

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - October, 2019
Newsletter for July, August, September, 2019
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LoveLiftedMeRecovery.com

Twelve Step Program

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 very 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, July 6, 2019 - We had a great group of volunteers to go out with us to the Boardwalk: along with Tom and me, we had Shami, Sheldon, Kaela, Felipe, Ricardo, Jose (one of our prison guys who paroled out in April), Keith, Johnny, and Sheldon’s nephews, Aaron and Eli. We had 178 lunches, lots of socks, toiletry/hygiene packets, and used clothing to give to the homeless, and dog food for those who have dogs. It was Jose’s first time, and he said he really enjoyed being of service to others. Johnny prayed for a man who had a cardboard sign saying he was a veteran. He took off his hat and showed Johnny a big scar across his head where he said he’d been hit by a bullet. Johnny asked if he would like prayer, and the man said, “Yes.” Shami and Sheldon prayed with Carol, who said she needed to get her I.D. card and get on Social Security. They also prayed with Bradley, and he needed healing. Sheldon encountered a man who was a little hostile and kept asking what was in the lunch. Sheldon told him it was food, nourishment, and it came from the Lord, and he finally took one. Kaela offered a lunch to a man who was pointing up to the sky, and he said he was talking to God. Kaela said, “Well, maybe God is telling you to take a lunch.” Other than these two odd incidents, everybody else was extremely happy and grateful to get the lunches, clothing and toiletry items. One young man received clothing, food and toiletries from us and then asked for a hug. I hugged him and asked his name, and he said his name was Jacquies. I told him we were Dottie, Kaela and Jose, and he said, “Now I know who to pray for!” We saw eighty-four-year-old Jean, who lives out of her car, and she said she was recovering from surgery, and asked for prayer. One man took a lunch and toiletries, and later he came up to us and asked if we

took donations, and gave us \$2.00. That's a lot of money for a homeless person, so we were thankful for his offering to the ministry. After we gave all our food and things to the homeless, we continued to give out gospel tracts to those who were just down at the beach for the day. Felipe, Ricardo, and Jose gave out tracts in Spanish, and we all handed out gospel tracts in English.

Saturday, August 3, 2019 - We had heard from some people that they couldn't come this time, so we were expecting a smaller group of volunteers than usual. Along with Tom and me, we had Sheldon, Johnny, Felipe, Ricardo, and Kaela. We went out in three groups of two each, and had a great time down at the Boardwalk. We had 176 lunches, lots of socks and toiletry/hygiene packets, used clothing, and some other items for the homeless. Everyone was very grateful and happy to get the food, clothing and other things, and several people told us, "You made my day!" A man named Richard asked us if we were giving out all this stuff in the name of the Lord, and we said, "Yes, in the name of Jesus." He was so thankful and was praising Jesus as we kept on going on down the Boardwalk. Sheldon and Johnny gave away all their lunches, all of the toiletries, and nearly all of the clothing. They said a man named Bear, who said he was the mayor of the homeless on Venice Beach, offered to bless them, and said how much God provides for us, and we just need to show up and make an effort for our part, and avoid or ignore negative people who won't respond to the message anyways. Sheldon saw the same guy who nearly cursed him last time over the contents of the lunch. This time he asked again, and Sheldon told him that it was good, nourishing, and nonperishable, and he accepted that and said thanks. One of the people came out from the vendor's booth, spoke no English, but pointed to his clothing. Sheldon tried to remember some basic Spanish, came up with "Quieres camisa?" (do you want a shirt?) and he said yes, and accepted, and his eyes got real big and joyful when he gave him a T-shirt. A lot of people were really glad to see us this time, and said many kind words of appreciation. After we all gave out the food and clothing, we gave out gospel tracts in English and Spanish to people who were just down at the beach for the day, and the homeless people get one in each lunch. Felipe and Ricardo were especially good with giving the tracts in Spanish, and they gave out all of the food, toiletries and clothing that they had with them. Praise the Lord!

Saturday, Sept. 7, 2019 - The weather was pretty hot, and lots of homeless people were down at the Venice Boardwalk. Our volunteers that went down to the beach, aside from Tom and me, were: Sheldon, Shami, Keith, Kaela, Stephani, Yasuko, Felipe, Ricardo and Marcelino. We had 174 lunches this time, along with lots of socks, toiletry/hygiene packets, used clothing, and lots of backpacks (donated by Kathleen). Every lunch contains a gospel tract, and we also gave out tracts to passers-by, and Felipe and Ricardo gave them out in Spanish and spoke to people who spoke Spanish. The homeless population was all very thankful and grateful for the food and things we gave them. Shami said not many people wanted to pray with them, but they did pray for a woman named Carol, who remembered them from times before. We also saw some people we knew, but there were a lot of new folks, too. The backpacks were received with joy by the ones who received them. One woman saw them in our cart and said, "Oooh! Can I have one of those?" Kaela, Stephani and I gave food and clothing to a man and woman, and then I told the woman I had a pair of reading glasses and a sewing kit in my bag, if she wanted them. She was so happy to get them, and right away said she could see much better with the glasses. There was another church group down there giving out things to the homeless, but it was different things, so we didn't get in each other's way, but just blessed the homeless, each in our own way in the name of Jesus.

"Then He also said to him who invited Him, 'When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor your rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you:

for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” Luke 14:12-24
Check out our website for photos of the Venice Beach outreach. LoveLiftedMeRecovery.com

Prison Ministry

Our prison ministry reaches men and women in every state prison in California, some federal prisons around the country, and prisons and jails in Oregon, Arizona, Missouri, Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma. We have over 400 people doing our Bible studies and 12-Step program by correspondence. They are growing in their faith, because God’s word does not return void, but will accomplish His plan and purpose. Here are a few portions of letters we’ve received from inmates:

Roy Mata, Federal Correctional Institution, El Reno, OK - “You are always in my heart and prayers. I thank you for all your love and support over the last thirteen or more years. I pray that your ministry is being so blessed by our Lord for all the work you do for His kingdom. It’s very important to the people who come into contact with you in Jesus’ name, so please keep feeding God’s people. I love you guys and I pray to see you two in person real soon. Love you in God, Roy”

Mike Escalante, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, CA - “I have received the “Serenity” New Testament with Psalms and Proverbs, and I want to tell you that I’m finding out that the Scriptures have all the answers for the 12-Steps recovery. I also received your paper on “Dealing with Anger” and learned that I need to “not let the sun go down on my wrath”, which means to let go of all anger before the end of the day, or as soon as possible. If I don’t, it will give the devil an opportunity to mess up my life. Also, it is a great blessing to read what you are doing for the homeless. I was a homeless soul for a while, and I wasn’t lucky enough to have met people like you. God bless! Sincerely, Mike Escalante”

Barrett Simon, California State Prison LA County, Lancaster, CA - “Thank you so much for the literature on forgiving myself for the sins I have committed in the past. This has been a terrible burden upon me and I tried to seek help from brothers more mature than I in the ways of the Lord. No one has been able to give me the correct Bible verses to reflect and pray upon, like you have. I will work on this and I pray that I am able to forgive myself one day in the future. Thank you both for all that you do for all of us in here, and for the men and women that are touched by your outreach. Also, this last Step I have been working on has opened my eyes to more helpful things that are lacking in my life, and I am so thankful that I joined your program. I never knew that it took so much hard work to get here, and I am focusing on completing the course. God bless you and I will keep you in prayer. Love, Barrett”

Alfred Galaz, Sierra Conservation Center, Jamestown, CA - “Enclosed are my completed Step 5 lessons. I’m feeling a lot lighter for it. Thanks a million for your Holy Spirit-filled Bible study. I’ve taken AA and NA for years, but feel I’ve gotten the most out of the Love Lifted Me Recovery course. Love, Brother Alfred”

Alan A. Garcia, California Men’s Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA - “My warmest regards in appreciation for allowing me to work the 12-Steps with your program and guidance. Thank you for the “Serenity” Bible. I love it and carry it with me everywhere I go. I’m new to religion, but have come to understand I need our Lord in my heart and life. May I be worthy to be of service and help others in need as you do. You are amazing people. Thank you for caring and sharing God’s word with us in prison. God bless you, Alan”

Robert Ledbetter, CTF North, Soledad State Prison, Soledad, CA - “Thank you for giving me God’s

word. I John 3:2-3 really spoke to me, for I have asked myself this question, 'What am I supposed to do?' These verses answer that question, as it says I 'will one day be like Jesus, and to purify myself as He is pure.' You two do the work of God, spreading His love to others, and to help them learn the true way of life through Jesus Christ, who died for me and for the world. Thank you two for the tears of joy that are coming out of my eyes right now. Love in Jesus' name, amen, Robert"

Rene Fuñes, Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria, CA - "I'm okay, just staying focused on my walk with God and in my positive change, as well. I've come a long ways from what I used to be. Anyway, I started going to church a while ago, and the first few times I sang to God I got really nervous and sweaty, and I didn't know why. But last week, that didn't happen, and I sang even louder, and man, I felt so happy. I felt this peace and I started to tear up, and it was so beautiful. Also, God has opened the doors for me to take this class that I need so that I can learn coping skills for anger and criminal thinking, so I feel blessed. Thank you for all you do. With respect, Rene F. Fuñes"

George McGlown, CTF Central, Soledad State Prison, Soledad, CA - "At about 5:10 pm on Friday, I heard the sound of your letter hitting the floor and being slid under my cell door. It's nice to hear from you, and your letter blessed my spirit in spite of the circumstances here in prison. I don't know if you heard it on the news, but we had a major riot between rival gang factions recently. Eight inmates had to be transported to an outside hospital, and fifty or more were treated here for stab or slash wounds. Those of us who were not involved have been allowed to resume our activities, but these things are always unsettling. As you have pointed out, this life here on earth is a training camp of sorts, and I'm confident that God will continue to keep me strong and steady through the process, and to keep growing in my faith. Thank you for your ministry, and for caring. Love, George".

Carlos Lugo, Pelican Bay State Prison, Crescent City, CA - "I appreciate you guys' service, you helped me a lot to do some really deep down soul-searching. Though it was scary at first, it was needed in order for me to resolve some issues that I was failing to acknowledge and recognize as the true source of my problems, such as bitterness, resentment, and ill-will towards others. As I continue to work on releasing myself from those negative feelings and emotions, I am able to free myself from these chains of oppression. I am very grateful and proud to be doing this, and I can live happy and free with a clear conscience. Once again, thank you for everything. Yours truly, Carlos"

Dennis Grimstead, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, CA - "Sorry I fell a little behind. I was sick, then I hit a few bumps in the road, but life's better and God is awesome. Thank you for the photo. You are both lights in God's army, thank you sincerely for all you do. You've made a huge impact in my life, and so many others as well. God bless you and your ministry, you're beautiful people doing God's work. Love, Dennis"

Alphonse Kegler, California State Prison LA County, Lancaster, CA - "I'm always inspired when I read and see all that y'all is doing for the kingdom. May God continue to bless you and your ministry. I love y'all's diligence in serving the Lord, and it shuts my mouth when I try to make excuses about why I can't, but through y'all's encouraging and God's help I know I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I know y'all do a lot of mailing out homework, so with that in mind I'm enclosing a book of stamps. I hope it helps a little. Thanks for being a light to the world. Alphonse"

Larry Banks, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, CA - "As for me, I'm doing my very best to stay out of trouble and doing what it takes, with trust and faith, that someday God will free me from here and I can be back with my family and friends. Being a part of Love Lifted Me Recovery has been a true blessing to me, and my family and friends have seen a real change in me. Thank you for letting me be a

part of the Love Lifted Me Recovery family in the name of Jesus. Your brother in Christ, Larry”