

Christian HealthCare

NEWSLETTER

MEMBER LETTERS:

We like sending directly to other Christians

We are so thankful to be a part of Samaritan Ministries. It's such a blessing to send money directly to other Christians who have needs rather than to an insurance company.

Every time we have had a Need, God has graciously provided through the Shares and gifts of others. This summer my husband injured his finger, which resulted in surgery and many bills. Again God supplied through Samaritan members.

The Shares and notes of encouragement came from all over the country. We are grateful we still have the freedom in America to be a part of this ministry. Praise the Lord!

*John & Cheryl
Janesville, Wisconsin*

New sharing program coming soon: Samaritan Given

As we celebrate our 25th year in ministry we are also announcing the launch of an entirely new sharing program: Samaritan Given. We want to keep the same principles of direct member-to-member sharing but also package together new technologies and partners in a way that will make health care sharing better than ever.

Samaritan Given features a custom developed online platform that will enable members to do all sharing electronically. You will be able to set up your bank account to work with the platform, and a mobile app will allow you to send your Share with a swipe. You will also have the option to directly message others with encouragement and prayers.

Samaritan Given will also feature a membership card that members will present to providers, resulting in properly itemized digital billing information flowing into the sharing platform. You won't have to hassle with repeatedly requesting more information from providers. Our partners will reprice bills to a fair price, and the providers will be paid quickly. In the majority of cases, it will all happen automatically!

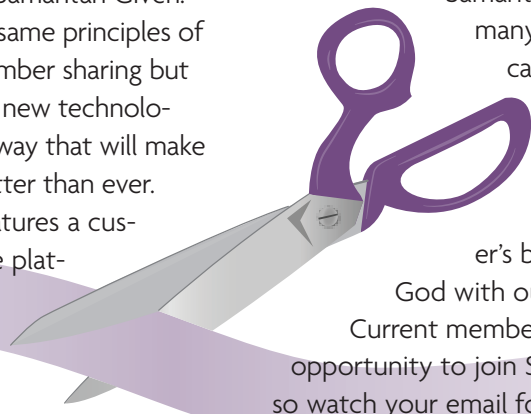
Samaritan Given is designed to allow you to determine what is best for you and your family. You will select the options for the monthly Share, Annual Unshareable Amount, and Co-share

that you prefer. Explore the options at SamaritanMinistries.org/given.

We are very excited to introduce Samaritan Given so that many more Christians can catch the vision for joining together as the Body of Christ to share one another's burdens and glorify God with our health care.

Current members have the first opportunity to join Samaritan Given, so watch your email for more details. Of course, if you prefer the Samaritan Classic or Basic experience, you can simply continue sharing as you always have.

We appreciate your prayers for Samaritan staff and partners as we work on this important new endeavor. ♦



In This Issue...

- 3 **Member walks across the country to raise awareness of foster care**
- 4 **Member Spotlight**
Steve & Renée Gillis: Patch Our Planet
- 6 **Five ways to ensure the orphan crisis will never be solved by the Church**
- 8 **Bone broth: Why you need it and how to make it**
- 10 **Book Excerpt**
Destructive Lies, Healing Truth
- 12 **Recommended vitamin D levels too low to save millions of lives**
- 16 **The Doorpost**

CONTENTS

- 1 **New sharing program coming soon: Samaritan Given**
- 3 **Member walks across the country to raise awareness of foster care**
- 4 **Member Spotlight**
Scott & Renée Gillis: Patch Our Planet
by Kathryn Nielson
- 6 **Five ways to ensure the orphan crisis will never be solved by the Church**
by Scott Gillis
- 8 **Bone broth: Why you need it and how to make it**
by Andie Dill
- 10 **Book Excerpt**
Destructive Lies, Healing Truth
by member M.A. Pasquale
- 12 **Recommended vitamin D levels too low to save millions of lives**
by Bill Sardi
- 14 **Prayer for the Persecuted Church**
- 16 **The Doorpost**
The key to being like Jesus
by Ray King

CONTACT US

newsletter@samaritanministries.org

FOLLOW US

On Twitter: samaritanmin
On Facebook: Samaritan Ministries

EDITORS

Jed Stuber, Editor
Michael Miller, Managing Editor
Ray King, Editor Emeritus

ART DIRECTION

Dan van Loon

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.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES:

PO Box 3618, Peoria, IL 61612
telephone: 309-689-0442
telephone (toll free): 877-764-2426
fax: 309-689-0764

Sharing Summary from October

Shares:	\$30,651,366	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:	\$30,605,878	
Deficit:	\$5,353,054	
New Needs:	4,593	
Total Needs:	9,008	
New Rewards:	227	
Miscarriages:	20	Member Households: 83,453
Final Rewards:	13	(as of 9/18/19)

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

- 1 - 1
- 1 - 3
- 1 - 4



Health Resources

Have a Need? Use the Health Resources app on Dash.

- Compare quality and cost of health care services in your area using Healthcare Bluebook.
- Use MediBid to receive bids from doctors for tests or treatments you are seeking.
- Email a medical professional or call a nurse (free), or call a doctor who can write a prescription (\$25).
- Access discount tools for prescriptions and lab tests.

Remember:



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



2 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.



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

Member walks across the country to raise awareness of foster care

Glenn Koster grew up in foster care and recovered from abuse and addiction

by Michael Miller

Glenn Koster wanted to raise awareness of the need for homes for thousands of children in the foster-care system across the United States, so he walked 4,310 miles.

That's about 9 million steps through 16 states and six mountain ranges.

The 64-year-old Samaritan member walked from Miami, Florida, on the East Coast across the U.S. to Westport, Washington, on the West Coast. The effort took place over 201 days achieved over two years, 2018 and 2019, with the break due to some mechanical issues with the Koster's recreational vehicle and some health issues. He began walking on February 1, 2018, started the break in July 2018, and stepped out again in May 2019, finishing this past August 28 in the surf of the Pacific Ocean.

"I didn't do it on my own," he says. "I did it knowing that it was God who enabled it to happen."

In the foster system

Glenn himself was in the foster system twice growing up. Abandoned at age 6, he was adopted, but had to be removed from that home 13 months later due to neglect and abuse. After re-entering the foster system, he lost his next foster father to a heart attack but landed with a good family and was adopted again by age 10, this time for good.

But he encountered trouble as an adult himself.

"I mimicked the behavior of my birth father," he says. "I became an alcoholic and a spousal abuser."

Glenn has been sober and violence free since 1989, he says. "Because of the drinking and violence, though, I could never be a foster or adoptive parent," Glenn says.

So, he did the next best thing: walking across the United States to make the need known.

By his own estimations, he has managed to meet his goal. Thanks to the walk, he believes that he has been able to get the word out to about 1 million people due to combined exposure through "uncountable" one-on-one conversations, about 50 newspapers, several TV stations, National Public Radio, and K-LOVE Radio, denominational newsletters, speaking at more than 40 churches, presenting at three different foster-parenting seminars, and social media.

Conversations along the way helped Glenn to spread the word organically about the need for families to open their homes to foster children. One man stopped his truck in the middle of a country road to talk with Glenn about why he was walking.

"Foster parenting needs more attention because the need continues," Glenn says.

He especially hopes churches hear the message.



"If every church had one family step to the plate as a foster family, there would be no shortage of homes," he says. "If every church rallied around those families, respite and emergency care would not be an issue either."

The most recent numbers available show about 443,000 children were in foster care in 2017, according to Child Welfare Information Gateway. But Glenn says that still leaves tens of thousands more waiting for a home to open up, either temporarily or permanently.

"Many foster parents that I have talked to mention the frustration they have with the system, particularly in addressing issues that arise in a timely manner because of the caseload of available social workers," Glenn says. "Another issue for foster care is a lack of 'respite parents,' folks who step up for a day or a weekend to allow foster families to have a break.

"Emergency needs also exist in most states to address those situations where a child must be

Continued on page 15

Steve & Renée Gillis

Patch Our Planet

by Kathryn Nielson

Steve Gillis has created a plan to chip away at the needs of vulnerable children around the world with Patch Our Planet, a ministry that creates custom orphan-care plans for churches.

The need is staggering. America is home to 400,000 orphans, abandoned children, and children in foster care, and there are about 153 million children in similar situations around the world. To add to the crisis in the past decade, many of the American children have been affected as the result of another crisis—opioid addiction.

Depending on the size of the congregation, helping vulnerable children can mean anything from church small groups getting involved



in a boys or girls home or starting an adoption fund, to building an addiction recovery program which, as Steve says, is a way to close “the front door to foster care by helping these parents” struggling with substance abuse.

“I believe the church is the best answer to the orphan crisis,” Steve says. “Unfortunately, it is usually the least equipped.”

It all starts on a whiteboard.

“In a collaborative meeting with church leaders and laity, we literally write out a plan by finding out what the church does best and building a strong foundation of care based on the church’s strengths, instead of being spread out in all different directions,” Steve says.

Other churches have addressed the crisis in their own communities by forming partnerships with social services and government agencies to solve the problem. Steve says the ultimate goal is “to build a network of churches in a community to actu-

ally solve the problem.”

One example of how that happens is The Chapel in Buffalo, New York, where Steve’s brother, Jerry Gillis, is pastor.

Eight years ago, The Chapel wanted to address the orphan crisis in their area. Along with four other churches, The Chapel created the Every Child orphan ministry, “a bridge organization connecting the church to those who are already doing great work in the social services community through strategic partnerships,” according to the ministry’s website. Today Every Child partners with over 23 organizations across western New York in an effort to serve these children. In addition, church leaders in the region are planting churches together looking for places where the Gospel isn’t being shared.

“Even though some of the churches in western New York were already planting churches together, I like to kid my brother that intentional



orphan care is what really took those church relationships to the next level,” Steve says. “Churches rarely agree on everything. That’s why we have denominations. But they all seem to agree that vulnerable children need the Church to act, and that belief has a unifying power in bringing churches in a community together. It’s really cool to see what the Lord is doing in western New York.

“There is an enormously long list of things that can be done to serve the church, and many resources available to help parents of children from hard places who have experienced trauma. That’s why we start with the question ‘What do you want to do?’ to reveal a church’s heart and passion. Then, in most cases, we get really practical with one-, two-, five-, and 10-year plans. A vulnerable child’s best chance at a forever family is a fully engaged, fully equipped local

church nearby.”

Patch Our Planet is not just another “program.”

“It’s leading somewhere,” Steve says. “A lot of churches are involved around the world globally, but they can get stuck in a rut doing the same things every year. They’ll go to another country and paint or do vacation Bible school, and they’ll come back with heartbreaking stories and photos. It’s a well-intentioned trip, but they’re seeing the same kids every year. We help them discover how they can help the locals in that country develop a heart to take care of their kids just like it is our responsibility to take care of our kids.”

The irony is that when we start in our own neighborhoods and communities, our global reach becomes more effective, Steve says. All the local churches he has worked with are also involved globally in the orphan crisis.

Global orphan care has always

been on Steve’s heart. Prior to Patch Our Planet, Steve served as the road pastor and World Vision representative for the Christian music group NewSong back in the late 1990s. Despite the fact that they sponsored more orphans than any Christian touring group, Steve says that in the back of his mind he kept thinking, “There has to be more that we can do than just pay, pray, and stay away.”

“That’s when I started really thinking through some of the strategies of the local church that’s located on every corner of the planet,” he says. “Usually they lack the resources and direction, but when they are equipped, it’s incredible to watch the transformation that happens in that community.”

Steve spent 7½ years working as a college pastor at a church in Atlanta, Georgia, and transitioned out of that job in 2011 to create Patch Our Planet.

Continued on page 7

Why SMI?

Health care freedom was one of the factors that led Steve and Renée Gillis to join Samaritan Ministries.

While working as a pastor, Steve Gillis and his family were provided health insurance through his church, but, once he left that job in Atlanta to start Patch Our Planet, a national ministry equipping churches to help orphans and those in foster care, he was on his own to pay for that insurance.

His wife, Renée, remembers the sticker shock.

“Insurance was insane,” she says, remembering thinking, “Where are we going to go? What are we going to do?”

Because their son, Judah, was born with a cleft palate and some other issues that would require future surgery, they kept him and his sister on state aid and Steve and his wife joined a health care sharing ministry.

“There were definitely things about it I didn’t like,” Renée says.

Things like a lack of choice in doctors and the similarity to insurance were just a couple of reasons they didn’t stay with the ministry. They moved to Florida and were introduced to Samaritan Ministries, though, by a friend. Because of their son’s pre-existing needs, they kept him and his sister on Florida Kids Care, but she and Steve have been with Samaritan for three years.

Renée loves that they can go anywhere to get treatment rather than being limited to in-network doctors as well as “caring for someone else’s need directly.” She was on the receiving end of that care last year with her own need.

“It was amazing to have that need met by complete strangers, other believers,” Renée says. ♦

Five ways to ensure the orphan crisis will never be solved by the Church

by Steve Gillis, founder of Patch Our Planet

I was looking back at some old blog posts recently, kind of reminiscing about how far my journey with Patch Our Planet and orphan care has taken me, and how much I've learned and experienced along the way. When I saw my original post boldly titled "Five ways to ensure the orphan crisis will never be solved by the Church," I instinctively thought of ways to reframe it.

I've learned that wading into controversies online is often unproductive and better done face to face. If I were to post it today, I might title it, "Five Ways the Church is Challenged in Its Orphan Care Ministry." You see how that sounds a little softer? Less in-your-face?

Upon reflection, though, I remembered that there is no better balance than grace and truth. Part of advocating for the most vulnerable is sometimes telling a hard truth. So, after giving it more thought, I am republishing the post asking God to use it to spur us on to love and good deeds.

Six years after I wrote it, I think there is still a LOT of truth in this post. Is it wrong to ask your orphan care ministry to be intentional, like other major ministries at the church? I don't think it is. Matter of fact, I think it is wrong to just leave it up to the most passionate volunteer leader. They need a goal. They need a vision. And they need a clear lane

to run with the approval of their church leaders!

For almost nine years, it has been the mission of Patch Our Planet to help churches create custom orphan care plans by asking some tough, internal questions. Once the truth is established, then an intentional, long-term plan can be put in place. I've seen churches supporting up to 80 different ministries, spread so thin that they can't focus on doing anything with great focus. And what's worse is that most don't even know what is happening on the other side of their giving.

Let's solve it!

Does your church have a long-term, intentional orphan care plan?

- 1.** Focus more on building orphanages and less on getting children into forever families.
- 2.** Avoid the following books of the Bible: James, Exodus, Isaiah, Job, Psalms, Matthew, Acts, John, Jeremiah, Esther, Deuteronomy, Hosea, Malachi, 1 Timothy, Lamentations, Proverbs, 2 Kings, Judges, Numbers, Ezekiel, and Genesis.
- 3.** Pray for orphans without families around the world, then take no action.
- 4.** Keep the benefit when you visit them. Take pictures. Feel sad. Be humbled. Play soccer. Then go home and talk a lot about *your* experience.
- 5.** Let non-profits and passionate orphan advocates take care of the crisis.

Why not? Would your church set one up if they knew there was a ministry that would travel to them and guide them through something like that? Even customize it under their church's mission/vision?

What if they found out that that Patch Our Planet doesn't charge a set fee but allows partner churches to invest whatever amount they see fit?

That's our faith step. God always takes care of the rest.

I hope your church takes advantage of that offer this year. Not only will your orphan care advocates thank you, but you will see how much greater focus and effectiveness you can have simply by shining the light on orphan care and putting together a smart plan according to the strengths of your church. It doesn't have to be huge and unattainable. Just start at home and where you are connected globally. You'll be amazed at the difference.

Hope to hear from your church! ♦

Contact Steve Gillis:

PatchOurPlanet.org

Phone: 404-281-8927

Email: info@patchourplanet.org

Twitter: [@patchourplanet](https://twitter.com/patchourplanet)

Facebook: [@Patch-Our-Planet](https://www.facebook.com/Patch-Our-Planet)

Not long after, his son was born with a cleft palate and other health problems that required he and his wife, Renée, to shut down the ministry for a year and take care of their son. During that time, they drained their savings, and Steve needed to get back to work in order to make up for all of that lost income. But Renée reminded Steve as he began his job search, "You need to do what God called you to do."

They restarted the ministry, but this time with absolutely no financial cushion, "just a simple faith in a big God."

In November 2011, Steve was invited to sit on a White House panel of experts for National Adoption Month to talk about Patch Our Planet, sharing why he believed the Church was the best answer for the orphan crisis, and what his small ministry was going to do about it. Having just started, this moment would prove to be the boost that he needed to really kickstart the ministry of Patch Our Planet.

Steve, Renée, and their two homeschooled children have traveled the country to help churches get started on the journey of making a difference in the global orphan and foster care crisis. Their ministry is what they would call a good old-fashioned by-faith ministry, which they wouldn't trade for anything.

"People say we're nuts," Renée says, but the Gillises are not fazed.

"When churches ask, 'Hey, can you come and help us?', we do everything in our power to say 'yes' every time," Steve says.

"It's really a by-faith ministry," Steve says. He wanted it to be that way because as a pastor "I was on the other side of the desk for so long and

heard from so many non-profits tell us how much we needed them, and I desperately wanted one to just come and say, 'Hey, we want to come and serve and add value to the church.' So, because that is how we operate our ministry, I guess you could say we are unique in that way now."

Last year alone, Steve and his family spent three months on the road in 21 states training churches. In the past nine years, they've helped over 300 churches see their dream of helping orphans become a reality. But the work is far from over. Steve says that, even though more and more churches are getting involved, he is still left with a feeling of "not doing enough."

"We're not chipping away at the problem like you'd think we would be because the need is increasing at such a fast rate because of broken families and the state of our culture," he says.

But Steve and his family are committed.

"As long as God provides, I'm going to do it," he says. "When He shuts it down, I'll do what He has next for me. We can always trust that the One who called us will be faithful to provide and to direct our paths. For our family, that is the great adventure of being a Christ follower, and we'd have it no other way." ♦

Bone Broth: Why you need it and how to make it

by Andie Dill

I had always been familiar with the idea that bone broth has many health benefits, but until an illness left me with gastrointestinal damage and multiple food allergies, I didn't take time to look into it. However, once I did, I found that broth helped me heal and was easy enough to make. I also discovered that bone broth is a tasty and multi-purpose component of a healthy diet that I thoroughly enjoy.

An bad infection and strong antibiotics left me with severe intestinal permeability and extensive food allergies. My gut just wasn't right, and I suffered through daily anguish. Not to mention, I now had to make huge adjustments to a whole new set of highly restrictive dietary needs.

Did I mention I was just fresh out of college? I needed something cheap and easy. That is when I stumbled across the cookbook *Nourishing Broth*, a spinoff of the original *Nourishing Traditions* cookbook written by Sally Fallon, founder of the Weston A. Price Foundation.

As the book's subtitle states, bone broth is an "old-fashioned remedy for the modern world." Weston A. Price was a famous researcher who traveled the world studying traditional societies where modern chronic illness, such heart disease, cancer, and diabetes were virtually unheard of. He concluded that refined flour, sugar, and carbohydrates were the crux of the problem that lead to dental decay and diseases of civilization.

Based on Price's research and findings, Sally Fallon advocates

for a traditional diet that includes eating whole unprocessed foods, incorporating healthy fats and oils into cooking and meals, and using lacto-fermentation to preserve and enrich food. *Nourishing Broth* delves into the science behind the unique combination of amino acids, minerals, and cartilage compounds in bone broth. The book explains that these important nutrients can help us overcome almost any malady and maintain optimum health.

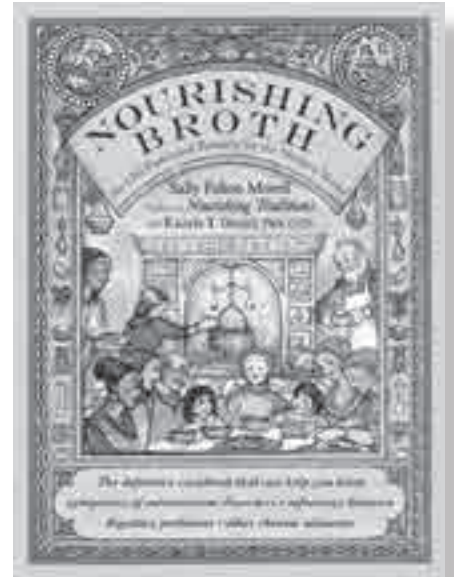
I noticed the benefits of incorporating broth as a foundational aspect of my diet within the first month.

Fall is a great time to give bone broth a try and fill up your freezer.

After the first year, my intestinal lining had healed so much that I was even able to successfully reintroduce several of my allergenic foods back into my diet.

According to *Nourishing Broth*, some additional health benefits of bone broth include:

- Gut healing and repairing of the intestinal lining.
- Aiding in faster recovery from illness.
- Protection of joints and cartilage.
- Strengthening bones and teeth.
- Assisting in healing of infectious diseases and chronic health conditions.



ISBN-13: 978-0967089737

- Weight loss.
- Regulating methylation for overall optimal mental health as well as cell detoxification.

Bone broth is often used by those following a ketogenic diet and is also considered a way to optimize intermittent fasting because of the essential nutrients and electrolytes it provides. *The Complete Guide to Fasting* claims that broth allows people to easily do extended fasting to help them lose weight, reset their metabolism, and even overcome diabetes. (See review at bit.ly/comfast.)

Perhaps you are thinking that this all sounds well and good, but the thought of following complicated recipes and slaving away over a boiling pot for hours feels rather daunting. I felt the same way, but, after a try or two, I realized that making this nutrient-rich and versatile food was no big thing! All you really need is a big pot, the leftover bones from

last night's chicken dinner, and a few veggie scraps.

What makes for the most nutrient-dense broth?

Over the years I have tried a few different methods, made some mistakes, and settled on my favorite way to make this delicious food.

Organ meats are superfoods, full of B-vitamins and amino acids, so if possible, always be sure to put plenty of these in your recipe. I personally would shoot for 2 to 3 pounds of livers, kidneys, hearts, and whatever else I could get my hands on. Also, the necks and backs of a chicken (or turkey) are all-around the most nutritious part and full of collagen. The chicken feet are the hidden treasure of any good bone broth and are responsible for making the broth gel because of their abundant gelatinous content. Gelatin is critical in the healing and repairing of the gut lining, so be sure to get several of those in your recipe too, if possible!

In addition to your chicken pieces, you will need a combination of carrots, celery, and onions. In brotlingo, these three vegetables are referred to as the "Holy Trinity" or *mirepoix* according to French cuisine. That is because they work together synergistically to bring out flavor, color, and lots of important minerals. Many people do decide to leave the skins on the onions for added flavor and color, but carrots should be peeled to keep the broth from becoming too bitter.

Lastly, at the end of the simmer, you will add a *bouquet garni*, which is the term for sprigs of parsley and thyme, plus a bay leaf or two all tied together. You could also add in

peppercorns, garlic, or spices such as turmeric to enhance the flavor and nutrient content of your broth.

How to make your own nourishing broth in a few easy steps

All you really need is a big stock pot and your ingredients as listed above. First, I put all chicken pieces in the pot and fill it with water. Before you turn on the stove, pour in a couple tablespoons of raw, unfiltered apple cider vinegar and



let sit for 30-45 minutes. This will help draw extra minerals out of the bones. Turn the stove on and bring the water to a quick boil. You will want to keep it quick so you don't destroy or boil out the gelatin, which is the best part. As soon as it starts to boil, turn the heat way back down to a simmer. Then skim any foam off the top.

Here is a fun fact about foam and the quality of your chicken: the more foam, the more toxins. As the water boils and all the impurities are drawn out, a resulting foam rises to the top. You will notice a signifi-

cant difference between a factory-farmed, conventionally fed chicken and a free-range chicken eating its natural diet of green grass and plenty of bugs, under the bright, sunny skies. With a free-range chicken there will be little to no foam, while a factory farmed chicken can have an inch or more of foam on top.

Once the foam is skimmed, let the broth simmer on the stove for at least 24 hours. As long as I kept the heat low, I felt perfectly comfortable letting it simmer through the night.

Once you turn off the heat let the broth cool slightly but not all the way to room temperature. For me this is usually a couple of hours. I use a 20-quart stock pot, so if you are using a smaller pot, it may cool faster.

Then you simply strain the broth and pour it into storage containers that you can freeze. I enjoy cooking eggs in broth for breakfast, sipping it from a mug, and of course incorporating it into sauces, salad dressings, soups, and gravys-. Anytime I come down with a cold or the flu, broth is a welcome remedy.

Fall is here, and the weather is getting cooler. It's a great time to give homemade bone broth a try and fill up your freezer! With Thanksgiving approaching, consider using your freshly made broth in a homemade gravy recipe. All you will need is some white flour and the drippings from your roasted turkey. And of course, save your turkey bones and gizzards after the meal, and you're all set for another batch of broth. ♦

Disclaimer: The information in this article is for educational purposes and not meant as medical advice.

Destructive Lies, Healing Truth: 31 Days of Encouragement for Patients and Caregivers to Find Strength, Purpose and Peace in Health Related Trials

by member M.A. Pasquale

This book intends to contrast some of the destructive lies we are presented with from the enemy, as well as the world, with the light of God's truth regarding health-related trials.

At some point, we will all face an event involving pain, injury or disease requiring hospitalization, rehab and perhaps even long-term care. Some will encounter a terminal diagnosis or permanent disability. And, many of us will become caretakers.

As the enemy attempts to twist a health challenge into a faith crisis, we must keep our spiritual armor on. This book was written for those suffering, as well as their caregivers. It attempts to eliminate doubt by redirecting our attention to the strength, perseverance, and peace found only in Jesus Christ. It also offers insight to the hope in, purpose of and benefits yielded from suffering.

Come and draw near to the God of all comfort.

* * * * *

This devotional was written by drawing from real life interactions I have had over the years with my rehab patients during their Occupational Therapy treatments. It was also inspired by my own personal experiences during times of physical struggles, sickness, and healing.

I am extremely thankful to all those who shared their faith, fears and doubts with me. I consider it a privilege to have been trusted

through their trials, given the opportunity to share the gospel and pray with those who were open to it.

Most importantly, I thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—for everything.

* * * * *

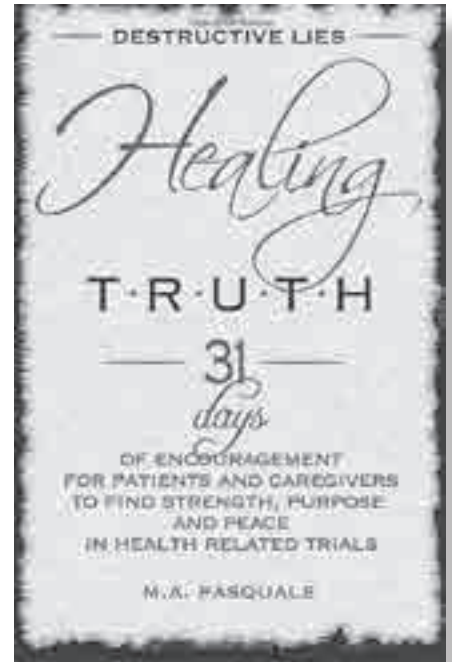
Day One – Lie: “I would be afraid if I were you.”

“God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though its waters roar and be troubled, Though the mountains shake with its swelling.” (Psalm 46:1-3 NKJV)

When sudden illness, injury, or a new diagnosis comes without warning we must remember where our help comes from. Waves of fear can cause us to feel as if we are drowning in anxiety, causing us to needlessly panic.

The disciples also felt that fear of impending doom when a fast and furious storm came upon them while crossing the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 8:23-27). While waves of water swept over their boat, Jesus slept. Feeling helpless, the disciples screamed for Jesus to save them. Despite the fact the disciples had already witnessed Jesus perform miracles, they were still overcome with fear.

Jesus awoke, rebuked the winds and water, and all was calm. Jesus



CreateSpace – ISBN-13: 978-1983723735
Available at HopeWordsLife.com

said, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Jesus pointed out that their fear was related to their lack of faith, or trust, in Him.

Why then are we so afraid? Fear, which we all experience at times, is directly related to a lack of faith. When we experience doubt, God reassures us of His faithfulness through His word. He is completely trustworthy. God is with us in all the storms of life just as He was with the disciples. When we trust in Christ completely we exercise and strengthen our faith.

Therefore, we need to cry out to Jesus in faith. God is always with us, in control, and able to calm the waves of our storms whether we face pain, sickness, or even permanent disability. Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in

Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:39)
Trust Jesus completely through faith.
Give Him your burden.
No fear, just faith.

*Recommended Reading: Psalm 27:1,
Psalm 46*

* * * * *

Day Two – Lie: “God must be punishing you.”

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” (James 1:2-4 NKJV)

God’s word says consider trials joy, not punishment. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ from the eternal punishment we deserve. Yet there are natural consequences for our choices, behavior and living in a fallen world with disease.

When facing sickness, we can choose to run in one of two opposite directions. We can choose to wallow in the misery of self-pity or we can focus on our relationship with the Lord who loves us. The joy of the Lord is forever. This joy is from the Holy Spirit and is the evidence of salvation through Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:6). He was bestowed upon us the day we accepted Christ. We can choose to delight in the eternal blessing we already have promise of, in good times and trials. Running the course with joy enables us to acquire endurance, building our spiritual muscles to stand up under pressure along the way (Romans 5:3).

God desires not to destroy us

but to save us from sin and refine us in the fire during the race of life. This is yet another way we grow in our faith, our trust in Christ, and become mature Christians lacking nothing in order to persevere in this world. From experience comes wisdom on how to deal with and press on through the next trial life brings. We must depend on the Lord. When others are encouraged by our perseverance we can then boast of the hope and strength found only in Christ.

There is joyful hope in knowing that almighty God, who is carrying us through our trials, is the same God at the finish line who one day will say, “Well done good and faithful servant.”

Recommended Reading: Romans 5:1-5

* * * * *

Day Seven – Lie: “There’s no hope for this old body.”

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” (Philippians 3:20-21 NKJV)

Many frail seniors, as well as the sickly young, find themselves physically falling apart. Bones break easily, pipes back up, and body systems fail while hope fades. Being advanced in age can make new medical issues, as well as rehab, an overwhelming challenge. Many have overcome with

renewed strength, while others lose hope and give up.

God designed our earthly bodies to bounce back in many ways, even those with high mileage. Under God’s care we can work hard, persevere, and get well once again. When that is not God’s will for us we can always depend on His promise of a glorified, resurrected body. Our salvation through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ seals the deal. “Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26 NKJV)

Revelation 20:6 (NKJV) says “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Those of us who are saved by faith and die, are blessed with the promise of entering His kingdom.

We can trust God’s word. We have the best to look forward to. How wonderful that will be when we are conformed to His glorious body. There will be no more pain, no more tears, no more suffering.

We will enter into a body specially designed for eternal life with God. We will drink in His peace, love and mercy, never to thirst again.

Recommend Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:35-54, 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 ♦

Copyright © 2018 M.A. Pasquale. Reprinted by permission.

M.A. Pasquale is the pen name for a Samaritan Ministries member who is an occupational therapist. Contact her at M.A.Pasquale316@gmail.com.

Recommended vitamin D intake levels (600 Units) too low to save millions of lives If you don't live in the South or get out in the sun, you should supplement this winter

by Bill Sardi

Given that an estimated 100 million American adults are diabetic or pre-diabetic,¹ will this sub-population begin to receive prescriptions for vitamin D from their doctors? This question is now asked because of a revealing study showing diabetics in particular are at 4.5-times greater risk for an early death when their blood levels of vitamin D are low.² The risk of death from infectious disease also doubles for individuals who are deficient in vitamin D.

While an abject deficiency of vitamin D is defined as a blood concentration of 10 nanomoles per liter of blood, survival data confirms “a strong association of vitamin D deficiency (under 50 nanomoles/liter or 20 nanograms/milliliter) with increased mortality.”³

There are two ways of measuring blood concentration levels of vitamin D. The most often cited dividing line between health and disease is 20 nanograms/milliliter or 50 nanomoles per liter of blood.

The Institute of Medicine considers blood levels of 50 nanomole/liter or 20 nanograms/milliliter to meet the requirements of 97.5 percent of the population.⁴ Yet an esti-

mated 42 percent of Americans are vitamin D deficient when defined as a blood concentration below 20 nanograms/milliliter/50 nanomoles/liter of blood.⁵

A different analysis shows 9600 units of vitamin D from dietary supplements is needed to ensure 97.5 percent of the population achieves

blood level of 30 nanograms/milliliter increases mortality rates 2.7 times for elderly adults.⁷ Yet another recent study shows blood levels of vitamin D below 50 nanomoles/liter increased the risk for death from cardiovascular disease in senior adults.⁸

It's obvious that the Institute of Medicine's definition of “optimal blood level” for vitamin D (20-50 nanograms/milliliter or 50-125 nanomoles/liter of blood) is outmoded.

It takes about 5000 IU (international units) of oral vitamin D3 for most people to achieve a blood concentration of 50+ nanomoles or 20 nanograms.⁹

The Institute of Medicine, which establishes nutrient intake levels (Recommended Daily Allowance), sticks with its 600 IU (15 micrograms)/day recommendation.¹⁰ This intake level is incorrect say

two vitamin D experts. Specifically, sun-deprived individuals or people with dark pigmented skin who do not produce as much vitamin D from sun exposure, will not be assured of reaching healthy intake levels. The Institute of Medicine's

A 100 million Americans are prediabetic or diabetic. A new study shows they are at 4.5 times greater risk of early death when their vitamin D levels are low.



a blood level of 40 nanograms/100 nanomoles.⁶

While this headline study did not find any increased risk for mortality among adults over 75 years of age, other studies do. Another recently published study reveals a vitamin D

“safe upper limit” of 4000 IU¹¹ is the minimum adults should take to supplement their diet. The Endocrine Society now says 4000 IU/day should be supplemented for children and 10,000 IU for adults.

Over \$1 billion of vitamin D pills are being sold annually and blood levels of vitamin D have risen 83-fold from 2000-to-2010.¹² About 2000 IU of supplemental vitamin D is needed to raise blood levels 20 nanograms or 50 nanomoles. The diet provides very little vitamin D (only 400 IU in a serving of fortified milk) which would only trivially raise blood levels.

Except during the summer months, the body makes little if any vitamin D from the sun at latitudes above 37 degrees north (in the United States, the shaded region in the map). ♦

Disclaimer: The information in this article is for educational purposes and not meant as medical advice.

Copyright © 2019 Bill Sardi Word of Knowledge Agency. Reprinted by permission. <knowledgeofhealth.com/recommended-vitamin-d-intake-levels-too-low>

Bill Sardi is a consumer advocate and health care research analyst. He is a member of Light House Church in La Verne, California.

Sources

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. bit.ly/2q6RsxY | 8. bit.ly/2MhOfEk |
| 2. daily.ai/2IRM0pf | 9. bit.ly/35yOGlj |
| 3. daily.ai/2IRM0pf | 10. bit.ly/2pnknxm |
| 4. bit.ly/2OLhtNB | 11. <i>ibid</i> |
| 5. bit.ly/2IRCRx1 | 12. nyti.ms/35vB22p |
| 6. bit.ly/32mCum0 | 13. bit.ly/35yRAGW |
| 7. bit.ly/35vMfAh | |

We wanted to send a letter for the same reason many others do: to report the savings and blessings received. I started to write a long and involved letter detailing everything, but really the numbers speak for themselves. So, here they are:

In 2014 our total costs for insurance premiums/deductibles/copays/prescriptions was \$14,641. In 2015 that total jumped to \$15,550 and in 2016 it was \$18,604. In 2017, we joined Samaritan and our total costs for shares/prescriptions/non-shareable expenses came to \$7,251. In 2018 it was \$7,461.

Those numbers amazed me when I finally took the time to add them up on paper, but that's not all. Randy had major surgery in 2017 and 2018. The total billed for those two events was \$129,325, but because of discounts for paying cash and the hospital write-offs, our actual costs were only \$19,149. Every penny was shared by Samaritan members.

Folks, these are radical numbers. It should also be noted that we did have some major events in 2016, but how we were treated by insurance was a major impetus for us seeking a different approach. We discovered that you can't always know what doctors are covered with insurance plans even if the hospital is in network. Those unforeseen huge bills were a punch in the gut.

The insurance companies are obviously looking out for the bottom line. We wanted something, if it were possible, that allowed the person facing health problems to do what was in his best interest. And beyond that, we wanted something we could feel confident in supporting—where our dollars weren't spent funding activities we

disagreed with. For us, Samaritan filled both those needs better than anything else out there. We only wish we had been better informed before 2016.

We felt like we should share our story to let everyone know the ministry is making a difference. And it is doing so because we are doing it God's way. How simple, right? Thank you to the staff for what you do everyday—processing Needs, directing Shares, helping members get a fair price—and everything else. This ministry is truly a blessing.

*Randy & Cindy
West Unity, Ohio*

Many people have been amazed at how I am handling the knowledge that I have bladder cancer and will be starting treatments this week and continuing them for the next six weeks. The prayers of God's people, my brothers and sisters in Christ, give me peace and strength. I also know that I am His and He loves me, whether here on this earth or if He takes me home to heaven. He will be with me always. I am thankful for the ministry of Samaritan as it encourages us to bear one another's burdens. I really appreciate those who write notes of comfort and encouragement.

*Jeffrey
North Berwick, Maine*

Three years after my accident, I had yet another surgery to remove screws, and it finally took my pain away! I can now ride my bike and sprint! I can do my job without discomfort! Thank you Samaritan members for sharing all the costs.

*Allan & Amber
Mercedes, Texas*

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, we will provide updates and offer prayer points gleaned from a variety of sources. Please use them in your personal or group prayer time.

Men wearing crosses killed

Four Christian men were executed in June by gunmen in northern Burkina Faso for wearing crosses around their necks, the Washington Post reports. The executions happened after the Islamic group stormed the village of Beni, ordered people to lie down, and then checked their necks for jewelry. The shootings followed Burkina Faso attacks that have left at least two dozen people dead since February. Mission News Network says Islamic extremism in the west Africa nation has led to the increase in attacks. Over 70,000 people have fled their homes there this year. *Pray for the families of those executed, for the safety of all innocent people in the nation, and for provision for displaced people.*

Christian tortured to death

A Christian man accused of theft was tortured to death by police in Pakistan, MNN reports. Amir Masih, a 28-year-old gardener, was taken into custody after being accused by his employer on August 28. His family picked him up three days later, and he died a few hours after that.

He is survived by his wife and two sons, ages 7 and 14. *Pray for Amir’s family and that Christians will be treated with justice in Pakistan.*

Algerian churches investigated

The Algerian government has ordered regional governors and security heads to intensify investigations into financial activities of Protestant leaders, International Christian Concern reports. The order was issued on August 28. Besides “The Protestant Church,” two radical Islamist groups were also mentioned in the orders. The Christians are accused of relying on foreign groups for finances to influence Algerian politics. *Pray that the “investigations” will not interfere with the churches’ efforts to evangelize and worship, and that Algerian Christians will remain strong in their faith.*

Algerian church closed

Also in Algeria, a church in Boghni that serves two congregations was sealed by authorities on September 24, ICC says. That makes eight churches affiliated with Algerian Protestant Churches that have been closed since 2017. Another four church groups were ordered to halt activities. *Pray for Christians in Algeria to find ways to meet for worship and service and that the Algerian government would operate with fairness and transparency.*

4 hospitalized after attack

A retired pastor and three members of his family were seriously injured in a mob attack in India’s Haryana state on September 22, ICC says.

It is believed the attack on Pastor Mangala’s home was caused by a court decision that prohibited a Hindu group permission to erect an idol on the property of a Christian school run by the pastor. All four family members were hospitalized, including the pastor’s son, who lost four teeth, and have now gone into hiding. *Pray for healing for each family member, for complete spiritual and emotional healing, and for the attackers to be brought to Christ.*

Convert killed in Egypt

A man living in Egypt who became a believer in Christ was killed, possibly by his Muslim family, on October 6 after making his conversion public, ICC says. The man, who wanted to be called by his baptismal name of George, had posted photos of a cross tattoo on his wrist on social media. *Pray for his family to believe in Jesus and for safety for the Egyptian Christian community.*

Graduates denied diplomas

Two Iranian Christian children of Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, who has been repeatedly imprisoned for his faith, have been denied secondary-school diplomas by the state, ICC says, because they haven’t completed their Islamic education. Their father was first arrested in 2009 after protesting a policy requiring all students to take a course on the Quran. *Pray that the two children will receive their diplomas and for the release of Pastor Nadarkhani. ♦*

For more on the persecuted church, contact International Christian Concern (persecution.org, 800-422-5441) or World Watch Monitor (worldwatchmonitor.org)

removed immediately for safety reasons. In Kansas (where Glenn lives), such removals can result in a child spending a night, or two, in a social worker's office."

On the road

Glenn had started the healthy hobby that led to an erstwhile cause with a job-related fitness challenge, then met a man walking from the Grand Canyon to Cincinnati to raise awareness of the Creation Museum.

"A light went off," he says. "I realized I could do a cross-country walk to raise awareness of the need for foster care and adoption."

He ramped up his endurance with a walk from Oklahoma to Nebraska in 2014, going 187 miles in 10 days. In 2015, he walked from Eve, Missouri, to Holly, Colorado, in 22 days. Both of those walks were fraught with blisters, bleeding, and cramping, but through them he learned to do such things as wear two pairs of socks and wear the right size shoe. He found out during 2014 that, thanks to walking, his feet had spread out and elongated from size 10½D to 12½EE. Wearing the right size of shoes helped with his cramping. And taking a walking stick along helped his balance, especially when negotiating ditches and hillsides.

Glenn has done all of this despite health challenges like cataracts forming in both eyes and midlevel thrombosis in his left leg.

He and his wife, Charlcie, teamed up for the cross-country walk, with Charlcie managing the RV they used, tending to Glenn's feet in the evening, and making sure he stayed hydrated.

The Kosters' first plan was for Glenn to walk from Seattle to

Miami, but seasonal considerations led them to reverse the course.

The original route would have taken them through the Cascade Mountains and Rocky Mountains while there was still a significant chance of major snowfall and then land them in the Southeast during hurricane season. They also decided to avoid major cities to give Charlcie a break, since she was an inexperienced RV driver.

The couple also saw a reason for the longer route.

"I wanted to be able to show that foster care and adoption is a nationwide problem," Glenn says. "What better way to show that than to walk farther than the shortest east-to-west distance plus the shortest north-to-south distance. That combined total is 4,274 miles, so I knew I had to walk somewhere close to 4,300 miles. No matter how you slice it, the only way to accomplish that total was to stair-step a diagonal route across the U.S.

"Secondly, I wanted to emphasize the fact that foster children do not have an easy life, so my route had to be somewhat difficult. Hence, I chose the most difficult route, a route that would take me through six mountain ranges: the Ouchita and Ozark mountains in Arkansas, the Black Hills in South Dakota, the Badlands in North Dakota, the Rockies, and the Cascades."

None of that includes the training. He covered nearly 1,800 miles in late 2017 and 2,400 miles between his 2018 and 2019 walks. Often, he and Charlcie would walk a couple miles a day through towns they stayed in along the way to meet more people and tell them about their efforts.

The only days Glenn didn't

walk were Sundays, holidays, and unplanned downtime due to mechanical failures or injury.

Still, he had to work through challenges from snow to heat—the heat index hit 112 at one point in Nebraska—to steep inclines. "And sometimes a mix of more than one!" he says.

Some days he had to cover as many as 30 miles "simply because there was no appropriate place to call it a day and know we would be safe overnight."

He and Charlcie tried to connect every six or seven miles, but sometimes the distances had to stretch to 10 or 11 miles. Glenn was mainly concerned that Charlcie find a safe place to park the RV to wait for him.

By the time the Kosters stepped into the Pacific Ocean, a small welcoming party had gathered due to the word getting out on K-LOVE stations.

"It was exhilarating," Glenn says. "I was truly glad that it was over. Yet, at the same time, part of me says, 'What's next?'"

What's immediately next is Glenn's new position as associate pastor for urban ministries and evangelism at First Church of God (Anderson) in South Hutchinson, Kansas.

And while Glenn and Charlcie are still living in their RV with their adopted dog, Walker, Glenn's long-distance walks are now limited.

Glenn laughed.

"Charlcie said, 'No more long walks.'" ♦

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure.

1 John 3:2-3

A.W. Tozer wrote, "We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God." What comes into our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us. None of us will ever rise above our understanding of God.

We see this principle in the verses above. Being more like Jesus depends on seeing Jesus more clearly. When He finally appears, we will be like Him because we shall see Him as He is. Until then, we will only know Him in part, like seeing an imperfect reflection in a mirror (1 Corinthians 13:12).

We need to seek to know Him more accurately through His Word, through prayer, and in every situation in our lives, so we can see Him more clearly and become more like Him. If we have this hope in Him, we will purify ourselves to be pure as He is pure.

For the Kingdom,



Ray King