

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - July, 2013
Newsletter for April, May, June, 2013
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LoveLiftedMeRecovery.com

Twelve Step Program

During this past quarter, one of the Steps we covered was Step 5, which is: **STEP 5 - Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.** Here is a part of our introduction to Step 5: My friend, in James 5:16, God's word says, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." The word "fervent" means burning, glowing, intensely devoted, earnest or passionate. "Avails" means to be worthwhile, effective, helpful, or accomplishing an end. We have put so much time, work and thought about our personal lives into the 4th Step, and have written it all down. The next thing in getting our affairs in order is to confess to God the wrongs we have done, and allow Him to forgive us and heal the pain, shame, and guilt that we see was contrary to His will for us. Yes, that's right. In I John 1:9, God says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Now, we can heal for real! And because God says He will cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness when we confess our sins, we now stand in the place of that "righteous man" of James 5:16, whose prayers are effective! In Proverbs 28:13 we read "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." Look at all the benefits of confessing your sins in your 5th Step: healing - physical, mental and emotional; forgiveness from God; cleansing from all unrighteousness; having your prayers become truly effective, because those sins or unforgiveness towards others are no longer a hindrance to prayer; and mercy from God.

Through completing Step 5, you will notice that a healing is taking place in your confidence and even in some of your relationships. The fact is, it is easier to move forward when you can leave the baggage behind. It was such an unnecessary load of weight, because, if it was guilt, shame, sin, or pain, then almost 2000 years ago that burden was put on Jesus, just so that you would not have to bear it. Praise the Lord, what a release! Even though we have surrendered our heart and mind to God and accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, I believe to really make Him Lord of our lives we must surrender our free will to Him on a daily basis. When you truly do that, and invite Him up onto the throne of your life, you will receive the real godly freedom and peace, along with the joy your Heavenly Father has for you. This freedom is yours because your soul is now in tune with God; you are in agreement with Him and you are surrendered to Him. Now, He can direct your steps into a prosperous life. To God be the glory!

With love and care, Pastor Tom

Monthly

Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, April 6, 2013 - For this outreach, we had Tom, me, Leigh-Anna, Keith, Catharine, Daniel, Frank, Ararat, Mitch, Angela R. and Jimmy. We had 115 lunches, lots of socks and toiletries, and several sweatshirts, T-shirts and other clothing items, which had been donated by people at our church. We gave out the lunches and other items to the homeless community down at the beach, and each lunch has a gospel tract inside, too. After handing out all the stuff to the homeless, we continued to hand out gospel tracts up and down the Venice Boardwalk. It was a beautiful day, and lots of tourists

and people were out for the day. We gave out several hundred tracts in English and Spanish, and one in Arabic, and one in Thai. Angela and Keith saw one young woman earnestly reading the tract they had given her, and one man asked for extra tracts to pass out to others. I had a few people ask for more than one tract, and gave them several different titles. We all thought people were very open to receiving the tracts, and prayed for the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and bring them to Jesus. Catharine and Daniel's group prayed for a lot of the homeless people they met. They couldn't find some of their "regulars" in their normal spots, as things were all in disarray in certain parts of the Boardwalk, due to a TV show being filmed there. All in all, though, we all had a good time, and give God the glory.

"Now the parable is this: The SEED is the WORD of GOD. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their HEARTS, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation (testing) fall away. And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the GOOD GROUND are those who, having heard the word with a NOBLE and GOOD HEART, keep it and bear fruit with patience."
Luke 8:12-15

Saturday, May 4, 2013 - We had a good group to go out today for our outreach. We had Tom, Dottie, Bob, Keith, Angela, Shami, Catharine, Frank, Brian and Ararat. We had made up 120 lunches to give to the homeless, along with lots of little bags of toiletries, and lots of socks. Our group ran out of lunches soon, and Angela had promised one to a tall, blond man, so when we caught up with Ararat, Frank and Brian's group, she grabbed a lunch and ran up to find him. He was extremely grateful that she remembered him and gave him a lunch. A young man came up to us and gave us back two little cans of Vienna sausages, saying that someone was a vegetarian, and couldn't eat them. Right then, an older lady came up, and although we were out of lunches, we told her we had these two cans of Vienna sausages. Her eyes lit up, and she was very thankful to get them. We also gave her toiletries and socks. Ararat started walking over to a man near the alley, but the man said, "I don't want to talk to you!" Ararat asked him, "Would you like a lunch?", and that changed his whole attitude. He told Ararat that most people didn't treat him very well, and he didn't trust anyone, but because Ararat had offered him some food, it opened the door, and Ararat ended up praying for him, too. Catharine and Shami also prayed for a lot of homeless people, and they are opening up more and trusting them, since we come faithfully every month. Arthur usually asks for prayer, but this time, he started up and led in the prayer himself. Then, Shami asked him if he had ever prayed to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior, and he just said, "I'm a Catholic," so she led him in the sinner's prayer, and he received Christ. A woman named Julie also prayed with Catharine and Shami to receive Christ. Another man named Arthur needed prayer for his knee, and Shami laid hands on him, and felt heat go through her to him. Arthur said he felt the heat, also. Other homeless people they prayed for were Fabian, who wanted to get his child back, and Ararat prayed for Matthew, who had a broken foot. We all gave out several hundred gospel tracts in English and Spanish, and I gave one to a man in Arabic. Bob and Angela found a large group of men outside of the Phoenix House, a residential program for men, and everyone took a gospel tract.

Saturday, June 1, 2013 - Our team that went out to the beach today consisted of Tom, me, Shami, Daniel, Frank, Ararat, Cliff, Angela, Keith, Bob, Chris, Kenisha, Judy and Tikva. We gave out 120 lunches to the homeless, lots of little bags of toiletries/hygiene items, and lots of socks. We also had a few T-shirts and jackets. There were many large groups of homeless, and also individuals walking

along the Boardwalk. I asked one young man if he needed something to eat, and he just kept on walking. All of a sudden, I guess it registered to him what I had said, and he came back and asked for a lunch. When I gave it to him, he was very thankful. One guy who said his name was Mick was sitting by himself, and accepted a lunch. He also was very happy to get one of the big T-shirts we had, in a size 3X. Angela stayed and talked and witnessed to him for a while (she said she did the “Romans Road” verses). Angela also witnessed to a young man named Jonathan, gave him a Gospel of John, and prayed with him. Kenisha and Cliff were new to our outreach, and Chris and Tikva hadn’t gone out with us for a while, and they all enjoyed it. Chris said he had no problem talking to homeless people, but wasn’t used to hugging them. He got hugged by at least four or five people who were so grateful for the food and other things he gave them. Frank had two lunches left, and went down one of the alleys to search for likely candidates. He saw two men come out from between the buildings, and then they sat down. When he offered them his last two lunches, they said, “Praise the Lord!” He watched as they opened up the bags, arranged the food in front of themselves, and then bowed their heads to pray. I had one lunch left when a man came up to me. I told him it was my last lunch and it must have his name on it. He said his name was Robert, so I said, “Well, Robert, here is your lunch.” He had a big smile on his face. Bob talked to a man for about twenty minutes, giving him his testimony, and witnessing for the Lord. Bob said this man wouldn’t give his name, but took a Gospel of John and let Bob pray for him. Then, as we were almost back to the car, Kenisha came up to me saying that Angela told her I would have tracts in Russian. They were talking to two men, and I found two different tracts in Russian that she took back to them. Kenisha said the men were so surprised, and said, “I can’t believe you have it in Russian!” We gave out several hundred tracts in English and Spanish, also. Tikva said she was getting more bold about going up to people and offering them a tract.

Prison Ministry

Doug Winston, Solano State Prison, Vacaville, CA - “I really enjoyed your letter, especially the part where you told me about the outreach at Venice Beach. When you were telling me about the two cans of Vienna sausages and how happy the lady was to get them, I broke down and cried. That is a beautiful story, and it made me wish I could have been there to help with the outreach. Also, it was as if my emotions swelled up inside me from some deep place within my soul and spilled over and engulfed my whole spirit to the point where I could not hold back the tears. Luckily, no one came walking by my bunk and saw me crying. I am positive that they would not have understood why I was crying over two cans of Vienna sausages. I was born in Seoul, Korea during the latter part of the Korean War. Life was extremely hard for the average person, and I was placed in an orphanage when I was still very young. Later, my sister and I were sent to an orphanage in the United States. I remember always being hungry. It seems that we got food every few days. It never was much, and I would give most of mine to my little sister. Later, we were adopted, but by that time, I was really sick and suffering from malnutrition. Our adoption saved my life, but I never got over the trauma of being rejected and abandoned by my real mother and father. I grew up angry at the world, and with a very deep sense of mistrust. As a result, I’ve ruined a lot of lives and affected many more. But today, I am happy that God has blessed me with a guilty conscience and allowed me to understand the error of my ways, and the desire to repent of my sins. I’ve been adopted again, by God, but this time, I’ve experience nothing but Love, Peace and Serenity, and so, I think I’m going to stay awhile. Respectfully, Doug”

Thomas Murphy, California Correctional Institution, Tehachapi, CA - “Thanks for the Step 2 lessons. They helped me make it through another day in peace. I’ve studied the 12-Steps while attending AA, NA, and Celebrate Recovery, but your program is helping me to understand those Steps in more depth. I really enjoyed your letter, too. It’s nice hearing about some of the normal activities in the “real world”. Thanks for the opportunity to take your 12-Step program. Tom Murphy”

Noe R. Cantu, US Penitentiary/Federal Prison, Terre Haute, IN - "Thank you for the Step One work sheet and the Serenity Bible. This is something I've been wanting to do for a while. I have done the 12-Steps before, but for the wrong reasons. I did it for the court system, but now I want to work the Steps and take a good look at myself. I thank the Lord for placing me in this place they call prison. It was part of His plan for my life, and I am grateful He is with me today and every day I am in here. Your brother in Christ, Noe Cantu"

Randy Clark, Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, Blythe, CA - "While doing this last lesson, I experienced a re-connection to God and an understanding of God and myself. As my aunt has always told me, I have a wonderful testimony to reach others someday, and it has taken your lessons to get me "on the path" instead of beside it on the access road. I still have some issues, but I hear God's call. Thanks for turning on the lamp in the lighthouse to guide my vessel safely to shore. Sincerely, Randy"

Elizabeth Middleton, California Institution for Women, Corona, CA - "I'd like to say it is such a blessing learning about the word of God and working my Steps. I must admit it's taken me a little while longer than most. I've been here 29 years, and I truly believe everything that happens is in God's timing. I'd like to share that you and your ministry are appreciated. The transformation in my life is slow but steady. What I know today is that God truly has a purpose and plan for my life. I can honestly say, 'Darkness no more, no more victim, but victorious.' God is about to do something big, and my hope has been restored. Thank you for your ministry and your prayers. Sincerely, Elizabeth"

Raul Castillo, Centinela State Prison, Imperial, CA - "I want to let you know that I am a born again Christian since February, 1987. I also have been practicing the 12-Steps along with my Christian walk. Though I consider myself a rigorous Christian and Alcoholics Anonymous member, there is a thing that I haven't been able to see as clearly as I wanted to. For years I have been looking for an aid, and for help with a sponsor who can guide me to find out why I erred the way I did. For years I have been wondering about my insensitivity. Strangely, when I received your address, I was getting an idea of my mistake and deviation. Anyway, I am glad I enrolled with you. I am already enjoying your course. It's awesome how you use the Scriptures pointing to our powerlessness, especially II Chronicles 20:12. I have many favorite verses, and this is one of them. My hope in our Lord Jesus Christ is to grow more and more spiritually. I am willing to receive the proper meat of the word of God. May our God continue blessing and watching over you. Sincerely yours, Raul"

Antonio McCormick, R.J. Donovan State Prison, San Diego, CA - Here is a poem he wrote:

The Stormy Sea

The stormy waters raged around me, for within me, I found no peace.
I was thrown about, the spirit of doubt hit me, like deadly debris.
As I sank deeper into the sea, the trauma that I received
When I was young, was like salt water filling my lungs.
I hollered, "Buddha, save me!" But no helping hand reached into the sea.
I hollered, "Allah, save me!" But I was left to my own abilities.
I reached out for philosophies and ideologies,
I even looked for a god within me, to save me, but I found that I'm no god,
I only found a wretched man that I am.
Other gods said, "You do this or do that, and I'll love you."
But through the stormy sea, I heard the Father say,

“I loved you when you didn’t know or love Me.
I gave My Son to the world to set them free.”
So I hollered, “Lord Jesus, save me!” and He lifted me from that stormy sea.