

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - January, 2015
Newsletter for October, November, December, 2014
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Web Site: www.Loveliftedmerecovery.com

Twelve Step Program

Step 10 – “Continued to Take Personal Inventory, and When We Were Wrong, Promptly Admitted It.” – One of our lessons for Step 10 is on “checking the condition of your heart”, which is actually a study on “The Parable of the Sower” of Matthew 13, which ties in with doing the daily inventory of Step 10. Here’s a quote from the lesson: “the Bible teaches that **WE are responsible for the CONDITION of our own hearts**, or “**ground**” in which the word of God is planted, as we grow and mature in our Christian walk. So, another way to look at the daily inventory is to compare it to a farmer checking on his crop and on the condition of the ground into which he would plant his seeds. Our **HEARTS** are the **GROUND** into which God will plant His seed - the word of God. Doing a daily inventory is checking on the condition of your ground! Several areas are mentioned in this parable that would be things for us to look for in our inventories. Check your heart to see if it is hardened (rocky soil), and check to see if the thorns of cares and worries, riches, or worldly pleasures are choking out the seed of God’s word.” Then follows a great Bible study with verses from all over the Old and New Testament about our hearts, and our responsibility to keep them right with God. “What if you find, in doing your inventory, that your heart is already showing signs of being hardened, or you find thorns growing up and choking God’s word in your life? What can you do to **CHANGE** the condition of your ground? Step 10 tells us what to do: “When we were wrong promptly admitted it.” God’s word tells us what to do: Confess and turn away from sin, with a **BROKEN** and contrite **HEART** (break up the old ground). Jeremiah 4:3-4, “For thus says the Lord’Break up your fallow ground, and do not sow among thorns.....” (Verse 14) “Wash your **HEART** from wickedness...” and Hosea 10:12 “Sow with a view to righteousness, reap in accordance with kindness; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord until He comes to rain righteousness on you.”

Venice Beach Evangelistic Outreach

Saturday, October 4, 2014 - We were having a hot spell, but we still had a good group to go out onto the Boardwalk and Venice Beach. We had Tom, Dottie, Shami, Catharine, Keith, Yvonne, Frank, Harold, David M. and Justin. We had 135 lunches, lots of toiletries, socks, tons of clothing, and even some shoes and little fanny packs for the homeless. We were going to start giving out blankets and knit hats and jackets, but because of the hot spell, we decided to wait until next month for those. They will be appreciated much more when the weather gets colder. Each lunch contained a gospel tract, and a bottle of water, a small can of Vienna sausages, a fruit cup or applesauce, several little packets of peanut butter crackers, several little packets of cookies, and a napkin and plastic fork. Frank and Harold said everyone to whom they gave food and the other items was very joyful and thankful. Catharine and Shami gave an umbrella to an older lady named Kelly, and she was thankful to have it for shading from the sun. I saw a big guy, and offered him a shirt in a large size, and he was happy to have something that fit him. Some of the shoes we had were in smaller sizes, but Catharine and Shami found two women who fit the small sizes perfectly. Harold saw one man who used to be at the Bible Tabernacle, but is now back on the streets. He did ask for a Bible, though, and Harold gave him one. I saw two men walking along, and wasn’t sure if they were homeless, so I just said, “How are you doing today? Do you need anything to eat?” They both eagerly accepted a lunch, and then another guy came up and said, “Oh, I’m so hungry! Thank you!” Justin ran out of lunches, but promised one man that he would try to

find one and bring it back to him. He found Frank, and Frank had one last lunch, so Justin took it back, found the man and gave it to him. After giving out all the food and clothing to the homeless, we continued to hand out gospel tracts to anyone and everyone who would take one. Several people thanked us, and some even asked for more than one tract.

Saturday, November 1, 2014 - It rained during the night and early morning, but we went out anyway. By the time everyone arrived at our house, the sun was out and it was nice weather. Tom stayed home to provide prayer cover for our team, which consisted of me, Charles and Vicki Turner, Shami, and Frank, Mitch, Brendan, Justin and David from the BT in Canyon country. We had 136 lunches, lots of socks and toiletries, and jackets, sweatshirts, knit hats, and blankets. The food is always appreciated by the homeless community there at the Venice Boardwalk, but because of the rain and colder weather, everyone was especially grateful for the jackets, sweatshirts and blankets. Shami, Brendan and David found Arthur, one of their "regulars", and he was very thankful to get food, a blanket, and everything, as his belongings had all gotten wet in the rain. They prayed for a lot of people, and Shami prayed for "Lone Wolf", for healing for his leg. They prayed for Lorenzo and Crystal, as someone had stolen Crystal's purse. David gave Lorenzo information and directions for the Bible Tabernacle, too. Justin gave a man named Carl a blanket, and then gave him directions on how to get to the Bible Tabernacle, in case he'd had enough of living out on the street. Justin and Mitch saw a guy digging in a trash can, and when they offered him a lunch, he was extremely thankful. Vicki and I also saw a man digging in a trash can, and even though he was dressed nicely, he gladly accepted a lunch, and also a bar of soap and toothpaste and tooth brush. Charles gave a lunch to a young man named Carlos, and then remembered that he had a knit hat, so called him back and gave him a hat, also. Vicki and I saw three very young men walking along, and when we asked them if they were hungry and would like a lunch, Vicki said one of them was almost in tears, he was so thankful. After we gave out all the food and clothing to the homeless, we continued to hand out gospel tracts. Vicki and I gave out a lot of tracts at the Phoenix house, which is a transitional house and recovery program for men. They were all happy to get the tracts, and asked what ministry or church we were from. We told them we represented several different churches, but also gave them the website information for LLMR. As Vicki and I were almost back to the car, we still had a few lunches, one jacket and a blanket. I found a guy named Brandon who could fit the jacket (he was a very big guy, and the jacket was in a large size), and he was very thankful to get it. When I told him it was being given in the name of Jesus, his expression changed a little. A few minutes later, we were talking to Brad and Helen, and they told us they don't associate with Brandon's bunch over there, because they're all drug users. Maybe that's why Brandon had a "funny" look on his face when I mentioned the name of Jesus. Vicki gave Brad and Helen lunches, and then I came over with the last blanket, and they were overjoyed to get it. All in all, we had a great time out on the Boardwalk, and we thank the Lord that He stopped the rain and let us go out, even though it was later than our usual time. Maybe the Lord had some people that were going to be down there at that later time, and that's why we were delayed.

Saturday, December 6, 2014 - It was a beautiful day, and our team consisted of Tom, Dottie, Mitch, Shami, Justin, David and Ararat. The city was having some kind of marathon, so many streets were blocked off, and we had to go a totally different way to get to the Boardwalk. We were kind of "out of our comfort zone", but trusted the Lord to get us to the people He wanted us to reach. David came with me, and we parked in the parking lot at the end of Washington Blvd., so we had a long way to walk before we got to the part of the Boardwalk where we usually go. Shami and the other guys from the BT found parking on the street, and walked up to the Boardwalk. Shami's group prayed with a lot of people, and we all gave out lunches, toiletries, socks, and men's and women's clothing, including some jackets and knit hats. We also gave out about ten blankets. Ararat prayed with a man named Ron, who said he had been living in his RV, but it caught on fire and burned up. Mitch prayed with Carol, and she had a dog named Honeydew. Ararat had one lunch left, and saw a man rooting through one of the trash cans. Then, he recognized the man, a homeless man named Rasheed, and when he offered him the lunch,

Rasheed's face just lit up, and he was so grateful. We had made 136 lunches, but since David and I couldn't carry everything, we ended up with a few left over. Tom and I would just look for homeless people during the week to give them to (and we did find some). After we gave out the food and clothing to the homeless, we continued to hand out gospel tracts. We covered a different area than we usually do, so maybe the Lord had some people there who needed to hear the gospel, and we planted some good seeds

"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 8:4-15)

Prison Ministry

David Von Haden, R.J. Donovan Prison, San Diego, CA - "I want to thank you for all the information you sent me, for it helped me out a lot. It has given me a better understanding of the Trinity, who God is and His Son, and the Holy Spirit, and how all three are One. I know there are things that are hard to understand - we have to have faith in the Lord. Also, the pamphlets you sent me about the Jehovah's Witnesses gave me a better understanding of how wrong they are about the Lord. I learned a lot from them and can use that information when they try to lead me down the wrong path. I tell them I'm right in my beliefs and won't change no matter what. They have stopped coming to me to try to get me to believe what they say, and I stand my ground. Thanks again for all the information you have sent me - it has made me stronger in my faith in the Lord. It gives me hope knowing if I have any questions I can turn to you both to help me out. Love, your brother in Christ, David"

Jason Brewer, California City Correctional Facility, California City, CA - "As you may have noticed, my address has changed, due to my recent relocation to California City. I have a quick story to tell, so here it goes: Shortly after my arrival here to the new prison, a few weeks in, things started to finally settle down from the move. All new people and new surroundings to get used to, ya know. I was faced with a physical conflict which I may say I wasn't the victor. But this is the thing, even though I suffered broken bones in my face, due to this altercation, I have found in my heart somehow to forgive this person for his actions. My sister told me, "Pray for such people, because it's the devil who uses and preys on them." That's what she wrote me in her last letter, and I received it the same day I received your letter and Step One, about powerlessness. You wrote II Chronicles 20:12-23, about letting the Lord fight our battles. I was really struggling with being a victim for the first time in my life, but as I sat there looking at the postmarks of both letters, it hit me like a freight train out of control! God knew I needed these letters and to hear that message just at that very moment. I had no one, all alone in my cell, no personal belongings (I had been put in Ad. Seg/solitary for my protection). But then these letters appeared from out of nowhere, both dated more than a month ago, because of the mail being forwarded due to the move, to "Lift Me Up" and I felt like it was going to be okay. I look forward to the next Steps and letters to follow. Sincerely, Mr. Brewer"

Ondra Gwinn, Solano State Prison - "I received my certificate for the 12-Step biblical program today and it was really nice. Thank you both so much for your time, efforts, biblical course, encouraging words, the letters, and love which you have shown to me. I would like to ask you both if I can continue with your Bible studies. I really enjoy each topic which has been shared. I hope to be used by God in some way

to bring about His purpose and will. Thanks and God bless! Truly, Mr. Ondra Gwinn”

Terry Lester, Calif. Men’s Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA - “Everything is going well in my life. I started your 12-Step program as an unbeliever, and now I’m a born-again Christian. I’m thankful for the blessings bestowed upon me, so instead of complaining, I find reasons to be thankful. Instead of worrying or dwelling on my small problems, I try to help others with their problems. I just want to be pleasing in the eyes of God always, and if I’m doing that, everything else will fall into place. It’s still amazing that I’m a full-fledged, pledged Christian, that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior, and that I will live forever through His grace and salvation. Thank you for helping me to find eternal life. Thank you for being my mother and father in the word of God. No longer do I think of self and all the self-centered ideals I once believed in, but now it’s about being of service, being a soldier for Christ. Love, Terry”

Jennie Bender, Calif. Institution for Women, Corona, CA - “Okay, here are my Steps 6 & 7, and 8 & 9 are completed as of today. My lists are made and I have written letters to my victims (indirect amends). This one is not new to me, but I did learn something new - I have to list my family. I actually hadn’t realized they are victims of my poor choices. Also, I victimized myself. I had the opportunity to forgive myself by looking in the mirror and speaking to “me” from my heart. I feel a weight lifted off of me and I can say this, I am finally free of my past and will continue to move forward. I am still “under construction” and loving and learning all that I can. Love, Jennie”

Raul Castillo, Centinela State Prison, Imperial, CA - “I want you to know that your ministry is an answer to one of my prayers of many years. And the awesome part is that my prayer was answered not as I asked, but in a better way. I am grateful to our God and to you, brethren Tom and Dottie, thank you for allowing yourselves to be a blessing to the world and me. Through your 12-Step course I have been able to see many “whys” - I was able to see that I grew up being dysfunctional, possessed by many evil spirits, and with a warped ideology. Seeing the truth of our God squarely through the Bible, it’s astonishing to see that every deed that man does, good or evil, is written in the Bible. “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20). I grew up doing precisely what the above verse says. It’s shameful and painful, because I hurt myself as well as others. As for your Bible studies, again and again I have to make an emphasis of its simplicity and easiness to understand. Specifically, talking about this Ephesians study, I am overwhelmed because I am able to see Ephesians 1:1-7, but especially verse 3, “Who has blessed me with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.” Wow, wow, wow! I know in the past I was feeling and seeing the blessings of our Lord within my life, but the way I’m seeing it through this study, I know I am rich, rich beyond my imagination. Our God’s care and love is great! Yet, it cannot be understood in its fulness. Though I don’t understand all His mysteries, I know I am complete and joyfully living under His care. Raul”

Edan Mangram, Pelican Bay State Prison, Crescent City, CA - “I just wanted to thank you for the letter and giving me an opportunity to be a part of something positive and productive in my life. It’s a great feeling to be able to work on these lessons in the 12-Step program. Again, thank you for your time and assistance. God bless you, Edan”

David Ross, R.J. Donovan Prison, San Diego, CA - “I want to share some of God’s work in my life. A few months ago, I heard this guy named Abraham, and he was talking to someone, and said that he hated Christianity. I walked up to him and said, “I heard what you said, and I just want you to know I am a Christian now, and God has given me peace and love for others in my heart.” Abraham told me, “I’ve tried that before, and it didn’t do anything for me.” I came in from the yard and prayed that God would take that anger and hurt out of his heart. A couple of weeks later I saw him in church, and I told him how happy it made me to see him there. A couple of weeks after that, he gave his life to Christ. Now, he

and I are on the Kairos team, and he was sitting next to me the other day at a Kairos meeting. We were singing a song, and he put his arm around me, and I just fell apart and was in tears, because it shows me that I was part of God's work in this man's life. Praise God! Love, David"