

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” Ministry Update - October, 2015

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Newsletter Covering July, August, September, 2015

Website: LoveLiftedMeRecovery.com

Twelve Step Program

Step 7 - “Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings”, Step 8 - “Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all”, and Step 9 - “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others”. In some respects, we may work on these steps all our lives, but we try to remove as much “baggage” from our lives as we can for the present. These “Steps” as they are called, are really just biblical principles, and they are necessary for every Christian, not just those with problems of addiction. Every Christian **MUST** remove the weights and baggage from the past that tend to drag them down and make them less effective in serving the Lord Jesus. None of us can afford to let anger, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, or any “little sins” that we might call “shortcomings” crowd out the Holy Spirit and keep Him from working in our lives.

“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 ENSNARES us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher (He’s the Finish Line in the race!) of our faith....” Hebrews 12:1-2

“But in a great house there are vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone CLEANSSES HIMSELF from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, SANCTIFIED and USEFUL for the Master, prepared for every good work.” II Timothy 2:20-21

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, July 11, 2015 - Today, our group consisted of Tom, me, Frank, Mitch, Moses, AJ, Bob, and Keith (some of our regulars were out of town). We had 144 lunches, lots of toiletries and socks, a few items of clothing, and nine blankets to give to the homeless. The guys from Canyon Country got here late, because they had to drop two guys off at the hospital. Bob, Keith and I went at our usual time, and we met up with the BT guys later down at the Boardwalk. A young lady named Jennifer took a lunch, and when she saw we had tracts, she asked for a bunch to give out to others. A man named Andrew took a lunch from Bob, and then he asked if he could pray for Bob. Keith gave his last lunch to a man who said, “I was wondering where my next meal would come from,” and Keith said, “It came from Jesus!” One lady took a lunch and toiletries and then asked if we had any underwear. I said I only had a pair of men’s underwear, but she was happy to get them. A guy in a wheelchair nearby asked if he could have a pair of underwear, too, and I called Bob over, and he had a pair to give to this man. I told him, “They’re brand new - nobody has ever worn them!” and he was really happy. A lady and her family were just down at the Boardwalk for the day (not homeless), and she asked Moses and Frank what they were doing. Moses said, “We’re giving food to the homeless and praying for them, just as Jesus told us to do.” The lady said she was a Christian, and said, “You’re going to make me cry.” A homeless man named “Scooter” told Moses, “What you guys are doing is really cool - keep up the good work!” While we are down at the Boardwalk, we don’t just minister to homeless people, but to anyone who is there. A group of

handicapped people were getting off their bus, and Moses asked them if he could pray for them. They seemed a little surprised at first, but then he prayed, and they all went on their outing. We gave out several hundred gospel tracts in English and Spanish to the people who were just having a nice day at the beach, as well as a tract in each of the lunches we gave to the homeless.

Saturday, August 1, 2015 - Our ministry team that went down to the Boardwalk and Venice Beach today was: Tom, me, Frank, Mitch, Ararat, Moses, A.J., Nancy, Bob and Johnny. We had made 141 lunches, had lots of toiletries and socks, and a few clothing items and blankets to give to the homeless. You might think the blankets are not as much appreciated in the hot summer weather as in the winter, but the people we gave them to were really grateful. This was Nancy's first time, A.J.'s second time, and Johnny's fourth time to go out with us, and they all enjoyed it. Johnny said he's getting bolder in talking to people, and as he gave a lunch and tract to a man named Jason, Jason asked if he would pray for him, so Johnny laid hands on him and prayed right then and there. Nancy, Johnny and Bob came with me in the car up to Rose Ave., and in one of the first homeless groups we found, a man named Duke said there was a guy here earlier looking for us. Our pastor had called the night before and said someone from another church was going to try to meet us down on the Boardwalk, so we thought that must be him. We did meet up with him a little later, and his name was Tony. Tony had brought a huge duffle bag filled with muffins and cookies he got from a store that was giving them away, because they were past the sell date. They came in very handy for when we ran out of lunches, because we at least could offer people a muffin or two to eat. Also, Duke grabbed my hands and started praying for me and our group after we gave them lunches, socks and everything. He prayed a very earnest prayer and ended it in the name of Jesus. Everyone was very grateful for the lunches, muffins and everything, but not everyone was grateful at first. Mitch and A.J. met a homeless man named David who was very angry and wanted to "tell his story" and vent his frustrations on them. They let him rant and scream for about three minutes, and then gave him a lunch and some other things. He calmed down, began to smile and say "thank you" and was a changed person after that. They thought maybe it just made him feel better to get all his anger and frustration off his chest, and I guess it did. Moses and Ararat talked to the man and his daughter who were at the Boardwalk again giving out gospel tracts and Subway sandwiches. The daughter asked if she could pray for Moses and their group, and he said he was very touched by her prayer. As my group was coming back to the car, a lady who had taken a lunch when we first got there came up and talked to us. She said she had given her lunch away to some others, so Nancy gave her the last lunch we had. This lady said her name was H.J., and she and her dog were living out of her car. As usual, after giving out the food and things to the homeless, we all just continued up and down the Boardwalk giving out gospel tracts, praying for the Holy Spirit to move in peoples' hearts to bring them to Christ.

Saturday, September 5, 2015 - Our ministry team today consisted of Tom, Dottie, Shami, Bob, Frank, Ararat, Mitch, Desiree, Darla, Nancy and Tony. Tony brought, as he did last month, a huge bunch of "day old" muffins, Danish, doughnuts, apples and oranges, and some juice drinks that were donated by Smart & Final. We had 142 lunches, but we either gave out the extra goodies along with the lunches, or instead of a lunch when we ran out. We also had blankets, socks and toiletries for the homeless. Shami, Desiree and Darla gave a nice, whole Bible to a young man named Julio. When they first approached him, he said, "Guess what I am?" They didn't know, and he said, "I'm a Bible teacher and preacher." He really appreciated the Bible, because he said his had been stolen. Nancy and I talked with a man named Mickey, and he also said he was a preacher, but he already had his own Bible. He reached out and took Nancy's hand and prayed for us. Frank gave a lunch and a pair of socks to one man, and the man put them on right then and there, saying how great it was, and how in "real style" he now was with a new pair of socks. Desiree prayed for a lady named Carol, who needed healing for her feet. Tony and Bob talked with two young men who were living in their van, and gave them directions to the Bible Tabernacle. After we gave out all the food and other items to the homeless population at Venice Boardwalk, we continued on up and down the Boardwalk giving out gospel tracts. We all thought people were very receptive for the

most part, and we always pray that God will cause the seeds of His word to grow in peoples' hearts and that he will draw them to Jesus and salvation.

•**Isaiah 55:11** "So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, without accomplishing what I please, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

Prison Ministry

Our prison ministry is primarily a discipleship program for men and women who are already Christians, but just need help in their spiritual growth and sanctification, but we still encounter people who say they started our program as non-believers, and somewhere along the line became believers in Jesus Christ. They don't always write out a nice little testimony, but it is indicated in their answers to some of the 12-Step questions. One man recently said that because of our program and the help of Christian brothers there at the prison, he is now a Believer and has accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. Praise the Lord!

Donald E. Brooks, Solano State Prison, Vacaville, CA - "Our God is a loving, merciful God, and through your words I receive His warm blessings, guidance and encouragement. Thank you for helping me become better educated in the word of God. Yes, I am ready to let God control my life. I tried living my way without God's complete rule over my life, and it does not work. Don't get me wrong, I was raised from birth to praise God and acknowledge Jesus Christ, but I allowed myself to stray. Temptation was everywhere. But now I have committed myself to God, and no longer do I think, act or associate with negative lifestyle or criminal behavior. I want to be of service to my family and community, and I love to hear how you feed the hungry and share God's word with people. I want to give love, hugs, and a meal besides God's words like you do. I thank God for you two angels. Love, Donald Eugene Brooks"

Raymond Mendoza, R. J. Donovan State Prison, San Diego, CA - "Thanks for the photos of all of you feeding the homeless at Venice Beach. I thought I had it bad, but it touched my heart, and I see that I don't have it bad at all. I will continue to pray for those people. Thanks for everything. Raymond"

Carlos Lopez, Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria, CA - "I've been receiving your letters every time I receive my lessons, and they really put a smile on my face. They always make my day, especially when you write about your daily activities and your outreach to Venice Beach. Your program has changed me a lot and has made me a better man. Participating in your program has meant more to me than I can clearly express, and has changed my outlook on life. No matter what subject a particular lesson is on, mostly what I experience is love. Through the process of doing the lessons, I have "fallen in love" in the purest sense, and the supreme gift of Divine Love now permeates my daily life. God bless you always. With love, Carlos"

Loida Cruz, Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla, CA - "Thank you very much for the Bible study lessons that you are and have been providing for me. It truly has helped me understand some and a lot of truth in the word. I can't put into words my appreciation and gratitude toward you both for your ministry. God is so faithful, and I thank and praise His holy and mighty name Jesus for using you and your ministry for my spiritual growth. Blessings in abundance from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Sincerely, Loida ("Tita") Cruz"

Olymeous Matthews, Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, Blythe, CA - "Greetings to you both in the name of Christ Jesus! I am contacting you to thank you for being good humble servants of the New Covenant. I have really enjoyed the lessons from the 12-Steps, and am somewhat sad that one part of our journey has come to a close. However, I do look forward to continuing with the next Bible-based

course you have to offer. I cannot tell you how often I've felt alone and unimportant, rolling and drowning in self-pity, only to be snatched up with love and encouragement from the two of you through a letter. I love your correspondence, sharing, witnessing, and teaching a beggar where to find bread, and I love you, my brother and sister in Christ. Your brother in Christ, Olymeous"

Chris Kelly, Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria, CA - "I appreciate the hard work, dedication and love that you put into our recovery program with "Love Lifted Me Recovery." I am becoming a new man who has found God. I am grateful for having this opportunity to work with the both of you. Had I not found this program, I very well may have been stuck in sin still. So, thank you for showing that there is a better way, and that way is with Jesus my Lord and Savior! I look forward to the next lesson. I am learning a lot about myself and the people around me. I am doing great, and each day is a blessing. Love, Chris"

Rufus A. Avent, Folsom State Prison, Represa, CA - "I want to thank you guys. Reading your testimonies has given me the courage to write my first testimony, me being a baby Christian. I have been trying to get clean and sober for years and years, but I continued to do the same things over and over, expecting different results. I was so tired and depressed, ashamed, feeling weak and powerless, but my pride would not let me be honest. I was always making excuses, and I believed I could quit when "I was ready." I was powerless and my life was unmanageable for as long as I could remember. I was in "the hole" and I finally got on my knees and prayed and asked God to help me and guide me through this, as I have tried for the last fifty years, and I cannot get it right. I repented and I have been confessing my sins ever since that day. I got a Bible and I have been having a relationship with my Heavenly Father and Lord Jesus Christ. I wrote all my family and friends and told them what happened to me. I got out of "the hole" and feel so good, and God has been so good. I feel so strong, after thirty years of heartache and pain, and now by following God's will I am clean, and I don't have to lie anymore. I am a baby Christian, but I am building a stronger relationship and learning to go to God with all my problems. God bless you, Rufus"

Mark Villegas, Ironwood State Prison, Blythe, CA - "Thank you so much for this lesson. It has been really helpful, and it couldn't have come at a better time. I've been searching for answers for a long time, and I'm glad to let you know I'm finding them with your help. It's a daily struggle around here, but I've begun a new phase in my life, in large part due to your help. I thank you from the bottom of my heart as I continue on this path. Be happy in the Lord, and God bless. Love & respect, Mark"

Dominic White, California State Prison LA County, Lancaster, CA - "My name is Dominic White and I am currently incarcerated here in Lancaster. I am very interested in taking your 12-Step recovery correspondence course, and was referred by my cellmate Kenneth. I am 43 years of age and I have been incarcerated since I was 18 years old. Kenneth shares some of the curriculum with me, and I was particularly moved by the questionnaire in Step 4. A lot of the adolescence questions were a stark reality check for me. No one has ever tried to ask or understand me in such open and honest terms. Also, I've never trusted anyone enough, where I would divulge such intimate details regarding myself as an adolescent. I told myself that it's time to purge, so that I can evolve mentally and emotionally, and this is my initial step in that direction. Hope to hear from you soon. Sincerely, Dominic"

Matthew C. Rider, Solano State Prison, Vacaville, CA - "I received your letter, and I tell you, it was the most wonderful letter ever. I enjoyed reading about how God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty, and the base things of the world, and the things which are despised God has chosen, so that no flesh (no human being) should glory in His presence. And also, in I Samuel 2:8, how God has raised us up out of the dust and the dunghill, and has made us to sit with princes. That's so right - we could do absolutely nothing without the Lord. Thank you, Tom & Dottie, for everything you are doing for me. I'm

so thankful. The love and support you give to me is heartfelt. Sincerely, Matthew”