

Love Lifted Me Recovery Ministries - July, 2016
Newsletter for April, May, June, 2016
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LoveLiftedMeRecovery.com

What is the purpose of a Christian, Bible-based Twelve Step program? This study is from the Gospel of John, where Jesus has just raised Lazarus up from the dead. John 11:44 says, "And he who had died came out BOUND hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. **Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."** Now, why didn't Jesus just bring Lazarus back from the dead already unbound, or loose (unwrap) Lazarus Himself? Why did Jesus say to His disciples to loose Lazarus from his graveclothes? We believe the lesson for us is that **WE ARE ALL LIKE Lazarus. We receive NEW LIFE when we are BORN AGAIN by FAITH in Jesus Christ, but we all still have the stinky, old graveclothes of our OLD LIFE wrapped around us, tripping us up sometimes. We need one another in the church, the Body of Christ, to help unwrap each other from old habits, character defects and shortcomings, and whatever else is still clinging to us from our old sin nature.** God's word tells us to assemble together often, especially for the purpose of hearing God's word PREACHED. **When we hear the word, and fellow Believers exhort and encourage us,** it helps us get UNWRAPPED and untangled (Hebrews 12:1) from our old sinful habits. We need other Believers to help us see our blind spots - to help us see where we are still dragging some "graveclothes" around. **Doing a good 12-Step program is also helpful in this area.**

•**Hebrews 10:24-25** "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but **exhorting one another**, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

•**Hebrews 12:1** "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily entangles us**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, April 2, 2016 - The "Lord of the Harvest" sent forth laborers into His harvest for today, and they were: Tom, Dottie, Mitch, Frank, Moses, Justin, Ararat, Michael, Adia, Monica, Virginia, and Tony. We had 160 lunches, lots of socks and toiletries, a few items of clothing, and also 24 blankets that we gave out to the homeless. Tony also brought some extra cupcakes, Danish sweet rolls, and other goodies that he got from Smart & Final. Everyone was very grateful to receive the food and other things which we gave for their physical needs, and also the gospel of Jesus Christ for their spiritual needs. Many homeless people received hugs from us, and many were prayed for by our members. Ararat gave a lunch to the woman who had cursed him out last month, and she remembered him, but still no apology for cursing at him. Moses, Ararat and Justin took Shami's usual route, because she couldn't come this time, and that is to go out by the handball courts, basket ball courts, and skateboard park. The other guys from the Bible Tabernacle took Tony with them, and they covered the south end of the Boardwalk, and also went up and down the alleys to find homeless people there. Monica, Adia, and Virginia came with me, and we started up at Rose Avenue and went up to the north part of the parking lot, and then moved on down the Boardwalk from there. We offered some of the cupcakes to a young woman named Michelle, and she told us she was diabetic and couldn't eat them. The guy next to her spoke up immediately and said, "I'm not! I'll take them!" Virginia felt led to ask Michelle if she could pray for her, and she did. After we ran out of lunches, we continued to hand out gospel tracts to anyone who would take one. Most of the people seemed open to receive them, and we always pray for the Lord to let the seeds be planted in good ground. Mitch said he

noticed more people reading the tracts as soon as they got them. We gave out several hundred tracts in English and Spanish, apart from the tracts inside each lunch to the homeless - glory to God!

Saturday, May 7, 2016 - Our witnessing team today consisted of Tom (staying home to provide prayer cover), Dottie, Shami, Keith, Tony, Frank, Mitch, Ararat, Michael, Justin, Jonathan, Jahleel, Chris, Alice, and Yvonne. We had 179 lunches, lots of socks and toiletries, six pairs of shoes, about 20 or so warm, quilted vests, a huge box of T-shirts (maybe 30 or 40?), and two boxes of blankets, which came to about 25 blankets in all. Tony also brought candy bars and coffee cake-type goodies that had been donated by Smart & Final. We gave out everything except for three T-shirts, and they'll be saved for next month. This was all given to the homeless population down at Venice Beach and the Boardwalk. Tony, Alice and Yvonne came with me, and in one of the first groups of homeless that we encountered up at the north end of the Rose Ave. parking lot, there was a man who said he had lost all of his belongings, and needed everything. We gave him a lunch, toiletries, socks, a vest, and a blanket, and he was so happy. Tony and the men from the Bible Tabernacle gave out information about the BT to many of the homeless, so if they are serious about getting off the streets, they have directions how to get there. Yvonne said she enjoyed meeting the needs of people, and Jonathan said he enjoyed praying with people, and also that it was a good experience for their nine-year-old son, Jahleel. Jonathan also said it almost brought tears to his eyes when he saw how young some of the homeless people were that they ministered to. Shami prayed for a woman named Gloria, and also gave her a lunch. Most of our lunches contain a can of Vienna sausages, and Gloria said she didn't eat meat. When she looked in the bag, she saw it had a can of tuna, instead, so she was able to eat it. The lunches with the little can of tuna were some of the ones made up by our Sunday school kids at Sunrise Church. After that, we continued to hand out gospel tracts, in English and Spanish, and prayed with many people.

Saturday, June 4, 2016 - For our monthly outreach to Venice Beach, we had 190 lunches (177 that we made up, and some that the BT guys brought with them), lots of socks and toiletries, three pairs of shoes, about 40-50 T-shirts, about 15-20 warm quilted vests, 12 blankets, and a few other items of clothing for the homeless population down at the beach. The people who came to help besides Tom and me were Shami, Desiree, Keith, Tony, Frank, Mitch, Michael, Justin, and Junior. Mitch went with Shami and Desiree, and one of the homeless men they prayed with and gave food and other items to was also interested in going to the Bible Tabernacle. His name was Lamar, and Mitch said he could see Lamar's face light up with hope when he explained how he could go to the BT, and he even gave him his cellphone # and said to call any time. Desiree said a man named Joe serenaded them with singing and guitar, and he was very happy to receive the food and things that were given to him for his physical needs. Shami said a man named Jimmy was inside a tent, and he just stuck out his hand to receive a lunch, socks, toiletries and everything, and they also prayed for him. Tony and Keith came with me, and we went up to the north end of the Rose Avenue parking lot, as we've been doing, and gave out almost half of our stuff just to those people. Then, we swung by the car and filled up with more lunches and clothing, and headed off down the Boardwalk. Tony gave out lots of little fliers we've made up with information about how to get to the Bible Tabernacle. One man I talked to seemed really interested when I told him how their program works, and as always, we pray that some of these people will want to go there and get off the street. Michael saw a man who needed food, but he was all out of lunches, so he promised the man he would go and find the rest of his group and bring him a lunch. The man looked like he didn't really believe it, but his face really lit up when Michael came back with a lunch for him. Frank said everyone seemed very thankful and joyous to receive everything that we were giving out. We also gave out the gospel to those who were just down at the beach for the morning, and we handed out several hundred gospel tracts in English and Spanish, and one in Chinese. When large groups of people are walking by, I've noticed that even if some of them say they don't want a tract, there is usually at least one in the group who will take one (sometimes everybody takes one).

One group was passing by, and they all turned the tracts down, but then one man came back and said, "I'll take one of those!" Praise the Lord!

Prison Ministry

Daniel J. Thomas, Ironwood State Prison, Blythe, CA - "You guys are such a huge inspiration to me. One of my goals is to help and volunteer in your ministry whenever I get out. Also, I want to let you know that it was not until I did my Fourth Step with your ministry that everything came into the light, and I finally got it. When I finally did the work thoroughly, I saw my causative factors, defects of character, triggers, and my true self-centered lifestyle. If not for Jesus and all He has done for me, I would still be a lost sheep. I had a major gambling problem that He took from me without me even asking Him to. I am enrolled in Coastline Community College, and will get my business degree at the end of this year. I am also the janitor in the education building, where I clean the bathrooms, and I love it, because I am a humble servant of our Lord and do the job as He placed me in with joy. I volunteer for a lot of things, and am so hungry to be of service as a Christian man in recovery. So when I say I can hardly wait to help you guys at Love Lifted Me, it is an understatement. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Love, Danny"

Hector Demara, Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria, CA - "Thank you for your encouraging letter. I just received my next Bible lesson, and it gives me great pleasure to continue this path of righteousness. It's hard to explain how I feel, but it's a freedom that I never felt until I gave my life to the Lord. If you knew me two years ago, you wouldn't believe anything that I'm saying. People that have known me and my past history have seen my transformation. I tell them that God changed my life, and that all things are possible for the Lord. I've even seen some of my old prison rivals attending services, and we are no longer rivals, we are brothers in Christ. May God continue to bless you. Love & peace, Hector"

Oriental D. Liggins, Soledad State Prison, Soledad, CA - "I apologize for my delay - I was busy studying for my mid-terms. That's no excuse, though, because I really enjoyed this lesson. I also enjoyed the "Walk in Deliverance" paper. Thank you so much. I really felt like God was speaking to me, and the lessons were right on time, Praise Jesus! I am so thankful to be in your program, and I also enjoy the Serenity Bible. I use it every day to read Scripture. Thank you again, O"

Rene Pacheco, Folsom State Prison, Represa, CA - "I am so grateful and blessed to have done your "Love Lifted Me" 12-Step recovery program three times. I began with blind faith, attending AA meetings for all the wrong reasons. For years, I struggled to make sense of my life crime, but it wasn't until I truly worked Step 4 and made a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself, that I was able to unveil the truth behind my actions and motives. Romans 13:11 calls us to awaken out of sleep, and that's exactly how I was unaware or the trivial reasons behind my actions. Before I did your program, Step 4 was nothing but a blur to me. Tom and Dottie, thank you so much. Yes, I would be happy to do another one of your Bible studies. Respectfully, Rene P."

Loc Duong, Folsom State Prison, Represa, CA - "It's a honor and a blessing to be able to be friends with you guys through letters. I know I need a lot of help and support in my walk. I was told that for a brother or sister in Christ to best know each other is through testimony, so this is my testimony. My name is Loc Chi Duong, and I'm Chinese born in Vietnam in 1981. I came to America in 1988. Being in a traditional Chinese family, I was raised worshiping many different gods (just idols, but I didn't know that at the time). My first real exposure to Jesus Christ was a couple of years later in a Chinese Bible Church. It was brief, because I lost interest after a few months. I did not have a good relationship with my parents, so I began to hang out with so-called friends, skipping school, smoking cigarettes, drinking, and smoking weed. I was about 11 or 12 at that time. By the age of 14, I started to hang out with gang members and

commit crimes with them. In 1997, at the age of 15, I committed armed robbery, and was sentenced to 43 years for the crime. It was many years later, after trying unsuccessfully to get rid of my guilt in my own ways, that I finally heard someone's testimony of their faith in Jesus Christ, and I began to read the Bible. I also started going to church and listening to Christian TV preachers. My first prayer to Jesus goes like this, "I don't know if You're real or not. I just started reading the Bible, but I'm trying to find You. If You're real, please let me know, because I have no hope left, and don't know what to do." In April, 2014, I finally saw the truth and got down on my knees and prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart and change me. I asked Him to be my Lord and Savior, and confessed all my sins to Him. After that, I felt the peace and joy wash over me like never before. It felt like the world was lifted off my shoulders. I've found hope, and Jesus found me in my time of great need and brought me out of darkness into His light. I gave my life to Jesus that night and never looked back. Through God's strength and power, I've been able to be drug- and alcohol-free for almost two years now. Sincerely, Loc Duong"

Michelle Dufur, Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla - "I loved my lessons. Thank you for the letter, too. I am co-dependant and I use the 12-Steps in my recovery. Unfortunately, I had to come to prison to learn so much about myself. I'm so glad I'm in recovery and with God now. I will be a better person when I go home. I have two daughters and grandchildren to enjoy when I go home. Thank you for being available to help me with my walk with God. Love, Michelle"

Tiberiu Nista, Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria, CA - "I want to be honest with you for a moment. I don't write much, I'm not good with letters and saying the right thing, and today is no different. I just got my certificate of completion. Thank you so much! What I can't find the words to say is how much this program did for me. At first, I just wanted to do the program for the certificate, because it would look good for the prison board. I was so wrong about everything! It took me over one year to complete, but what you don't know is that over the course of this program, I got saved and got baptized here in our prison chapel. Tom and Dottie, I know I'm doing life, but for the first time I feel free! I'm saved! Thank you for everything you do for us! God bless you and your family and everyone in your ministries. I'll never forget you. Love, Tiberiu Nista"

Shawn McFee, Centinela State Prison, Imperial, CA - "Here is finally my 5th Step, and I know it took me a long time, but it was very hard for me. To forgive the people who hurt me and to bring back to mind things I have tried to forget was almost too much. But, I am serious about becoming a whole person and not the damaged one I have been for so long. I have learned so much about God and myself. I want to be a giving person. I have done so many bad things to people that I used to think there was no way God would ever forgive me. How could He? I am learning better now, and even though I am still a little afraid to totally give in (the damage done was so great), I am in a better place in my life that I have ever been. I will continue to move on and thank God for guiding me. I also thank you so much for helping me see God's plan for our lives. Always, Shawn"

Thank You to our Ministry Supporters!

We just want to acknowledge our ministry supporters, as we could not do any of this ministry without you. Those who support us financially, or with prayer, or by going out on the outreach, or by giving us toiletries, socks, or clothing, you are all loved and blessed by God, and we love and appreciate you so much! Also, you will receive rewards in heaven for your part in every soul that is saved, or Christian who is encouraged and restored to fellowship with the Lord through this ministry.

"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