and confidence to adopt the Internet as a major feature of their lives without the assurance that the federal government will be helpfully monitoring all our e-mail, Internet browsing, geolocation, and credit-card transactions in order to keep the Internet safe, especially for the children.

Because, after all, ~~if it ain't broke, don't fix it~~ if the government isn't running it, it's broken. ♦

Editor's Note: In case you haven't guessed, this article is satire!

Tom Giovanetti really is the president of the Institute for Policy Innovation (IPI), an independent, nonprofit public-policy organization based in Dallas.

at 10, 24, and 48 hours afterward. Remarkably, the treatment group, taking four mg. per day, showed no increase whatsoever in joint soreness in their knees. Apparently astaxanthin completely prevented joint pain after exercise.

Numerous studies are cited showing that astaxanthin can reduce eyestrain, dryness, tiredness, and blurred vision. Others showed that it can improve visual acuity (ability to see fine detail) and depth perception. By improving retinal capillary blood flow, it can also prevent retinal damage. Its antioxidant effects can help prevent cataracts and macular degeneration.

In a randomized, double-blind and placebo-controlled study in Japan, 12 mg of astaxanthin were given for 12 weeks to elderly subjects. The researchers found improvements in age-related forgetfulness, as well as cognitive and psychomotor function. Another study showed that after 12 weeks, subjects had decreased levels of phospholipid hyperperoxides (which accumulate in people suffering from dementia) as well as improved red blood cell antioxidant status. The researchers concluded that astaxanthin supplements may contribute to the prevention of dementia in humans as we age.

In other studies, it was found that astaxanthin is a potent neuron protectant, and could be used as a therapy for early stages of Alzheimer's. It can also protect against brain damage during and after a stroke. Astaxanthin reduces brain cell death and can improve the proliferation of neural stem cells, showing that it may be useful for treating diseases such as Parkinson's. It also shows potential for reducing anxiety and depression.

Astaxanthin also has many benefits to the skin. It can reduce fine lines and wrinkles, improve skin elasticity, reduce visible signs of UV aging within four to six weeks of use, maintain a youthful appearance, reverse premature signs of aging, and reduce the risk of skin cancer. Astaxanthin demonstrated 100 times the strength of beta carotene and 1000 times the strength of lutein at protecting against UVA and UVB oxidative stress. It acts as a natural sunscreen both when taken internally and when applied topically.

There are many cardiovascular benefits as well. Because of its powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, astaxanthin can minimize the risk of heart attack or stroke, and reduce the damage if they do occur. A group of Japanese researchers did four separate studies on rats with high blood pressure. Within 14 days of astaxanthin supplementation, hypertensive rats showed a significant decrease in blood pressure, while those with normal blood pressure showed no decrease. It seems that astaxanthin may help reduce the consequences of heart attack by reducing constriction, increasing blood fluidity and restoring vascular tone.

In rodent studies, astaxanthin was shown to lower blood glucose levels in diabetic rats. The antioxidant activity of astaxanthin reduced oxidative stress on the kidneys and prevented renal cell damage. It also lowered blood lipid levels, and reduced oxidative stress on white blood cells. In another study, astaxanthin scavenged free radicals in the cellular mitochondria, leading to the conclusion that it might prevent the progression of diabetic nephropathy.

It may also be useful in protecting the retina from harm due to advanced glycation end products (a consequence of diabetes).

Another study involved 20 couples who were trying to unsuccessfully to conceive for a minimum of 12 months. The men were diagnosed as having abnormally poor semen quality. After three months of 16 mg/day of astaxanthin, five out of 10 of the infertile men got their wives pregnant! In another preclinical study, it was found that astaxanthin given to mothers-to-be significantly reduced the number of stillborn births.

Drs. Chew and Park demonstrated that astaxanthin at low dose (2 mg/day) could reduce oxidative damage to DNA by 40 percent!

A very promising study showed that astaxanthin inhibits 5 α -reductase, making it useful in the treatment of benign prostate hyperplasia, and also as a possible means to prevent or help treat prostate cancer, especially in combination with saw palmetto extract. That combination showed a 20 percent greater inhibition of 5 α -reductase than saw palmetto alone. Prostate cancer cells exposed to astaxanthin for nine days reduced growth by 24 to 38 percent depending on the dosage. It was also found that astaxanthin helped prevent enlargement of lymph nodes and excess protein in urine, both of which symptoms are associated with certain forms of cancer.

A preliminary study in obese mice fed a high fat diet showed that astaxanthin inhibited increases in body weight (specifically adipose tissue) and reduced liver weight, triglyceride levels (both liver and plasma) and reduced total cholesterol.

The authors emphasize that it is

very important to get astaxanthin from a reputable manufacturer, because great care must be taken to ensure that it does not oxidize during processing, handling, encapsulating or tableting, and during packaging and storage. Cyanotech's products are marketed by Nutrex, and you can read more about their quality assurance procedures on their website: nutrex-hawaii.com.

Of course the authors are advocating for their own product, but the concern about the quality of supplements is something buyers should be aware of. A story recently was published about the New York attorney general's investigation into supplements marketed by national retailers like GNC, Target, Walgreens, and Wal-Mart. According to the *New York Times*, supplements like ginseng and ginkgo biloba were tested and "did not contain any of the herbs on their labels." Many of them contained cheap fillers like powdered rice, wheat, and soy.

But as long as you find a quality product, how much astaxanthin should you take? That depends on how well your body absorbs it. It is best taken with a meal containing fat to aid absorption. The recommended dosages range from 4-12 mg/day and Nutrex offers a convenient 12 mg size for a one-a-day capsule. The Nutrex 50-day supply is an Amazon.com best seller for about \$20. ♦

Ed Hill and his wife, Kathy, have been Samaritan members since 2003.

A PDF copy of Natural Astaxanthin is available at bit.ly/astabook

The information provided is for educational purposes and is not meant as medical advice. Please contact your own physician for advice on your particular situation.

Prayer for the Persecuted Church

Hebrews 13:3 tells us to “Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.” Our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are being persecuted for the sake of the Gospel. We need to remember them in prayer. Each month, the Christian Health Care Newsletter will provide updates gleaned from such sources as World Wide Monitor, International Christian Concern, and The Voice of the Martyrs and offer prayer points. Please use them in your personal or group prayer time.

Bishoy still being held

Bishoy Armia Boulous, formerly Mohammed Hegazy, continues to be held in an Egyptian prison, International Christian Concern reports. Bishoy converted to Christianity when he was 16. In 2007, he tried to change his official religious affiliation from Islam to Christianity. Since then he has been persecuted for his public effort, receiving death threats. His home has been set on fire, and he has been arrested and tortured on several occasions. He was last arrested in December 2013 and held since then on charges of “filming Muslim demonstrations.” ICC says that “as long as he is imprisoned, his life remains in danger.” *Pray that a call-in campaign to the Egyptian embassy in the U.S. will be successful and Bishoy will soon be released. Pray for his safety until that time, and that his convictions will be overturned. (You can call the Egyptian embassy and “politely but firmly demand” Bishoy’s release. See bit.ly/bishoy.)*

Two years in prison for Saeed

January 27 marked the two-year anniversary of Pastor Saeed Abedini’s conviction in Iran. Saeed was sentenced to eight years after being convicted of undermining the nation’s national security. The American pastor was visiting Iran in 2012 to check on some orphanages he had started years before. International Christian Concern reports that “there have been many disturbing accounts of physical abuse towards Saeed including hospitalizations where he did not receive full treatment.” *Pray for Saeed’s release and return to America, for his safety and health while in prison, and for Christians to continue to come together around the world to seek his freedom.*

Girls, women attacked

Human rights activists say there has been a “dramatic increase” in attacks against Christian girls and women in Pakistan, according to BosNewLife. In one recent attack, two Christian sisters, 14 and 16 years old, were reportedly sexually assaulted. Local police also have been refusing to intervene, so many of these attacks go unreported and unresolved. *Pray that the evil done against the sisters and other Christian girls and women will be revealed and that the attackers will be brought to justice. Pray also for the safety of all Christians in Pakistan.*

Pastor attacked in Vietnam

A Vietnamese pastor and his associate pastor were attacked by five men on January 18 near a Bible school that the pastor had founded in southern Vietnam. Voice of the

Martyrs reports that the attackers threw bricks and rocks at Pastor Quang and the associate until they collapsed. Pastor Quang suffered broken ribs, a broken nose, and injuries to his jaw and teeth. He has been arrested and attacked several times in the past because of his evangelical work, as have students at the Bible school. *Pray for Pastor Quang and his associate’s complete recovery from their injuries, for effective evangelization, and that the Bible school would continue to function.*

Sisters flee village

Two sisters, persecuted by their brother for leaving Islam and becoming Christians, fled their village recently, VOM reports. “Nazli” became a believer after learning the difference in how Muslims and Christians treat women. After that, her brother beat her and threatened to have her killed. But Nazli’s sister also became a believer and the two decided to leave. They are living in a VOM-sponsored safe house and learning more about the faith. *Pray for Nazli and her sister’s growth in their Christian faith, for provision for them, and for the repentance and conversion of their brother.* ♦

For more information on the persecuted church, contact The Voice of the Martyrs (www.persecution.com, 877-337-0302), International Christian Concern (www.persecution.org, 800-422-5441) or World Watch Monitor (www.worldwatchmonitor.org).

napped in Nigeria. or masked men occupy a building in Ukraine, it is America that the world looks to for help. So the United States is and remains the one indispensable nation. That has been true for the century past, and it will be true for the century to come.”²

Even if you agree with Secretary Albright or President Obama about their policies, use of the word indispensable should still set the alarm bells ringing in the heads of anyone who reads and believes the Bible.

Imagine an individual making similar claims about himself. Perhaps a wealthy man lives in a town that suddenly finds itself with a great need. He gets his checkbook out to fund much of the need, which is all well and good, but after that, he goes around the town bragging about it and claiming that he is the one indispensable person in the town. What would you think of him? I’m guessing that you would think that no matter how big his bank account, it is dwarfed by his pride account—and we know where that leads (Proverbs 16:18).

Statements of indispensability from people of any nation ought to alarm because:

1. They are a sure sign that there is spiritual decline in the nation. In Deuteronomy 8:11, God warns the Israelites with these words: “Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’” Having been given every good gift that they had from the hand of God, they are warned not to attribute their good fortune to themselves, or they face having these blessings taken from them. The claim of indispensability is similar in nature.

Leaders of nations that have been granted much favor over the centuries and which are as a consequence looked up to, ought not to brag about being “indispensable.” Rather, they should make a point of attributing that good fortune to God, and in humility seek to make sure they do not abuse their position.

2. They are a sure sign that those who make the claim aren’t very interested in what God thinks.

People making the claim of indispensability should be asked, “Indispensable to whom?” To God? To other nations? If they think that, they need to read some of the Old Testament references mentioned above, which testify that God is not partial to any nation, does not see any as indispensable, and has no qualms about bringing them down to the pit if they or their leaders continue in pride (Psalm 9:17).

3. They are a sure sign that without repentance, the nation is heading for a big fall.

In first century Judea, the Pharisees, scribes, and chief priests really did believe that they were the one indispensable nation on Earth, the special people above all other people in the sight of God. Jesus didn’t agree and warns them what will happen to them if they keep on in this error: “Therefore I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits” (Matthew 21:43).

4. They are essentially idolatrous in nature.

Any nation or leader of a nation that makes this claim is essentially saying, “You cannot do without us, therefore look up to us.” In other words, the claim of “indispensability” is actually a messianic and salvific

claim, and is therefore an offense to the God Who accounts the nations as “a drop from a bucket ... as the dust on the scales” (Isaiah 40:15), and Who tells the world to look to Him for salvation (Isaiah 45:22).

Don’t misunderstand me. Loving your nation is great. Feeling pride in your nation is a good thing. Patriotism is all well and good. But believing that your nation is indispensable is high folly, tempting God, and needing repentance.

Having said this, there is an indispensable nation. No, I’m not about to claim that it is Britain. It is the Kingdom of God, which “shall never be destroyed” (Daniel 2:45) and which “shall have no end” (Luke 1:33). Whereas every other nation or kingdom on earth might be brought down to the pit (Psalm 9:17), with the Kingdom of God “the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). This Kingdom, this holy nation (1 Peter 2:9) is indeed indispensable. ♦

Rob Slane lives with his wife and six home-educated children in Salisbury, England. He is the author of The God Reality: A Critique of Richard Dawkins’ The God Delusion, contributes to the Canadian magazine Reformed Perspective and blogs on cultural issues from a Biblical perspective at www.theblogmire.com.

1. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/06/the-myth-of-the-indispensable-nation/>

2. Ibid.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:8

We are always in danger of fooling ourselves. All we have to do is say that we have no sin.

When we have sinned, and we say we didn't, we are in grave danger. Inner falsehood corrupts every part of our lives without us even recognizing what is happening. We are deceived.

In the parable Jesus told in Luke 18:9-14, the man who was confident that he hadn't sinned was the one whose prayer God didn't hear.

There is only one way to escape from this self-deception and the resulting corruption.

That is openness and confession. 1 John 1:7 says that if we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:9 says that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we want to escape self-deception and falsehood, our only hope is to admit our sin and rely on the cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Be careful not to fool yourself.

For the Kingdom,



Ray King