

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - July, 2015
Newsletter for April, May, June, 2015
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LoveLiftedMeRecovery.com

Twelve Step Program

Step 6 - “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”
Step 7 - “Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.”

The dictionary definition of defect is “an imperfection that impairs worth or utility; a shortcoming; a lack of something necessary for completeness; a blemish.” The definition of shortcoming is “a deficiency (lacking something), a defect.” **Our shortcomings means those areas where we COME SHORT of God’s perfect standard.** Romans 3:23 says, “For ALL have sinned and **fall short** of the glory of God,” so there’s no person on the face of this earth who is entirely without SOME defects and shortcomings, no matter HOW GOOD a person they may seem to be. Also, when we say “character” we are speaking of moral and ethical traits or **behavior patterns and qualities that you have LEARNED.** We are NOT referring to YOU as a person, or your personality. God has given each one of us talents and qualities that make us special individuals, and each one of us is precious in His sight. What God wants us to do is to **get rid of behavior patterns we have learned that are not godly,** and all things which are hindering us from being the creation He meant us to be. **We must work on those areas where we have been bent and warped out of shape,** so that God can conform us to the image of Jesus Christ. Also, God can’t use us to the fullest extent that He would like to use us when we are full of our character defects and shortcomings. That’s what the dictionary definition of defect means when it says “an imperfection that impairs worth or utility.” In God’s eyes, our WORTH and VALUE is never impaired (made less), because He will always love us. However, our UTILITY (usefulness) is definitely impaired and lessened, and **God is not able to use us** the way He wants to. **II Timothy 2:21** says, “Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, **USEFUL to the Master,** prepared for every good work.”

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, April 4, 2015 - In Romans 15:16, the Apostle Paul says, “That I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, **ministering the gospel of God,** that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” So, in that light, our outreach team that “**ministered the gospel of God**” to the people at Venice Beach and the Venice Boardwalk today included: Tom, Dottie, Shami, Bob, Keith, Darla, Desiree, Frank, Mitch, Brian, Johnny and Sarah. We had 142 lunches, tons of socks, toiletries, jackets and other clothing, and blankets for the homeless. Each lunch contains a gospel tract, and we also handed out many tracts in English and Spanish to the people who were just down at the Boardwalk for a Saturday morning. When our group first got down to the parking lot at Rose Ave., we were met by “Abraham” who took a lunch, and also informed us that someone had brought their car into the parking lot earlier that morning and was trying to run over homeless people. We were happy to find out no one was hurt, but I’m sure it was scary when it was happening. Frank, Mitch, Brian and Bob prayed for a lady named Monica, and she also prayed for them. She said she had been kicked out of her home several times, all for the same reason, and that was because the buildings were being condemned. Now she was homeless. Johnny, Sarah and Keith were with me, and they got ahead of me, and were giving out their last two lunches to a large group on the grass. Right then, Shami, Desiree and Darla

came up and still had lunches left, so they were able to give one to each of the others in the group. A young man with lots of piercings and tattoos took a lunch and then said his friend needed one, too. He pointed down the Boardwalk, and we said we'd already covered that area. He said he and his friend just got there, so they didn't get lunches yet, so I went with him to give one to his friend. There was also a lady named Angie there, and she saw one of our blankets and asked if she could have it. We gave it to her, and she said she had been praying for God to give her a blanket. We also gave her a shirt, a hat, some socks, and toiletries, and of course a lunch, and she was overflowing with joy and thankfulness. Later, I saw some young girls selling things they had made, and I bought a colorful pencil holder from them. Then, I gave each of them a gospel tract, and they couldn't very well refuse, since I had just bought something. We had some shoes, and Mitch said the lady who got them not only said they fit her and were "perfect", but was so happy, because her old shoes were falling apart. Some of the shirts we had were large sizes, and the people who got those were very grateful to have something that fit them. One man said to Shami, "This is a really nice, expensive shirt." She said, "Yes, it's being given to you from my son and in the name of Jesus."

Saturday, May 2, 2015 - Our team to go out on the beach outreach consisted of: Tom, Dottie, Shami, Darla, Keith, Bob, Frank, Mitch, Moses, Brendan, Johnny, Sarah and Cody. It was the first time for Moses, and he really liked it. Moses said, as they were unloading the lunches from their van, a woman walked up and said the Holy Spirit had told her to come and pray with them. There was also a group of Christian young people there, and they came over and prayed, too (they were getting ready to pass out gospel tracts, also). We had a total of 140 lunches, lots of toiletries, socks, and some blankets and clothing for the homeless. Sarah, Johnny, Keith and Cody came with me up to the Rose Ave. end of the Boardwalk, and as we were unloading our stuff from the car, a man came up and asked for a lunch,. He was riding a bicycle, but all his worldly goods were strapped onto it, and he did look homeless. We saw so many homeless people that we ran out of lunches by the time we were about halfway down the Boardwalk. Later, when talking to Shami, she said she, Darla and Bob had gone up further than usual, and they had lunches left and were able to give them to those people we missed. Shami's group also met up with Brendan and Moses at one point, and as they were starting to come back, they heard someone calling for help. A homeless woman named Rhoda was very sick, and said she was diabetic, and asked if they could call the paramedics. Brendan called 911 on his phone, and they all stayed with her until the paramedics came. All this time, Rhoda was holding onto Brendan's hand and saying, "Please don't leave me, don't leave me." She also asked for a soda, and Shami went and bought her one. They also prayed with her and stayed until the paramedics arrived. Frank and Mitch saw two men who seemed to be angry, but after they offered them lunches, they calmed down. On the way back, they saw the men eating the lunches, and they were very happy. We are always encouraged when we see and talk to other Christians down at the Boardwalk, and Moses said there was a father and daughter who were handing out Subway sandwiches and fruit to the homeless, and also giving out gospel tracts. Sarah, Johnny and I talked to a man named Julio who said he was originally from Venice, but now lived in the Compton area and had a ministry there. He was encouraged by seeing us there doing the Lord's work. I offered a lunch to a young man sitting on a bench. I didn't know if he was homeless, but I always say, "We're giving out lunches to anyone in need, do you need one?" He said this was his first day being homeless, and he didn't need the toiletries and things, but he was very hungry and thankful to get a lunch. Mitch went down one of the alleys and saw a woman named Gloria, who was handicapped and lying on some kind of bed with wheels (like a gurney?). He stopped and talked to her and prayed with her for quite a while, and she gave him a little cross she had made out of palm leaves. Mitch said he was just so blessed to be able to spend some time with her and talk to her, and she seemed to appreciate it, too. Shami and Darla remembered a woman named Jennifer who had asked for a Bible last month. They didn't have one then, but brought several this time. They saw her, and Darla caught up with her and asked if she remembered asking for a Bible. She said that she did, but that she hadn't been living right lately, and didn't feel worthy of receiving one now. Of course, they gave one to her anyway. We

handed out lots of gospel tracts, in English and Spanish, and about 30 or 40 copies of “Our Daily Bread” (we put those in some of the lunches, actually). I also gave a tract to a young man, and when I asked if English was okay, he said he spoke French. I found a French tract in my bag, and he took it and gave me back the one in English.

Saturday, June 6, 2015 - Today, our team for going out to Venice Beach was: Tom, Dottie, Bob, Shami, Desiree, Mitch, Frank, Moses, and Ararat. We had around 140 lunches (lost count on them somehow), lots of toiletries, socks, some clothing, a few blankets, and gospel tracts and Bibles. Moses said he saw a few homeless people with Subway sandwiches, so he knew the man and his daughter that they had met last month were there again passing them out. Moses, Shami and Desiree were praying for a man named Mark, when all of a sudden another man, Derek, came out of one of the stores, wrapped his arms around them, and prayed with them. Ararat said to one man, “Enjoy your lunch!” and the man replied, “Yes, I’ll enjoy it, because Jesus gave it to me.” Bob and I met a man who was playing on a keyboard, and after he saw that we were passing out Christian literature, he started playing a hymn. It was Fanny Crosby’s “In the Cross”, and Bob and I joined in singing the rest of the verse and chorus, while everyone around us was watching and listening. Frank said there were quite a few people who said, “Oh, you’re from the Bible Tabernacle - thank you for all you do!” Another man asked Bob and me who we were “with” and we said, “We’re with Jesus!” He said, “No, I mean what church are you with?” We told him we were from several different churches, but we all loved Jesus and were trying to do what He asked us to do. I gave gospel tracts to young people with pink hair, tattoos, and body piercings. They seemed really open to taking the tracts, whereas sometimes, the more “respectable” or well-dressed people turn them down and can’t be bothered. We did, however, have a great time, and Bob said he “felt a lot of love” down at the Boardwalk. We all thought there were more people than usual that took the tracts, and we know that means the Holy Spirit is working in their hearts. A police car was moving down the Boardwalk slowly, and I even gave a gospel tract to the police woman who was on the passenger side. The policeman driving said, “My partner will read it.” Don’t know if that meant he was already a Believer, or if he just wasn’t interested. That’s okay - we’ll give gospel tracts to anyone who is breathing and has a pulse! We’re out there planting seeds for the kingdom of God.

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase (caused the growth). So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.” I Corinthians 3:5-9

Prison Ministry

Rafael Perez, California Men’s Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA - “The purpose for this letter is to thank you for your on-going blessings upon me. Love Lifted Me Recovery in itself has helped me stay focused on becoming more and more like the new man I am in Christ, as it makes me look at my struggles from the person I used to be, and I am reminded of what I need to do to get things in line. Not only have you helped me through this ministry that our Lord has entrusted to you, but also in your kindness in that you went the extra mile for me to write me a support letter. Thank you! I know for sure all your needs will always be met and that your blessings will be great in our Father’s kingdom. Keep doing what you are doing in the good work which our Father has called you to (I Corinthians 15:58). In the love of Christ, Bro. Rafael Perez”

Arlene Whitney, Central California Women’s Facility, Chowchilla, CA - “Here are my Step 5 lessons. This is the Step that helped free me from the fear of being rejected and judged by my past. I used to keep from sharing, but today I’m free and honest, hoping I can help someone keep from making the same

mistakes. God bless you both. Thank you so much. Arlene.”

Linda Brown, El Cajon, CA, Released several years ago, and still doing our Bible studies - “I can’t imagine not having these Bible studies to see me through. Life in general has changed in the way I see things, and in the way I choose to live. Wow! Not every day is guaranteed to be a bowl of cherries, but I’m hanging in there. I’m learning so much and praying for the change, because practice and prayer are a must. I’ve been here at Integrity One Sober-Living practically two years now. I work with many aspects of recovery from behavior, health, and court appointed alcohol and drug addiction programs. Please keep me in prayer. Blessings, Linda”

Harun Smith, High Desert State Prison, Susanville, CA - “I got your mail with the photo and the reading material, “Leaving the Garbage Behind.” It’s amazing what will come to you when you most need it. I’m sure the material goes hand in hand with Step 4, but I got to admit its timing and arrival is appropriate. Prison being what it is, and me turning away from who I was and trying to purpose and direction is being put to the test! For the most part, God is keeping me conscious and guiding me along a path that’s keeping me too busy to give in. Two things in your paper caught my attention: ‘I will be able to serve God out of the purest of motives when I get rid of all the co-dependant, self-seeking behavior patterns in my life’, and then ‘But I’ve got to have a “garage sale” and get rid of a lot of junk.’ I get it! Harun Smith”

John-Lionel Taylor, California Men’s Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA - My Testimony - “In April, 1995, it was this Indian’s last day of having spent a total of four years in “The Hole”. Pelican Bay State Prison was my home, where they sent the worst of the worst. This was my life. Being Indian, I struggled with the concept of Jesus. My heart reached out for Huaca, Tunkasila (Indian names for God), the Creator-God. I knew the ways and the songs, the sweat lodge and the suffering, but I did not know how to ask for help. Or even if I could ask or should ask. I was at a crossroads. Then I finally reached out to Jesus, and that Scripture comes up, ‘Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ I remembered the old man in juvenile hall who used to have us kids memorize Scripture for candy - who knew it would matter years later? I made some promises to God, but over the next few years, I didn’t keep them. I was in and out of prison like a revolving door. I thought, “Is this what life is about? It doesn’t make any sense!” I didn’t want to hurt any more people, but I didn’t know how to stop. April, 1998, my true salvation night, alone in my cell, it all hits me. God showed me I was possessed by an evil personality, a demon. That night in my cell, God pulled back the curtain, and there’s Satan laughing at me and pulling my strings. That night I knew I was a prisoner of sin. I wanted to die, but God said, ‘If you’re going to die, then why not die for Jesus?’ I prayed, ‘Lord, I couldn’t do anything good with the life You gave me - You do something with it. I’ve wasted what You gave me. If You save me, I’ll give you my life.’ In that moment, I felt a hand descend upon me, and then enter into me, gripping and pulling, and something lifted off of me and away from me, and then peace came over me. In that instant, I could feel again, and I was a kid again, and I couldn’t stop crying. This time, I got better and stopped getting worse.” Love always, in Christ Jesus, Bro. Lionel

Yudit Rosales, Central California Women’s Facility, Chowchilla, CA - “I get so happy when I get your Bible studies, because I can be me, being honest without feeling afraid, or to be judged or unsafe. Thank you so much. You guys are really a blessing in my life. I hope I’m doing good - English is my second language, but I love doing these Bible studies in English. May God bless you guys. Sincerely, Yudit Rosales”

Gabriel Branner, CSP Sacramento (“New Folsom”), Represa, CA - “Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your program. I am transforming myself through the word of God, and breaking all the bad habits. Just as Gabriel in the Bible was a messenger for God, I want to be a messenger and a preacher and teacher of God’s word. I’ve already started the 12-Steps, but can you also send me the ‘Noah & the

Flood' Bible Study? Sincerely, Gabriel"