

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - January, 2017
Newsletter for October, November, December, 2016
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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

“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

Saturday, October 1, 2016 - Saturday, we had a great team to go out on the Venice Boardwalk. We had Tom, me, Shami, Desiree, Mitch, Frank, Nancy, Bob, A.J., Toby, Moses and Jesse. We took 173 lunches, and lots of socks, toiletry/hygiene packets, some shoes and lots of clothing for the homeless. Toby said everyone was very thankful for everything. Desiree met a woman named Kelly, and she was very sweet, and extremely grateful and even joyful to receive everything. Shami said they saw one of their “regulars”, Arthur, and they prayed with him (his face was all scabbed up, and he said he’d had a bad fall). He was also very happy to get some sweaters, as he said he preferred sweaters to jackets. Moses and Shami prayed with a man with the name of Johpsalm, and Moses gave a Bible to a young man named Josh. Bob, AJ and I had a few lunches left as we turned to back to the car, but we found

some people by the bathrooms who hadn't gotten one when we'd been by before. Usually, if we see someone washing themselves in the sinks outside the bathrooms, we figure they are homeless people. One man was washing his hair, but he thankfully took a lunch and some more toiletries, and told us to just sit them on the wall while he finished washing up. After we gave out everything to the homeless, we continued handing out gospel tracts up and down the Boardwalk. We all thought it was a great outreach, and prayed that many seeds of the gospel would be planted in peoples' hearts.

Saturday, November 5, 2016 - We had a good group of people showing up for our Venice Beach outreach. We had Tom, me, Keith, Johnny, Shami, Jackie, Bob, A.J., Mitch, Frank and Miguel. We had made 170 lunches, and we had socks, toiletry/hygiene packets, lots of used clothing, especially jackets and sweatshirts for the colder weather, and 27 blankets. Also, my friend Debbie made some knit hats especially for our outreach to the homeless, and sent them to us. Knit hats or beanies are always a hit with people who have to be out in the colder weather, but these were made "with love" and were quite beautiful and colorful. Several people, especially the women, commented on how "really beautiful" they were. Mitch ran out of blankets, but promised one man he would go back to the van and get some more for him. He came back, and the man was not there, so he continued giving out the blankets. He made another trip back to the van and got some more, and this time the man was there. He said, "I thought you weren't coming back", but Mitch said, "No, I promised you I would get you one, but you just weren't here the first time I came back." The man was very thankful for the blanket and the fact that Mitch cared enough to go back and get him one, and he even said, "I just thank the Lord for you giving me this blanket." As always, the lunches, toiletries and socks are very much appreciated by the homeless people down at the beach, and after we finished handing out all the things for their physical needs, we continued on down the Boardwalk giving out gospel tracts to anyone and everyone who would take one. Johnny and A.J. were new to giving out tracts, but were encouraged to give it a try. Johnny gave a nice sweater to one man, and also handed him a tract. As we were coming back up the Boardwalk, he saw the man reading the tract. One young man was also handing out gospel tracts, so we all praised the Lord together. I asked him if he needed a place to go for Thanksgiving dinner, and he perked up at that and said, "Oh, yes!" We gave him a flier for the Bible Tabernacle's Thanksgiving dinner, and gave the fliers out to most of the homeless people we met, too. Two older men were walking along and watching us hand out food and clothing to the homeless, so I asked one of them if he would like a tract. The man said he didn't read English, so I asked what language he spoke, and he said, "Russian." It took me a few minutes to find one in my capacious bag, but I finally found one in Russian and gave it to him. The last I saw of him, he was reading it to his friend as they walked. Praise the Lord!

Saturday, December 3, 2016 - We had heard from several people that they couldn't come, so we didn't know how many people we would have to go with us. We just had to trust the Lord. We ended up with Tom, me, Mitch, Frank, Bob, A.J., Johnny, Cody, Dillon, Miguel, Reuben, Will, Craig, Robert, and Brian. We had 170 lunches, lots of toiletry/hygiene packets, socks, used clothing including hats, underwear, sweatshirts and jackets. Also, we gave out 13 blankets. All these were for the homeless, and the jackets, sweatshirts and blankets were especially appreciated in the cold weather. Bob saw a homeless man who asked if he could have two lunches. We don't usually do that, but Bob said he could tell the man was sincere, and said he hadn't had anything to eat for two days. One young man came up to us asking if we had a jacket or coat, and we gave him a heavy pea coat that fit him perfectly. He was so happy, and he also got lunches for himself and his wife, and a nice jacket for her, too. We still had some of the knit hats from last month, and the people who got those were extremely grateful. The large group of men from Canyon Country covered their usual route as well as that usually taken by Shami, who couldn't be here this time. Shami's route is over by the handball and basket ball courts, and the skateboard park. Reuben and Dillon handed out gospel tracts to the men at the basketball courts, and also talked to two men who were playing chess. One of the men said he was a believer in Jesus, but his friend was not. Reuben and Dillon gave their testimonies of how they came to know the Lord, and the non-believing guy paid attention and it looked like our guys were planting good seed in his heart. Miguel

gave his testimony to several people, and Mitch said he witnessed to some of his “regulars”, also. Mitch said that, as these people get to know him and trust him, they are more open to hearing the gospel. All of us gave out information to the Bible Tabernacle, in case anyone wanted to get off the streets and get their lives back on track. All of our people met back at the house, and we discussed how things went. The new guys all said they had a great time.

Prison Ministry

Our prison ministry reaches men and women in every state prison in California, some federal prisons around the country, and prisons in Oregon, Arizona, Missouri and Michigan. We have well 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:

Jose Angel Perez, Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria, CA - “I just wanna thank you for sending me the Twelve Step program. I completed it already, and yes, I’m interested in joining your Bible studies to learn and grow more in Jesus Christ. I thank God for putting your program in my life in helping me in here in prison. As you know, it’s not a good place. I’ve been walking with Jesus for about five years, when Jesus revealed Himself to me in 2011, and I was converted and became a true Christian. Thank you for everything you guys do for us. Your brother, Jose Angel Perez”

Charles Avitt, R.J. Donovan Prison, San Diego, CA - “I wish to extend my heart-felt thanks to you both for all you do in sharing God’s love with others. For me personally, your efforts and the course you share have renewed a lost sense of faith in God’s love for me. Many of us need that gentle guidance back to God when life threatens to pull us completely off the right path, and your course has done that for me. May the Lord continue to bless you and comfort you both. Respectfully, Charles Avitt”

Hugo Sosa, Solano State Prison, Vacaville, CA - “As for me, I am enjoying God’s mercy, grace, blessings and protection. I am happy to inform you that working the 12-Steps through your program has helped me so much that I now help others who cannot speak English, but only Spanish. Although I thought I was not ready to lead anyone to accept Jesus Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit thought differently, and as I was facilitating Step 3, it turned into a Bible study, and three men accepted Jesus. Now, I want to help them in their new lives in the Lord. I appreciate any help and advice, and I am also enclosing my Bible study lessons. In God’s love and grace, your brother in Christ, Hugo”

Jeffrey Peek, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, CA - “Your 12-Step and Bible courses have already helped me so much and I’ve only got more to learn. Thank you for your time. Your letters telling about helping the homeless, and the lessons I get back with the encouragement written on them, as little as it may seem, brighten up my day. God bless you both. With respect, Jeff Peek”

H.C. Smith, Federal Correctional Institution, Fairton, New Jersey - “Tom and Dottie, I thank you both so much for helping me look inside myself, and understanding that I’m important to God, and learning to trust God. My words could never do justice to what I feel in my heart. Everyone says I just walk around with a smile and I look different, but I know it’s having hope. I have hope that the Lord is working in my life now. I do believe everything is done in God’s timing, and I have hope that I will be out of here one day soon. Your brother in Christ, H.C.”

Loida Cruz, Central California Women’s Facility, Chowchilla - “Thank you for all the Bible study materials/teachings you’ve sent me over the years. They have helped me gain knowledge and wisdom that led me to grow in my faith. I praise the Lord for both of you and your ministry for being such a

blessing in my life, and in the lives of many. May the Lord continue to give you an increase with your resources in order to be of service to others. Also, please keep me in your prayers. Only God can get me out of here. Sincerely yours, L.T. Cruz”

Robert Webb, California Correctional Institution, Tehachapi, CA - “Greetings and blessings to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I have learned a lot through these lessons, more than I ever knew, and I continue to learn, especially about my relationship with Jesus, my Savior. You said I would be receiving my certificate soon for finishing the 12-Steps, and I would now like to start doing another one of your Bible studies. I have been trying to encourage my neighbor and others to do your lessons, but no takers yet, just some persecution. It’s okay, though - I can take whatever they throw my way, because it’s part of the deal of being a Believer. I wait patiently to hear from you and see what God has planned for me to do next. Until then, take care and God bless! Sincerely, Robert”

Marcelino Guzman, Centinela State Prison, Imperial, CA - “I wanted to thank you for your dedication to our Lord’s work, and may we give Him all the glory! I’m blessed to have come to know the unconditional love that God and His Son have for me. Since coming to Him and asking for forgiveness, and allowing Him to help start my life over, He has lifted this weight that I have carried so many years of my life, and given me peace and joy in my heart. I’ve just finished Step 9 and making amends with those that I was able to that were on my list. I did need help on it, but there was a brother in Christ who had participated in your course, and he was able to walk me through and help me to make those amends that were necessary to my recovery. I’m ready for Step 10. Hope to hear from you soon. Love, Marcelino”

Dave Murphy, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, CA - “Thank you for your uplifting letter. It sure is wonderful to hear from the outside world. It gives me hope and faith to keep up things I’m doing to improve myself. I think some of the people in this place are starting to notice the change in me. I just feel at peace within myself, and I believe that it is Abba the Father who’s working through me to shine His light in this dark place. When I do get out of this place, I’m still going to make my light shine for Jesus Christ. He is the only one who receives the glory - I am just a servant of His. Sincerely, Dave”

Wesley Jolly, Solano State Prison, Vacaville, CA - “I would like to express my gratitude for your prison ministry program. It has helped me a lot to stay in my studies of God’s word, so that I can grow daily in my walk with Christ. Your program has helped me to apply all the aspects of recovery from addiction to my life struggles, and it has helped me to realize that I don’t need drugs, alcohol or fast money, all I need is Christ and faith that He will provide. He has never let me down, and He has always provided, although it may not always be what I want, when I want, or how I want it, but He always answers my prayers and supplies my needs. I thank you for this blessing, and I feel I can do a lot more good with my life as long as I stay focused on Jesus Christ. I wish you and your family the many blessings God has in store for you. Your brother in Christ, Wesley”

Reginald Murray, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, CA - “I wanted to take this brief opportunity to thank you both for the compassion and sacrifices you continue to make for the prison ministry. Reading in your letters of all the time required to keep this train on track, the legwork and hands-on personal touch, and that God has placed two people here with such a purpose of dedication and service to His good works is inspiring to me. I am truly grateful and humbled to God and to you both for making a difference in so many lives. Respectfully, Reginald”

Richard Estrada, Avenal State Prison, Avenal, CA - “I want to thank you for helping me in my recovery over my addiction. You have given me a lot of insight into why I was an addict in the first place. I’ve

been struggling with a lot of personal issues in my life, and I ask that you pray that my faith may increase and I be able to overcome these obstacles. I thank God through Jesus Christ for allowing me to get to know you, and I pray that your ministry grows, and that you are able to bring more people to Christ.
Love, Richard Estrada”