

Christian HealthCare

NEWSLETTER

MEMBER LETTER:

A little like seeing the Kingdom
come ... just a glimpse

My wife and I are both physicians and we have become increasingly disappointed with our health care system, mostly because of our experience with the cost of third-party payment. We try to manage the best we can, but the overhead for coders, collections, and other parties with ever increasing requirements is frustrating.

With Samaritan I was extremely satisfied even before submitting the need, simply because of the ability to get fair prices for cash payment—from a clinic to the for-profit hospital.

Receiving all the checks and wonderful cards representing prayers felt a little like seeing the Kingdom come ... just a glimpse. The family of God voluntarily giving to our need was such a reminder of God's provision. There is an interesting mix of feelings of undeserved blessing and "this is the way it should be."

Devin Penny
Wichita, Kansas

Pro-lifers: Get out of medicine!

by Wesley J. Smith

Doctors in the United States cannot be forced to perform abortions or assist suicides. But that may soon change. Bioethicists and other medical elites have launched a frontal assault against doctors seeking to practice their professions under the values established by the Hippocratic Oath. The campaign's goal? To force doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and others in the health field who hold pro-life or orthodox religious views to choose between their careers and their convictions.

Ethics opinions, legislation, and court filings seeking to deny "medical conscience" have proliferated as journals, legislative bodies, and the courts have taken up the cause. In the last year, these efforts have moved from the relative hinterlands of professional discussions into the center of establishment medical discourse. Most recently, preeminent bioethicist Ezekiel Emanuel—one of Obamacare's principal architects—coauthored with Ronit Y. Stahl an attack on medical conscience in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, perhaps the world's most prestigious medical journal. When advocacy of this kind is published by the *NEJM*, it is time to sound the air raid sirens.

The authors take an absolutist position, claiming that personal morality has no place in medical practice. Under the pretext of "patients' rights" and a supposed obligation of doctors to adhere to the medical moral consensus—a tyranny

of the majority, if you will—Emanuel and Stahl would prohibit doctors from conscientiously objecting to performing requested procedures on moral grounds. From "Physicians, Not Conscripts—Conscientious Objection in Health Care" (my emphasis):

Making the patient paramount means offering and providing accepted medical interventions in *accordance with patients' reasoned decisions*. Thus, a health care professional cannot deny patients access to medications for mental health conditions, sexual dysfunction, or contraception on the basis of their conscience, since these *drugs are professionally accepted as appropriate medical interventions*.

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Sharing Summary from June

Shares:	\$24,219,309	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:	\$25,218,239	
Unshared Needs in Negotiation:	\$ —	
New Needs:	3,603	
Total Needs:	7,611	Member Households: 69,469 (as of 5/23/17)
New Rewards:	141	
Miscarriages:	31	
Final Rewards:	6	

Contact Us: 877-764-2426 Dash.SamaritanMinistries.org

Questions about?

- Your medical need
- Shares you are sending or receiving
- Your membership

Email

- needs@samaritanministries.org
- membership@samaritanministries.org
- membership@samaritanministries.org

Phone Menu

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Your Member Services Leaders



Cameron Easley
Member Services Director
Needs Processing



Rob Waldo
Member Services Director
Contact Center

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 pornification of society, part 2

by Rob Slane

What drives a person to use pornography, and what is the remedy?

Last month I discussed how porn is deceptive and destructive to society, but this month I want to address the individual struggle with it.

If I were to take a poll of readers to ask what they think is the driver behind pornography, my guess is that the most common answer would be just one word: lust. That's helpful as far as it goes, but we need to explore the meaning behind it. A good place to start is by studying the words of James in his epistle:

From whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust **and have not**. Ye kill, and desire to have, and **cannot obtain**. Ye fight and war, **yet ye have not**, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and **receive not**, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. (James 4:1-3, KJV)

I bolded those phrases because it seems to me that they are key to understanding lust and all sorts of other sins that James alludes to. Lust is at root a desire to have something that we don't have and isn't rightfully ours. We pursue it zealously but ultimately fail to find satisfaction. It is a vicious cycle in which the failure to obtain satisfaction drives us to seek it again in ever more misguided ways. Porn or drugs are often referred to as a "gateway." Users go on to seek harder and harder stuff in order to attempt to meet increasingly warped desires. Of course, true satisfaction never comes.

Like all other vices, pornography is driven by twisting good desires in a direction that they were never meant to go. Pardon the pun, but there are no original sins. "Original sin" is of course an important doctrine, but there are no "original" sins in the sense of actions that are entirely thought up by the devil or

When we seek satisfaction apart from God's design we experience frustration.

by man with no reference to God. Rather, all sins are perversions and mockeries of something good that God has given to man.

Imagine a father who buys his son a toy drum, only to later find him using the drumstick to hit his little sister. When the boy hits his sister, some of the actions involved are nearly identical to what the stick was meant to be used for. But his thoughts and actions have become twisted to entirely different purposes and ends.

This is how pornography works. God created us with the good desire to be sexually satisfied. It is a consummating, intimate part of the marriage relationship, which the writer to the Hebrews tells us is honorable (Hebrews 13:4). Without it, humanity would die.

Pornography takes this God-given desire and distorts it to the point it is no longer recognizable. We end up directing our desire people and fantasies that were never intended for us.

The irony is that, by using the gifts that God has given us for entirely different and incompatible purposes than the ones intended, we find that fulfillment eludes us. If the sexual drive was created to lead us toward a closer and better relationship with our spouse, how can pornography, which is entirely non-relational and involves people who we have never even met, fulfill? The answer, which James implies, is that it can't. To the extent that it appears to provide some fulfillment, it is like scratching an itch. Only temporary relief, but with the catch that when the itch returns, it will be even harder to appease than before.

Herein lies the pornography trap. We are designed to find fulfillment in a real relationship, but it is partly the fact that pornography is non-relational that makes it so appealing. Relationships are hard. Life is often a monotonous routine. Living with another sinner is often far from easy. But as for the people in the pictures or the video, you don't need to worry about their sins. You don't need to live with them and deal with their issues day after day.

And so the thrill and excitement of being taken out of normal life into some fantasy world where satisfaction apparently resides can become intoxicating. No faithfulness is required to obtain satisfaction

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Ben and Sheri Boyd

Samaritan Ministries Board member Ben Boyd believes we need more Christians who see the law as a calling.

“As I read the Scriptures and was taught a Biblical worldview, I became convinced that the law is a godly and necessary area of service for Christians,” Ben says.

He points to Proverbs’ teaching that it is by God’s wisdom “that kings reign, and rulers decree what is just.” (Proverbs 8:15).

“We’re in a culture that has lost that anchor to God’s justice and to God’s Word,” he says.

Ben is trying to apply God’s Word not just to law, but to health care as well by starting his first term as a member of Samaritan’s Board of Directors this year. A member since 2006, he has been acquainted with Samaritan’s leadership for several years. As a

student at the Liberty University School of Law, he invited SMI Executive Vice President James Lansberry to speak on health care sharing to students and faculty members in 2010.

First in Ben’s legal career came a stint as a judicial law clerk for two trial court judges in Wyoming.

“As I read the Scriptures and was taught a Biblical worldview, I became convinced that the law is a godly and necessary area of service for Christians,” Ben says.

During his time there, he wrote a research paper titled “Health Care Sharing Ministries: Scam or Solution?” which was published in 2013 by Cleveland State University’s *Journal of Law and Health*.

He dove into researching the

legal aspects of health care sharing ministries and “found that nobody else had really done any significant research,” Ben says. He wrote the paper because he “wanted to get some good legal analysis of health care sharing ministries out there ... if there’s litigation on these issues.”

In the process of his research, he was able to glean insights from Samaritan’s leadership about health care sharing ministries.

“I got to speak at length with James Lansberry and Brian Heller (Samaritan’s general counsel) on the legal issues. Brian shared some of his work and up-to-date

research with me. I also got to bounce some ideas off the lawyers that work with Christian Healthcare Ministries and (Christian Care) Medi-Share.”

After Wyoming came a job working as a staff attorney for one of

the best-known judges in America, Chief Justice Roy Moore of the Alabama Supreme Court. Moore received national attention in 2003 for installing a Ten Commandments monument in the Alabama Judicial Building. He was in the news again in 2016 for defending Alabama's traditional marriage laws even after the U.S. Supreme Court issued its same-sex marriage opinion in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

"It was one of the hardest jobs I've ever had," Ben says of his time with Chief Justice Moore in 2013 and 2014. "The number of cases was drastically higher at the Alabama Supreme Court than the trial court in Wyoming. It was an intense work-

load, but a lot of fun."

Ben says that God assembled "quite a team of other attorneys" to assist Chief Justice Moore.

"It was a band of brothers," Ben says. "We all had different church backgrounds, personalities, strengths, and senses of humor, but worked well together in the ministry of justice. I still have regular contact with most of the men that were on Chief Justice Moore's team."

Ben calls Moore "an incredible leader."

"He expected a lot of his staff, and has very high standards," he says. "I have a lot of respect for him as a person, too. He's a Vietnam veteran, West Point graduate, kick

boxer, cowboy, works with his hands, a man's man. It's a blessing and privilege to know him and to have worked with him."

Working for Chief Justice Moore was only a part of Ben's exposure to godly people in his life, starting with his own parents. Ben's parents, Dr. Deveen and Jan Boyd, served as medical missionaries to Zimbabwe when Ben was young. Then, during high school and college, Ben spent eight summers serving with Teen Missions International in Australia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania, Jordan, England, France, Nepal, and Indonesia.

"One of the key things that I took away from Teen Missions is a daily exposure to God's Word through

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Why SMI?

Like so many other Samaritan Ministries families, Ben and Sheri Boyd first became aware of the health care sharing ministry from a *World* magazine ad.

At that time in 2006, the Boyds planned to have children—they now have four—and knew they would need help with medical costs, so they started checking into Samaritan and other health care sharing ministries.

The decision to join Samaritan, though, came down to time.

One health care sharing ministry told Ben he would have to give up his pipe-smoking and then wait a year before he could join. Samaritan, which the Boyds also liked, told him he would have to give up his pipe-smoking and then wait a day before he could join.

He put the pipe down and the Boyds joined Samaritan.

Through Ben's time as a law student at Liberty University School of Law and then as a lawyer working in various locales, the Boyds have valued their involvement in Samaritan, calling their experiences "a delightful demonstration of mercy."

"We currently have a need being processed due to our expecting baby number five, so some of the prenatal aspects of the care for our baby and Sheri have been shared already," Ben says. "It's really just a blessing to get cards from different folks in different states, saying they're praying for our new one and for Sheri and our family. That's just been a blessing and reminder of the same mercy and grace received from other Christians in prior years."

Sheri echoes Ben's appreciation.

"I have no idea how we would have paid for our medical bills without the help of others," she says. "I remember once when we were on our way to the ER with our son thanking God that I didn't have to worry about how this was going to get paid for. When you are in a difficult situation it is such a blessing to not have the added burden of finances poured on top of that. It is one of my favorite checks to write for the month. It's a great blessing to be a part of a community of believers and seeing how the Body of Christ can come together and bear one another's burdens." ♦

Biblical compassion vs. collectivism

by Doug Wilson

If we want justice and equity in human relationships, we have to begin by acknowledging that God owns everything. One of the reasons our culture had for adopting atheistic evolution as our foundational creed is to get around this most inconvenient reality. In a world of purposeless chance, there is stuff lying around, and those who evolve out of other stuff first and find the stuff lying around can provisionally call it “theirs,” unless and until a stronger predator comes and takes it. In modern economics, we call that stronger predator “the majority.”

But in a creationist ethic, God created man and woman and gave them the responsibility for being stewards of the earth. So that we would know what our particular stations were in this broad task of stewardship, God established private ownership, answerable to Him. Just as the commandment not to commit adultery presupposes the institution of marriage, so also the commandment not to steal presupposes the institution of private property. This is why every form of socialism is evil.

The command is not “thou shalt not steal, unless you really need it.” It is not “thou shalt not steal, except by majority vote.” It is not “Thou shalt not steal, unless it is for the common good.” It is simply this: thou shalt not steal (Exodus 20:15).

So this prohibition of stealing is foundational to any just social order. Contrariwise, the lure of thievery is foundational to every corruption of the social order. As soon as we truly understand this, we start to see violations of the principle everywhere.

Theft is not an activity restricted to porch climbers and carjackers. Theft on a grand scale is usually accomplished, not with a crowbar, but rather with a congressman.

It decks itself out as “compassionate,” but this compassion consists of sending men with guns over to somebody else’s house in order

Theft on a grand scale is usually accomplished, not with a crowbar, but rather with a congressman.

to force him to give what all the nice people vaguely deem to be his “fair share.” There is a lot of math involved in determining these amounts. You probably wouldn’t understand.

Biblical compassion consists of giving your own resources away. Collectivist faux-compassion is the whitewash we put over our own larcenous hearts, justifying massive redistribution of wealth, in high defiance of God’s law. We want all the benefits of the thievery, along with all the benefits of a clean conscience, and the resultant acrobatic casuistry that follows is a sight to behold.

Frédéric Bastiat described the ludicrous rationalization quite well:

“When plunder becomes a way of

life for a group of men in a society, over the course of time they create for themselves a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it.”

Once we understand the Gospel, which teaches us the extent of our own sinfulness, we start to understand the lengths to which collective rationalization can go. There is no area of life where the Christian world stands in greater need of theological sanctification than here, on the issue of property.

Wealth is a good thing. It is a good thing that presents many temptations, certainly, and one of the central temptations it brings is that of making us think that it is other people who are experiencing the temptation. In short form, we think the great problem to avoid is greed, when the real problem is that we are addled with envy.

We think that the answer to wealth’s temptations is asceticism, when it is actually gratitude and generosity. The people of Israel in Deuteronomy were certainly warned about the temptations presented by wealth.

“Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage ... And thou say in thine heart, my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

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A kind word and gentle answer resulted in a 75 percent discount

by Sally Zito

What did it feel like for my husband, Tom, and me to join Samaritan Ministries back in 2015? Kind of like jumping out of an airplane, tugging on ripcords, and hoping our parachutes would open!

But through the shares we mailed, prayers we prayed, and cards we sent to those in need, Tom and I soon realized that, while we no longer had health insurance, we belonged to a wonderful ministry. Our commitment to fellow members became very important to us.

A few months later, Tom was hospitalized with a serious illness. Thankfully he recovered, and we prayed for God's help in handling the bills that would follow. Doctors, lab tests, in-patient care, emergency room fees, X-rays ... the steady stream of invoices sent me to my knees more than once. I soon realized that part of our commitment to Samaritan members included helping to keep costs down. Suddenly I was on a mission: I wanted to reduce every charge by the largest amount possible.

Each bill that arrived in the mail landed on a pile next to my phone. With a whispered prayer, I called providers and asked to speak with their billing department. Understanding how difficult the clerk's job must be, I tried to bring a little sunshine into their day. After all, I not only represented Samaritan Ministries, but Jesus Christ, too!

When a caller is pleasant, polite, and patient, even testy clerks can become quite friendly. I watched in amazement as God reduced nearly every charge—some by as much as

75 percent! One hospital fee—nearly \$24,000—was reduced to \$5,900. I was stunned. In fact, I was starting to have fun! Me, the girl who could hardly sell Girl Scout cookies without cringing, asking medical providers to knock thousands of dollars off my bill!

Part of our commitment to members included helping to keep costs down. I was on a mission.

The conversations went something like this:

Me: "Hi. I just received a statement in the mail from your office regarding charges for my husband's hospitalization last month. I have the account number here if you need it."

Clerk: "Thank you, I'll take that number. OK, I see your charges ... how can I help you?"

Me: "Well, I wanted to know if by chance Dr. So-and-so would consider reducing this bill for me ... since we are cash-pay patients."

Clerk: "Typically no, those are our fees."

Me: "I see. Do you think he might make an exception if we were willing to pay the full discounted amount right away?"

Clerk: "I doubt it, but I'd have to check."

Me: "OK. Well, I'd really appreciate you checking into that for me. It's quite a bit of money, but we'd be happy to pay it off if it could be reduced by say, 50 percent or so. But any amount would help."

Clerk: "I'll see what I can do and get back with you."

Me: "Thanks so much—God bless your day."

Nearly every provider reduced the charge. Most were happy to receive their payment in full, but some did insist on arranging for small monthly payments. We drew on our credit to get the discounts, and then paid off the debt when members mailed us their shares.

(And thank you SO much, dear members—your shares were on time and your cards brought tears to our eyes!)

To say that this has taught us to trust the Lord is an understatement. God also showed me that there are many good people in the medical field. Each of them appreciates a kind word and a gentle answer—no exceptions! It's truly a privilege to be an ambassador for Christ in this way, and a blessing to belong to such a wonderful ministry. ♦

Samaritan Ministries members Tom and Sally Zito live in Michigan.



Member Connect

Member Connect is the latest app to be launched on the Dashboard, giving us a new way to participate in Biblical community. Log in at Dash. SamaritanMinistries.org to join in praying for one another, exchanging tips about health issues or dealing with providers, and helping each other resolve any issues related to your Samaritan membership. Here are a few examples of the connections being made.

My wife was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer

P **Peter:** She just completed chemo sessions and will move on to mastectomies and then radiation therapy. Would request prayer for our family, especially my wife as she goes through this very difficult process. Please pray that Jesus will sustain us in our faith as He has thus far through our prayers and those of our friends and church community.

This is a long process and one that is difficult to understand the why—we try to maintain a positive outlook on the process and have placed the outcome in God's hands.

J **Jen:** Heavenly Father, I pray for the surgery that You will give the doctors wisdom and guide them and that You will give your

children comfort and peace as they go through this process.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

Prayer for our struggling teen

C **Christine:** Our daughter (18) has struggled with anxiety, depression, and unforgiveness. We are at a point where we've decided to offer her mediation with a trained Biblical counselor or living elsewhere as a solution to restore peace in our lives, and hers.

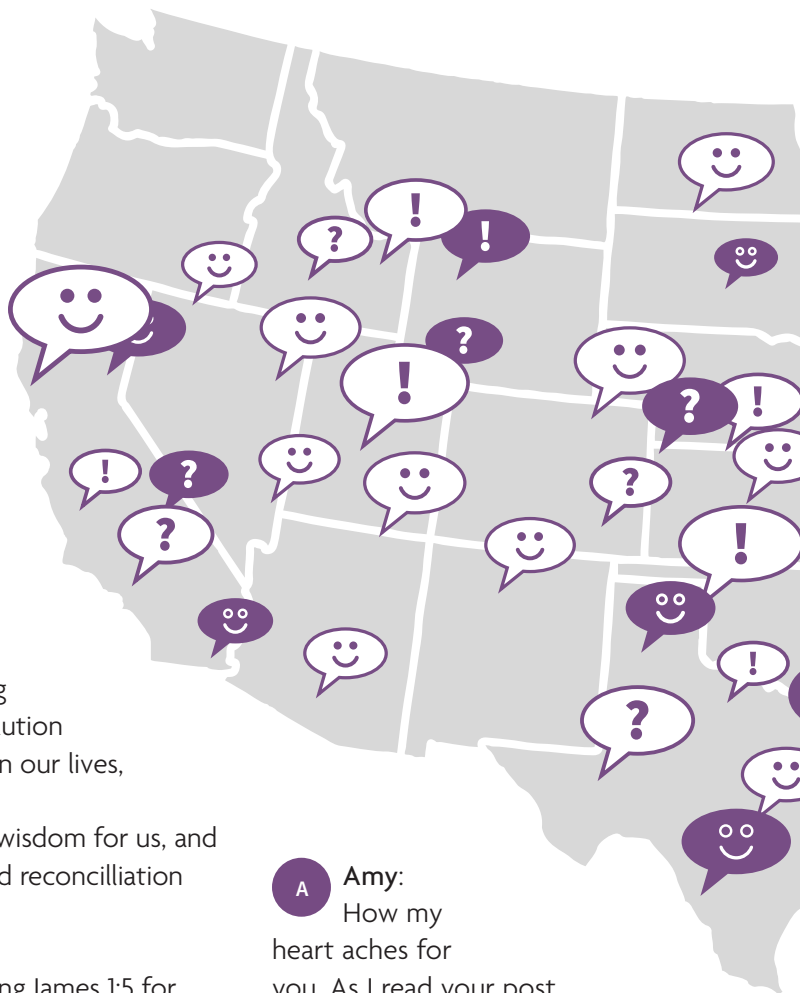
Please pray for wisdom for us, and healing, peace, and reconciliation for our child ...

D **Diane:** Praying James 1:5 for you as you seek direction for your daughter and your family, to His glory. May He give you patience, strength and peace as He works His perfect will in your daughter's life. We are walking a similar road and have seen His faithfulness over the years.

M **Monica:** As a parent myself (kids ranging in age from 38 to 18) I feel for you! I'll certainly pray for all you've asked. Teenage years

are especially difficult for kids without the additional struggles you've mentioned.

Don't be discouraged if this process takes longer than you'd hoped. (It usually does!) One thing I do know is that God hears all your prayers.

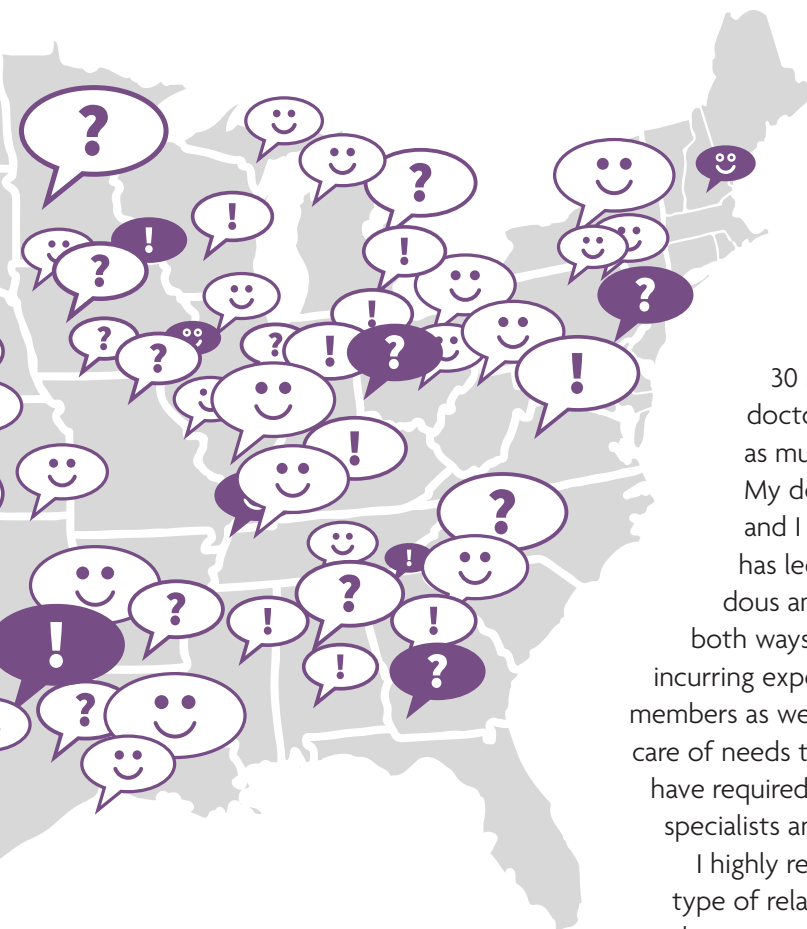


A **Amy:** How my heart aches for you. As I read your post I was remembering a time in my sister's life when the enemy had such a strong hold on her. My parents continued to be strong and pray and fight for her to be restored. One night she even physically assaulted my mother and had to be taken away by the police. I am so joyful to be able to say that God had a greater plan and she is fully restored to Him and to our family! There is still hope for your daughter!

Praise for healing of my shoulder impingement syndrome

M Marion: I avoided surgery through easy physical therapy videos I found on Youtube. Here's the link, just watch, it speaks for itself.

Pain free in two days! Healing through prayer plus know-how works. I'm so grateful I got the right ideas. Praise God!



Save on Epi-Pens

R Ryne: We were just informed by one of our members that there is a great deal for a generic Epi-Pen at CVS.

If you sign up for a savings card you can save \$100.00 on a 2 pack, which would reduce their price to less than \$10.00! Here are the links you can use ...

How many members use Direct Primary Care?

A Anthony: For primary care provider or family doctor?

D Daniel: I use Direct Doctors in Rhode Island. This is very high level care and often eliminates the need for specialists. For a modest monthly "sub-

scription fee" I get all access to my doctor. The response

time is quick. My office visits have never

been less than 30 minutes with the doctor and are often as much as an hour.

My doctor knows me and I know him. This has led to a tremendous amount of trust

both ways. I have avoided

incurring expenses for SMI members as well. He has taken care of needs that in the past have required a visit to hand specialists and urologists.

I highly recommend this type of relationship. In

those months where I had a shared need I am able to submit the monthly fee as well.

L Linda: We have been with a Direct Primary Care provider for several months now; very happy with the way it works: monthly fee gives us 24/7 access to Dr. via email, text, or cell phone call. Appointments within 24 hrs. No long waits in a waiting room. Great relationship with Dr.! I could go on and on ... do it!

Benefits of essential oils?

D Doris: I have been using peppermint oil instead of taking over-the-counter allergy medicine for about a year now. I would really like to learn more about the benefit of oils and the different brands that are best to use. Has anyone else seen a benefit from using oils?

M Michael: I have been using Lemon Grass and Rosemary to assist with dandruff and psoriasis. So far, noticeable results.

R Roy: I have been using coconut oil for several years and like how it helps my skin.

J Jared: Recently used Tea Tree oil (diluted) for my son's ear-ache. He experienced relief within a matter of hours. I'm not certain the full extent of what was causing the ear pain to begin with but 24 hours later he is still symptom free.

How do I join Save to Share?

J Jodi: I am very interested in joining Save to Share. Can I join Save to Share any time during the year, or do I have to wait until my annual Continuation? Can I join online?

K Kailee: You aren't able to start instantly online yet, but you can join Save to Share at any time! Just go to "Membership" and click "Learn More" for Save to Share and it will give you an option to request to join. ♦

Why member-to-member sharing?

by Jed Stuber

Have you ever received an incredulous look when you are trying to explain Samaritan to someone and you come to the part about the shares being sent from one member to another?

We get comments that run the gamut:

- “Wow, that’s different.”
- “I had no idea something like this existed.”
- “Are you sure that’s even legal?”
- “That will never work.”
- “That’s the way it should work!”
- “I’ve been looking for a ministry like this for my whole life.”



Perhaps even long-time members can recall many years ago when you were surprised to learn how it works.

We even get an occasional comment to this effect: “You know this would be a whole lot easier if Samaritan just collected the money and paid the bills, right?”

Of course, this comment misses the point entirely. We can’t emphasize enough how important it is that we minister directly to one another.

Direct personal ministry is emphasized in the Bible. There are 59 “one another” statements in Scripture:

- Encourage one another daily.

- Be devoted to one another.
- Be kind and compassionate to one another.
- Have equal concern for one another.
- Be patient, bearing with one another.
- Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

The command “love one another” occurs 20 times. At Samaritan we have always emphasized Galatians 6:2, “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ.”

We would all readily acknowledge that for any ministry to be successful these Scriptural principles must be honored. However, when it comes to health care, we often fall into the habit of

assuming that it’s an impersonal financial matter.

Sometimes you send money, sometimes you get money. Laws of large numbers come into play, and on average it works out pretty well for everyone. The problem is that we tend to think in terms of insurance.

But surely Christians should not fall for the idea that the spiritual aspects of any area of life can be disregarded.

We often receive member letters specifically stating that the spiritual

aspects are more important than the financial:

- “I’ve been so blessed to be a part of this ministry. It’s been wonderful for all my medical bills. But even more important were the encouraging notes, Scriptures, and personal words, they truly were from the Lord.”
- “When the members of Samaritan Ministries sent cards and prayers, I knew the power of prayer is more important than money. I have kept every card and prayer sent to me.”
- “Some would say Samaritan Ministries sounds risky. I’m



comfortable with it not being an insurance company, however, because I feel more secure in trusting God and His people, rather than a worldly company. Even more important are the prayers of those assigned to our needs.”

- “The money was very important to pay off these bills, but the cards, prayers, and encouragement were even more important as I faced this trying time.”
- “Until we found ourselves on the receiving end of Samaritan

Ministries we really didn't know or understand how vitally important it is to send a card or note of encouragement along with the share each month. I now take more time each month asking God to help me be a blessing to others. Thank you, family, and God bless you."

Consider these classic quotes on the importance of prayer:

- "What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer." E.M. Bounds
- "God does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it." John Wesley
- "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." Martin Luther
- "Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work." Oswald Chambers

We also find that science confirms the importance of faith and prayer for our physical health. Dr. Harold G. Koenig, director of Duke University's Center for the Study of Religion/Spirituality and Health, reports the following:

- An exhaustive analysis of 1,500 medical studies indicates people who are more religious and pray more have better mental and physical health.

- Religious people cope with stress better, experience greater well-being because they have more hope, are more optimistic, experience less depression, less anxiety, and commit suicide less.
- Regular churchgoers live longer. There is a seven-year difference in life expectancy between those who never attend church and those who attend weekly.
- Religious people have stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure, and better cardiovascular functioning.

Of course, none of this means that the financial aspects aren't important.

Member-to-member sharing helps us all be more cognizant of the fact that shares come from another person, not an impersonal pool we feel entitled to. It helps us be stewardship conscious about the financial aspects of a need because we know a dollar saved by us is a dollar saved for another family.

It also allows for us to have the responsibility and freedom to make health care decisions with our health care providers without interference from Samaritan as a third-party payer dictating medicine.

There's much more that could be said about the importance of member-to-member sharing, and we'd love to hear from you about it.

Why do you think member-to-member sharing is significant? Send an email to newsletter@samartanministries.org, or start a discussion about it on the new Member Connect app. ♦

But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish his covenant which He swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (Deuteronomy 8:12–18).

They sinfully assumed that they had made themselves wealthy. They gave way to self-sufficiency. They forgot that it was God Who made them wealthy. They forgot—just as we have forgotten—that He made them wealthy in order to establish His covenant.

And what does it look like when His covenant is established? We can see it in a mirror, when we look at what Israel did not do.

"Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and He shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until He have destroyed thee" (Deuteronomy 28:47–48).

What modern Christians in the West lack is not stuff. We have the stuff, but so did Israel before Nebuchadnezzar hauled away all their stuff. We have the stuff. What we don't have is the worship of God with joy and gladness, for the abundance of all things.

In short, we don't know how to be stewards, because we don't know that God is the only ultimate owner. ♦

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This includes human life-taking actions such as abortion:

[A]bortion is politically and culturally contested, it is not medically controversial. It is a standard obstetrical practice. Health care professionals who conscientiously object to professionally contested interventions may avoid participating in them directly. ... Conscientious objection still requires conveying accurate information and providing timely referrals to ensure patients receive care.

This would mean that a Catholic doctor who opposes contraception would have to prescribe it or find a doctor willing to fill out the prescription—even if she informs her patients before being retained that she practices medicine in accord with her church's moral teachings. It would also require a pro-life OB/GYN who refuses to terminate a pregnancy to find an abortionist, thus becoming complicit in the act. The authors would still allow doctors to decline to assist suicides—for now—but only because that practice is not yet accepted generally within the medical community. If euthanasia ever does become generally accepted—as it is now in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Canada—under the Emanuel/Stahl rule, dissenting physicians would be required to participate in homicide.

Emanuel and Stahl would drive noncooperating doctors out of medicine (my emphasis):

Health care professionals who are unwilling to accept these limits have two choices: select an area of medicine, such as radiology, that will not put them in situations that conflict with their per-

sonal morality or, if there is no such area, *leave the profession*.

Shattering medical conscience rights would also dissuade those who hold officially unwanted values—orthodox Catholics and other Christians, Jews, Muslims, and pro-lifers—from entering medical school in the first place. There is a method to this madness: The goal is to

The goal is to cleanse health care of all those who would dare to practice medicine in accord with pro-life viewpoints.

cleanse health care of all those who would dare to practice medicine in accord with sanctity-of-life moral viewpoints.

The attacks on conscience have already moved beyond mere intellectual advocacy. The government of Ontario, Canada, is on the verge of requiring doctors either to euthanize or to refer all legally qualified patients. In Victoria, Australia, all physicians must either perform an abortion when asked or find an abortionist for the patient. One doctor has been disciplined under the law for refusing to refer for a sex-selective abortion. In Washington state, a small pharmacy chain owned by a Christian family failed in its attempt to be excused from a regulation requiring all legal

prescriptions to be dispensed, with a specific provision precluding conscience exemptions. The chain now faces a requirement to fill prescriptions for the morning-after pill, against the owners' religious beliefs. In Vermont, a regulation obligates all doctors to discuss assisted suicide with their terminally ill patients as an end-of-life option, even if they are morally opposed. Litigation to stay this forced speech has, so far, been unavailing.

The ACLU recently commenced a campaign of litigation against Catholic hospitals that adhere to the Church's moral teaching. For example, it sued a Catholic hospital that refused to sterilize a woman in conjunction with her caesarian section. That lawsuit failed. Undaunted, the supposed guardians of civil liberties—except the free exercise of religion, it seems—recently brought a case against a Catholic hospital for refusing to permit doctors to perform an elective hysterectomy as part of a sex-reassignment surgery.

There is a reason that moral diversity is under attack in health care. When doctors refuse to abort a fetus, participate in assisted suicide, excise healthy organs, or otherwise follow their consciences about morally contentious matters, they send a powerful message: Just because a medical act is legal doesn't make it right. Such a clarion witness is intolerable to those who want to weaponize medicine to impose secular individualistic and utilitarian values on all of society. ♦

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Bible studies and devotional times,” Ben says. “That’s a key aspect of their ministry to youth, and it certainly made a difference in my life.”

It made enough of a difference to lead him to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. He applied to Moody sight unseen and in January 1996, flew to Chicago for the first time to start college.

“I grew up tremendously during those four years,” he says. “I’m not a city guy, but I certainly enjoyed my time” in downtown Chicago.

After college, though, Ben found himself without much direction. He worked a variety of odd jobs, traveled parts of the West on a motorcycle, and also learned how to fly fish.

In 2001, he took a full-time teaching position at Providence Academy, a classical Christian academy in Lostine, Oregon, and taught a variety of classes over the next six years. While he was there he met and married Sheri. He soon realized that his teaching career was not going to support their family

(which now includes four children) so in 2007, the Boyd family headed to Lynchburg, Virginia, and Liberty University School of Law so that Ben could start his journey as a lawyer.

He sees law as a mission field as well.

“It’s a very hostile mission field, but it’s definitely an area that needs to be reached with God’s Word and faithful Christian attorneys,” he says. “My understanding of Christ’s mission is a lot broader than just planting churches, doing evangelism and discipleship, or training pastors.”

Today, he’s an associate in a practice run by long-time friends Rahn Hostetter and his son, Zac.

As Christian lawyers, Ben and his employers have opportunities to implement Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 6 when counseling Christians who have legal disputes with one another.

“We direct Christians in a dispute to the elders of their churches,” Ben says. “We tell our Christian clients that they need to make every effort

to be at peace with their Christian brothers and sisters.”

He admits that if one party is sued, “it’s tough to convince the other side that they need to be at peace.”

The practical reality of it, however, depends on the elders of given churches being willing “to step into a thorny situation,” Ben adds.

Ben is eager to serve on Samaritan’s Board.

“What draws me to service on the Board is the quality of the people working in the leadership, the quality of the employees, and the Biblical focus of the ministry,” he says. “Samaritan fulfills a necessary part of the Church’s ministry. The Lord commanded His disciples to go out and heal the sick. Part of healing the sick is paying those who minister healing, as shown in the parable of the Good Samaritan. And paying those who minister healing will help Christians find godly, competent medical care.” ♦

Family is important to Ben and Sheri Boyd

“We see the Lord’s purpose in our marriage and raising a family together with God’s blessing,” Ben says.

Ben and Sheri pour into the lives of their four children, Gloriana, 10; Zion, 8; Jamin, 6; and Calvin, 5. Both parents are involved with homeschooling their “kiddos.” Sheri teaches math, grammar, reading, handwriting, spelling, gardening, and chicken-raising, while Ben teaches Bible, Latin, Lego construction, and shooting.

Sheri is grateful for Ben’s attention to her and the children.

“When he comes home from work, he refreshes me and pours himself into the kids,” she says. “He’s always looking for ways to include the kids in his

work. I’m thankful for his love and for how he includes us in the things he loves to do, but also becomes involved with the things that I love and the children love. He is a good teacher, a good leader, a good friend and much much more. I am so thankful for him. He is a good man who loves the Lord.”

Plus, one of the reasons the Boyds moved to Oregon was to help provide care for Ben’s 100-year-old grandmother, Ruth Boyd. Sheri has been “a huge part” of caring for Grandma Ruth.

“Sheri has a really close relationship with my grandma,” Ben says. “Grandma Ruth is a faithful Christian lady. It’s been a blessing for Sheri to pour into Grandma Ruth’s life and Grandma Ruth into hers.” ♦

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 Watch Monitor and The Voice of the Martyrs and offer prayer points. Please use them in your personal or group prayer time.

Indian pastor beaten

A gang of Hindu radicals attacked a pastor in India in early May, according to International Christian Concern. After luring Sikandar Kumar out of his house, the gang accused him of converting Hindus to Christianity and beat him with sticks and iron rods. *Pray for Pastor Kumar’s healing, for justice for the attackers, safety of the pastor’s family, and the conversion of the guilty.*

Chinese province bans church

A Chinese coastal church has been banned by provincial authorities, ICC reports. River of Life Berean Church and the Bereans Research Institute of Theology in coastal Fujian province were accused of “establishing religious sites” without approval and of “collaborating with Korea.” *Pray for the strengthening of the church and school, that its members would find ways to continue to meet and worship together, and that the situation would result in evangelistic growth.*

Pastor locked inside home

Chinese authorities locked the pastor of Huoquan Christian Church inside his home to keep him from holding services, ICC says. Police had already banned the 300 congregation members from meeting together. *Pray the pastor will be released soon. Pray also for the well-being and unity of the congregation.*

Chinese pastor arrested

Chinese pastor Cao San Qiang, known for his work among Myanmar’s poor, was arrested on March 5, VOM says. He was charged by Chinese authorities with “organizing illegal crossings of national borders,” although he had been crossing the border between China and Myanmar without incident for three years. He is being held in the Menglian Detention Center. *Pray for a quick release, safety while he’s being detained, and provision for his wife, Jamie Powell, and their sons, Benjamin and Amos.*

Two pastors detained

Two pastors in Myanmar have been detained for three months without trial, VOM says. Pastors Dom Dawng Nawng Latt, 65, and La Jaw Gam Hseng, 35, were arrested in December when they helped a couple that was complaining to the military about the destruction of their house. The two have been charged with “unlawful association with an armed ethnic group as well as recruiting and spying for an armed ethnic group.” Despite a law requiring a hearing within 28 days of arrest, their case has not gone to trial. *Pray for their safety, release, provision, and vindication.*

Christian lawyer threatened

A Christian lawyer and human rights activist helping people accused of

blasphemy in Pakistan is receiving death threats, ICC reports. Jacqueline Sultan also helps victims of forced conversions and marriages. Special services were recently held throughout the country to support Sultan. *Pray for Sultan’s safety as she continues to advocate for Christian victims of forced conversions and blasphemy accusations, that she will be able to continue her work, and that those persecuting her will turn to Jesus.*

Church planter threatened

A church planter working in Colombia is receiving frequent death threats, Voice of the Martyrs reports. “Xavier Gonzalez,” who started a church in one of the country’s poorest cities, has received threats from guerrillas, paramilitary members, and street gangs. *Pray for the protection of Xavier and the 130 members of his church so they can continue to carry out their acts of service.*

Ultraorthodox Jews attack homes

Ultraorthodox Jews are targeting the homes and meeting center of a messianic Jewish community in southern Israel, VOM reports. Protesters plus members of Yad L’Achim, an anti-missionary organization, created a disturbance outside the meeting place and then protested outside members’ homes on May 4, breaking windows and causing other damage. *Pray for protection of messianic Jews in southern Israel, for the children who were frightened by the attacks, and for justice and conversion.* ♦

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 (worldwatchmonitor.org).

there. No commitment is required to achieve satisfaction there. No dealing with another person in an ongoing relationship is required to get satisfaction there. And yet the irony is that true, lasting satisfaction is the one thing it can never bring.

What then is the remedy? Here are five suggestions.

1. Come to see how much it dehumanizes both yourself and others.

As I noted last month, pornography is by its very nature dehumanizing. It objectifies and commoditizes people. Once we are desensitized to people, we lose our ability to discern what is appropriate behavior and can justify almost any kind of sin against one another.

2. Understand that it cannot bring you the satisfaction you desire.

Any counselor of those with a porn habit will tell you it has never yet brought anyone true joy or lasting happiness. In fact, it's just the opposite, having ruined countless lives. If you are having to look for satisfaction in something which demonstrably cannot bring you what you are looking for, it's probably a good time to question whether you are seeking satisfaction in the right places.

3. Recognize how ridiculous it is.

C.S. Lewis famously used this illustration to point out the absurdity of a strip club, but it applies to porn as well:

Imagine an alien world where scores of men have assembled to watch a striptease. A small, covered platter is brought out—and with all eyes wide, someone slowly removes the lid, revealing a steaming hamburger. Cheering and

howling begins, and others snicker, elbowing their friends. Some just sit quivering in their seats.

If such a world did exist, we would not think it merely odd. We would think something inside the audience was broken. A healthy appetite for food is good, but when appetites turn into manic behavior, something is in a state of disrepair.

There's something to be said for trying to step outside of yourself for a moment to ponder. Porn involves fantasizing about having a sexual encounter with a person you've never met, never will meet, and if you did meet the person it would be completely wrong to pursue. Isn't it completely absurd?

4. Stop referring to your habit as an addiction.

The word addiction has become one of the most abused words of our day, and is often used as an excuse for avoiding responsibility. We'd be better off using Biblical terminology such as Christ's teaching in John 8. "Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin ... if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed."

I have no doubt that pornography produces certain chemicals in the brain that can take a powerful hold on us and some people will face extreme difficulty in breaking the habit. If using the word addiction helps us recognize how serious of a problem we've gotten ourselves into, that's fine. But the idea that we are passive victims is not borne out either Biblically or practically.

Pornography falls into the category of sexual immorality, and Scripture is plain that this is a sin

that we should avoid, can avoid, and must avoid, chemicals and habits notwithstanding.

5. God tells us that those who don't break with it will be excluded from the Kingdom of God.

This is a sobering truth that should cause appropriate fear. The Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the Kingdom of God." Despite the elaborate attempts of many modern Christians to ignore, twist, deny, confuse, or dispute the very clear teaching of this passage, there it is. Make of it what you will.

Much more could be said about these and other helpful ideas for fighting this sin, but there is a bottom line Biblical remedy. "Flee from sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18). *That's it.* All the reasoning in the world will not help the user of porn to break his or her porn habit unless they are prepared to do the one thing necessary: Run away from it. Have nothing to do with it. ♦

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God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie.

1 John 1:5b-6

If we say we are living in fellowship with God, while living in ways that are not obedient to Him, we are lying. Our words may fool others, and possibly even ourselves, but we are not practicing the truth.

We may not have made a long-term decision to walk in darkness. Instead we may do (or not do) something, “just this once.” Later we repeat it, “just once more.” Then again, and again. Eventually we may find ourselves comfortable with a habit and used to being out of fellowship with God. Even if no one else knows, we will not have fellowship with God.

This passage does not mean that we never sin. The verses that follow make this clear. When we sin, we can confess our sin, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us so we are living in the light, in fellowship with Him. But if we continue practicing our sin, walking in the darkness while claiming to have fellowship with Him, we are lying and not practicing the truth.

For the Kingdom,



Ray King