

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - April, 2017
Newsletter for January, February, March, 2017
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Web Site: www.Loveliftedmerecovery.com

What is the “High Calling” or the “Victorious Christian Life”? It is fulfilling God’s purpose for your life, which He planned even before you were born, but many Christians **never reach that goal of walking in and fulfilling the plan God has for them.** It is the same as the Israelites in Moses’ time - God lead them out of bondage in Egypt, but what **should have been a two-week journey** turned into a lifetime of wandering in the wilderness, and a whole generation never entered the Promised Land! **God’s Promised Land for you is the “Victorious Christian Life,”** and He wants you to enter it and enjoy it. There will be battles along the way, just as there were nations for the Israelites to drive out of Canaan, but God has promised you the victory. The victorious life in Christ is what is meant in Philippians 3:8, “That I may gain Christ.” Obviously, Paul already had Jesus Christ in his life, so what is he referring to? He means **having Christ become the dominating power in your life!** When he talks about not having already attained or arrived at, or not already being perfect, he is talking about becoming **LIKE** Jesus Christ in everything you do. This is our goal - to become Christ-like in all that we do and say. Have any of us totally and completely reached or attained that goal yet? No, of course not, but it is God’s desire and plan for our lives (Romans 8:29).

•**Philippians 3:7-14** “But what things were GAIN to me, these I have counted LOSS for Christ. But indeed I also count all things LOSS in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, **that I may gain Christ** and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law (keeping religious rules), but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.....if by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were **already perfect**; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brothers, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind**, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark (goal) for the prize of the **high calling** of God in Christ Jesus.”

•**Ephesians 2:10** “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has before ordained (prepared beforehand) that we should walk in them.”

•**I John 5:4-5** “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And **this is the VICTORY** that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”

Of course, we could study this for days, but the short version is this: what you must do is **YIELD the members of your body to God as instruments for His USE**, and PRESENT your BODY as a LIVING SACRIFICE (Rom. 6:13-19, Rom. 12:1-2). **You must SURRENDER your FREE WILL to God** completely. You must be willing to place on the ALTAR those things that do NOT please God, and completely, totally SURRENDER your spirit, soul and body to God, for His use, and live your life to glorify Him, by the power of the Holy Spirit (whose temple your body now is). Give up trying to live for God in your own power, and give up your free will to Him.

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, January 7, 2017 - Saturday was the day for our outreach, and we had been praying for no rain. Well, it was raining when we got up, and the guys from the Bible Tabernacle out in Canyon Country called to see if we were still going, and I said, “Yes, and we’re praying for the rain to stop, but we’re going no matter what.” If we got wet and uncomfortable, that’s nothing, because many, many people have

suffered much worse than “being uncomfortable” for the name of Jesus. We decided we would just do the best we could in the circumstances, and give God all the glory, because He must have a reason for things being as they were. As it turned out, our gracious and merciful God stopped the rain almost exactly when the first person arrived at our house, and that was Shami. We ended up with Tom, me, Shami, Keith, Tony, Bob, Sheldon, Andrew, Frank, Mitch, and Miguel as our team. We had 170 lunches, but since there were fewer homeless people out on the Boardwalk due to the rain, we had a few lunches left over. We would just look around town during the week to find homeless people, and give the lunches to them. We had the usual toiletry/hygiene packets, socks, and lots of used clothing and a few blankets. We had quite a few sweatshirts and nice warm jackets, in various sizes, and each person who received one of them said it fit them perfectly! One man who received a particularly soft, warm jacket from us had such a look of gratefulness on his face, and he put it on immediately. A young woman who told us her name was LeHeaven, received a heavy jacket and a sweatshirt, and she said she would layer them. Of course, everyone was thankful and grateful, and we told a lot of people that we had been praying that the rain would stop so that we could come out and give these things to them in the name of Jesus. Because there were fewer people out on the Boardwalk, we gave some people two lunches, and they were very grateful. Miguel and Mitch went down the alleys behind the Boardwalk, and found homeless people there who had found a little bit of shelter from the rain in several carpools. Shami, Keith and Tony prayed with quite a few people, and we all ministered the gospel of Jesus Christ to as many as we could find. It was Andrew’s first time, and he said he realized how blessed we all are, and when we help someone in need, it gives us a good feeling, too. He was also impressed that many of the homeless people only took what they needed, and if we offered something they didn’t need, they said, “Give it to someone who really needs it.” One young woman in a tent, received a lunch, toiletries, socks, and some clean underwear, and she said, “You guys are awesome!” A man named Tim asked us what church we belonged to, and we gave him information about the Bible Tabernacle, and he was really interested, and said he was tired of living out on the streets. We pray that he will go over to the BT and get some help there. Quite a few people asked us if we were from a church, and we always tell them that several churches are represented by our group, but we’re all Christians. One man had evidently been watching us, and he came up and gave us \$10 and said, “I really think what you’re doing is great.” Last of all, we want to share a story that Mitch told us about the Bible Tabernacle’s Christmas dinner that they do every year for whoever wants to come. Mitch was down at the Boardwalk handing out some last-minute fliers for the dinner, and he saw a homeless woman in a wheelchair. He was still wearing his Bible Tabernacle name tag, and she asked him if he was from the BT. He said, “Yes,” and she started crying. She said she wanted to go to the dinner so badly, but just couldn’t get there in her wheelchair. Mitch pushed her in her wheelchair all the way to the BT, which was probably about a mile, and she was able to have Christmas dinner there. We just had to share that story, even though it is not directly related to this beach outreach, but since the woman is one of the regulars who sees us down there every month, it’s related enough.

Saturday, February 4, 2017 - It wasn’t raining, but it was a bit cold for our outreach. Here is our team of people who came to go down to the Boardwalk: Tom, me, Keith, Frank, Mitch, Brian, Miguel, Robert, Moses, A.J., Bob, Johnny, Cody, Nancy, Jennifer, and Tony. It didn’t seem as if there were as many homeless people on the Boardwalk, because it had been raining just the day before, but we still gave out 172 lunches. Mitch, Miguel, Moses and Robert went down the alleys and found some people there who had found a little shelter from the rain. We also had hygiene/toiletry packets, socks, knit hats, underwear, T-shirts, some jackets and other clothing, a few blankets, and even some pillows for the homeless. All these things were donated by people at our church, or given to the Bible Tabernacle, and they shared the blessing with us. The BT guys also brought two big boxes full of cakes, cookies and other pastry items that they gave out of their abundance. Nancy brought her friend Jennifer, so it was her first time, and she really enjoyed the outreach. She said it helped her to see how really blessed she is, and to stop complaining, because there are so many people who are in much worse conditions. Nancy, Keith, Tony and Jennifer went together in one group, and they prayed for a lot of the homeless

people. Nancy said the rain has been very hard on the people, and they appreciated the things they were given, and appreciated the prayers. Tony said he felt he was connecting more with people as they prayed for individuals, and he felt the moving of the Holy Spirit. Mitch was happy to see a lot of the people reading the gospel tracts as they came back, and some people even asked for more tracts. One man said the tracts reminded him of his childhood, as he had grown up going to Calvary Chapel. I asked him if he would like a Bible, and he took one. Nancy and her group gave a nice, heavy jacket to one man, and he was so excited and happy to get it. I had a women's sweatshirt, and offered it to two women, and they each said they didn't need it, but the third woman I asked was thrilled to get it. She only had a lightweight windbreaker-type jacket on, so this would keep her much warmer. As my group got back to the car, we noticed we were missing one of our carts. Johnny, Cody and A.J. went back down the Boardwalk to try to find it, and they did. Praise the Lord!

Saturday, March 4, 2017 - Today, the members of our outreach team were: Tom, me, Keith, Tony, Bob, Frank, Brian, Sheldon, Sheridan, Miguel, and Dennis. We had a total of 177 lunches; some of which we made up, and some that the Sunday school kids at church had made up. We had clothing, jackets, socks, hygiene/toiletry packets, and hats for the homeless, as well as a few blankets. Everyone was very grateful and thankful for the things they received, and some of the homeless people professed faith in Christ, so we were reminded of the Scripture which says, "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?" (James 2:15-16). So, we were happy to be able to give them some of the things needed for their physical comfort., as well as their spiritual well-being. Tony and Keith prayed for a lot of the homeless people, and they said some of the people asked if they could pray, too. When giving out the clothing, they said one woman got a whole new outfit. Miguel and Sheridan went down the alleys so as not to miss any homeless people there, and they met one man who asked if they had a Scripture for him, because he was going through a lot of stuff at the time. Miguel has his Bible with him, and read him some Scriptures, and also prayed for him. Brian and Dennis also prayed for several people, including one man whose wife was in prison. Bob, Sheldon and I saw a man carrying several bags of cans and bottles he had been picking out of the trash cans, so we asked him if he needed any food. He didn't necessarily have to be homeless, but he was very grateful to get the lunch. When we offered him a gospel tract, he asked for one in Spanish, which of course we had. I also gave a gospel tract to one man in Arabic. He was one of the vendors, and when I offered his friend one in English, he asked for Arabic. We don't usually give the lunches to vendors, but one couple had a table set up with a few little things to sell, but they looked longingly at our cart full of lunches and clothing. I asked if they were in need of anything, and they each received a lunch. Then, the woman asked if she could look at the clothing, and we ended up giving her a nice leather jacket and some other items. Sheldon gave his own jacket that he was wearing, and his own knit hat, to two of the homeless people we met. Many thanksgivings went up to the Lord today for His provision, as people received these things in the name of Jesus. After we gave out everything, we continued to give and hand out the gospel tracts to security guards, tourists, and people just down at the beach for the day.

Prison Ministry

Julio C. Salas, Valley State Prison, Chowchilla, CA - "The reason for this letter is to thank you for all your love and everything you've done for me. I know you work hard for all of us in here. It's really nice and heartwarming knowing that people like yourselves still believe in us and that change is possible. People like you both motivate us to continue in our recovery, and because of your help and your 12-Step course, I opened up my heart to the Lord. I started reading my Bible and going to church. I really appreciate you planting the seed. Sincerely yours, Julio"

Garett (“Lance”) Nelson, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, CA - “Wow! It’s hard to believe how time flies by. I am done with the 12-Steps again. I am happy that I can learn things each time and renew things that I saw before. It’s been a blessing to work hard on the Steps, so that I can continue in my recovery that is Christ-centered. I do AA and NA, which is good, because I name my Higher Power as Jesus Christ, but when I go to those meetings, it’s not the same as a whole program that is Christ-centered, Christian 12-Steps. Love, Lance”

Jose Amaral, Calipatria, CA - “Doing the Love Lifted Me Recovery 12-Steps was very helpful in my walk with my Lord Jesus. I learned through the 12-Steps biblical principles that in order to heal, we must forgive those who have done us wrong, and forgive ourselves for being so hateful with those who have hurt us. It took a long time for me to be able to forgive myself and those who hurt me, until I surrendered my life to Jesus. When I did that, my life changed completely. Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Some of us have been enslaved with guilt, shame, fear and bitterness. I know I lived like that for a very long time. I had a problem, but I just didn’t want to see it. I needed help, but when we come to Jesus, He tells us to “Take His yoke upon us and learn from Him.” Jesus is saying we no longer have to try to carry our burdens by ourselves. Once I did that, my life got easier. God is awesome, and He is in control and watching over us all. Giving my life to Jesus Christ was the best decision I ever made. Your brother in the faith, Jose Amaral”

Aaron Lowers, Avenal State Prison, Avenal, CA - “I’ve been working the 12-Steps for some time, but working them with your program gives me a new perspective and reinvigorates my enthusiasm for recovery. More than that, I’m getting into Scripture, digging into the word and forging a closer relationship with God. Instead of thinking only of the Steps, I find my mind focused more and more on God - thank You, Jesus! I thank you for helping me get past myself. God bless you both, Aaron”

Charles LaFayette, Los Angeles County State Prison, Lancaster, CA - “I have just completed the very trying Steps 8 & 9, the making of amends to those I have hurt. These Steps really forced me to see the ripple effect of my past wrong deeds. I am so grateful to have Christ as my Lord and Savior, because His selfless act on the cross has given me a second chance at life. These Steps have taught me the true meaning of forgiveness and empathy. I thank both of you for your time and consideration in helping me on my road to recovery and everlasting life with Christ. Charles”

Michael A. Francis, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, CA - “I really enjoyed doing your Bible study lessons. I had not picked up my Bible in a few years. The mind-blower for me was a few Scriptures you had me to read, and I saw that I had read and underlined them already. That made me feel wonderful, and now I know that I’m on the right path. Thank you and bless you, love Michael”

Jessica Martinez, Central California Women’s Facility, Chowchilla - “I’m glad that I’m continuing my studies with you. I was close to stopping, but I know the enemy was attacking me. I’ve gained so much out of this study, and learned that my spiritual healing keeps growing and I’m being more at ease with receiving what the Lord has to say. I’m actually listening and taking into consideration what God has planned for me, instead of always doing what I want to do. God is guiding my life, and in His timing, I hope to be released and come and volunteer for your outreach. Love always, Jessica”

Juan A. Zamora, Corcoran State Prison, Corcoran, CA - “I am not a very expressive or eloquent person, but I really wanted to thank you for the beautiful and very helpful study, and for all the beautiful things you do to help people like me. Also, for the pictures you sent of your beach outreach, and for all your letters. I really enjoy all of them. You brought tears to my eyes, and put a bit smile on my face (and I have a big-sized mouth, so it was indeed a big smile). Thank you, thank you, thank you a

thousand times and more. May God keep blessing you and your ministry. Sincerely, Juan”