

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - October, 2023
Newsletter for July, August, September, 2023
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LoveLiftedMeRecovery.com

Christian 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 (eternal 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, especially one based on God’s word, is also helpful in this area. We don’t all have addictions, but we all have character defects and shortcomings - things that need to be worked on and gotten rid of in order to have “a walk worthy of the Lord.”**

•**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 1, 2023 - The “Lord of the Harvest” sent forth laborers into His harvest field for today, and they were: Tom, Dottie, Kaela, Felipe, Ricardo, Scott, Ulysses, and Josue. We had 183 lunches, lots of socks, toiletry/hygiene packets, and used clothing and shoes for the homeless, and dog food for their dogs. Scott, Kaela and I went to the north end of the Boardwalk, Felipe, Ricardo, Ulysses, and Josue went to the south end, and also to the homeless people by the freeway at Culver Blvd., where there are lots of people in tents and motor homes. Tom was our prayer warrior at home, keeping us covered in prayer. There were not quite as many homeless people down at the Boardwalk as usual, and we thought maybe the police had been there and moved some of them off because of the holiday weekend. Even so, we gave out most of the lunches and everything else, and everyone was very thankful. We saw some people way out on a concrete walkway or something, and Scott went out and gave them all lunches. Kaela had the dog food, socks and toiletries, and they went fast. A guy came by on a bike and got a pair of jeans, some shoes, a lunch and a T-shirt, and he was very happy. A woman named Mary was thrilled to get several pieces of clothing, toiletries and a lunch. Two men took lunches, and I heard them speaking

Spanish, so I asked if they would like a tract in Spanish, and they were very happy to get them. There is a gospel tract in each lunch, but it's in English, so I try to see if anyone needs another language. I gave out quite a few in Spanish today. Felipe and his group also had tracts in Spanish to give to anyone who preferred it. Felipe said they gave out all of the lunches, toiletries and clothes. He said his part of the outreach went "perfecta"! The gospel tracts we use are from Chick Publications, commonly known as "Chick tracts" and they are in comic-book form. One man (not homeless) saw us passing them out and said, "Oh, are you passing out Chick tracts?" He said he grew up reading them, and had a whole collection, but we had several ones he hadn't seen, so he took them, and then he asked if he could pray for us. We passed by the Phoenix House, a halfway house for men, and they were out in their yard for a break. I found their supervisor and asked him if he would give the guys our tracts, and he said he would. A group of guys were watching, and I said to them, "Make sure he gives you one!" As for the lunches we had leftover, we all took a few and will give them out to homeless people we see during the week

Saturday, August 5, 2023 - As always, we trust the Lord to bring us enough volunteers to do this ministry, and they were Tom, me, Johnny, Sheldon, Felipe, Ricardo, Scott, Ulysses, and Laura. We had 180 lunches, lots of socks, hygiene/toiletry packets, used clothing, and many pairs of shoes to give to the homeless. Felipe, Ricardo and Ulysses went to the south end of the Boardwalk, and also along the streets to give out all of their lunches. They gave out all the clothes, toiletries, socks, and also a pair of size 14 shoes. Felipe said there were no homeless people with tents, but there were plenty just roaming around, and as I said, they gave out lunches to many on the streets, some asking for help with cardboard signs. The rest of us also covered the Boardwalk at both ends, and looked for homeless people along the streets. Laura and I gave a pair of shoes, a shirt, a lunch and toiletries to a guy named David, and he was very thankful. Another man named Michael needed a shirt, and Laura helped him put it on, because he seemed so thin and frail. We gave him two lunches, and also prayed for him. After we prayed, he asked if we had a Bible, and we gave him a New Testament with Psalms. A woman named Kim remembered me, as I had given her a tract in Vietnamese before, and she said she is a Christian. Everyone was very grateful to get food, clothes and especially the shoes - all the shoes were given out, and most of the clothing. A man named Paul was thrilled to get a lunch and clothing, and he said he was a Christian, also. Johnny, Scott and Sheldon said they had a great time, and not a lot of special things to relate, but there was one incident with a woman having a "meltdown" as it looked like someone had torn her shirt. She was ranting and cursing and desperately trying to tie it up so it wouldn't fall off. They had two bras in the clothing bag that they gave her, and she was so appreciative. Everyone in her group also got lunches, and Sheldon said to the woman, "God's peace be with you." Then, as they were leaving, a lot of passersby were thanking and acknowledging them. On their way back, the woman was calm and even apologized to them. It's always just such a blessing to supply a little bit of people's material needs, and maybe brighten their day a little. Each lunch also contains a gospel tract or flier, and some had copies of the "Our Daily Bread" devotional in them. We always pray that the seed of God's word will be planted in good ground in people's hearts, and God says His word will not return void.

Saturday, September 2, 2023 - It was our monthly beach outreach, and it had rained a little bit in the early morning. It continued to be drizzling most of the time we were down at the Boardwalk, so there were not as many people there as usual. Our ministry team consisted of Tom, me, Felipe, Victor, Sheldon, Scott, Ricardo, Ulysses, Flora and David. Felipe, David and Flora went to the homeless people living in tents and motor homes by the freeway exit at Culver Blvd. in Playa del Rey, and Ricardo and Ulysses went to the homeless people under the freeway overpass on Venice Blvd. Felipe said everything went "excellent!" Victor and I went to the north end of the Boardwalk, and

Sheldon and Scott went to the south end of the Boardwalk. We had 182 lunches, lots of toiletry/hygiene packets, socks, used clothing, shoes, and dog food for those who have dogs. We gave out most of the lunches and dog food, and most of the clothing and shoes. Sheldon said he shared the gospel with a young guy named Jaban. Jaban initially refused the lunch, but then asked if he could change his mind, and he asked Sheldon why he was being so nice to him, and that's when Sheldon told him about Jesus. Pray for him, because he was getting high on something at the time, and he needs the Lord in his life. Victor and I gave out lunches, toiletries and clothing and shoes to homeless people on the Boardwalk, and they were all very grateful. We even saw 88-year-old Jean, who lives in her van, and we had some special things for her, including a crossword puzzle book and several issues of "Our Daily Bread" in large print. We had missed seeing her the last couple of times we'd been down there, but she has been dealing with a medical issue and had been in the hospital again. Then we decided to go out on the streets with the rest of our lunches. We found a group of people by the "99-Cents Store" and they were really happy to get some food. The man who seemed to be their leader told us his name is "Irish Dave" and he had a big pit bull. We asked if he needed dog food, and he said he had plenty of food for the dog, but he needed some for himself (many of the homeless people take better care of their pets than of themselves). One of the men with that group told us they usually get people coming by and treating them badly, and sometimes even trying to scare them away. We realize we aren't solving the homeless problem, but we are at least showing some kindness to these people in the name of Jesus. Another group was by the Smart & Final store, in an alley, and when Victor walked up to them, they thought he was coming to tell them to clean up their mess. He said, "No, I'm not here for that" and gave them all lunches. We also gave out lunches to some other individuals along the roadside who were quite surprised but happy to get some food. Each lunch also contains a gospel booklet, so the word of God is being given out to everyone. So, the rain did not stop us from doing God's work, praise the Lord!

Prison Ministry

Leonard Resendez, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, CA - "I would like to take the time to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your support and guidance in helping me educate myself in God's word. There have been days when I felt like giving up, but here comes mail call and I receive my next lessons, and in them is God's word lifting me up and reminding me that the devil only attacks God's chosen ones. We have a strong, big purpose God is preparing us for, and the devil likes to attack my mind, but I guard my heart. God bless you, sincerely, Leonard"

William Holmes, Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, Blythe, CA - "Thank you so much for the support letter for my commutation hearing. I began your 12-Step course in 2014. A friend gave me your address when I was just beginning my recovery. I was already a believer in Jesus, but your course provided me with tools, insight and support, all of which played a significant role in my personal development and growth in the Lord. Today, I am eleven years clean and sober! Your course, support and love are an important part of my journey. God bless your ministry, and I will pray for you. Thankful and appreciative, William"

Morris Rebollo, Ironwood State Prison, Blythe, CA - "Thank you for the Bible studies, and I'm ready for some more or for the 12-Step program. Most of all, thank you for your love and prayers. I am 66 years old, and have been in my walk with Christ for six years. I finally saw the light and answered God's call right here on the yard. By surrendering my life to Christ my life has changed forever. I was a heroin addict for forty years, but once I put my faith in Christ and believed in my heart that He could and would heal me, like the man with leprosy in Matthew 8, I became clean and sober. Thank You, Jesus! Thanks again for all your hard work, you are a true blessing. In Christ, Morris"

Dakita Brusiter, Kern Valley State Prison, Delano, CA - "Your 12-Step course has really helped me and enabled me to change for the better. I had made so many wrong choices in my life, and didn't realize how I was trapped in a web of warped beliefs and negative thinking. I developed this faulty system of thinking and acting as a child, and it continued to cloud and control my life as an adult. Now, I walk hand in hand with Jesus Christ every day, thanks to you and the teachings from God's word. Please start me up on a new Bible study. Forever a friend, Dakita Brusiter"

Chris Cunningham, Salinas Valley State Prison, Soledad, CA - "Thank you again for all the Bible studies you have sent me, they've all helped me tremendously. I've been with you guys since I was first saved. I came across your address and wrote to you before I even had my own Bible, and you were the first ministry I wrote to. It's been two years since I gave my life to Christ, but my life of drugs and violence seems like a lifetime ago. Since then, studying God's word has been my number one focus, and He has changed my heart. Thank you for being so faithful and diligent with me. When I see your names on the return address, it brings a smile to my face, and I thank God for this family of God we are all a part of. I send my love, Chris"

Jorge Rodriguez, Kern Valley State Prison, Delano, CA - "I just received your letter along with my certificate and lessons. Thank you for your time in writing, it brings a smile to my face. I am so happy I welcomed God into my heart and for Him changing my life. Your Bible studies have helped me a lot in this journey. Thank you for offering the 12-Step program, and yes, I would like to start it as soon as possible. Thank you for everything you do. Sincerely, Jorge Rodriguez"

Daniel Fuentes, Ironwood State Prison, Blythe, CA - "I just want to say how grateful I am to be in and to have completed your 12-Step recovery program. I gain so much knowledge from your lessons, and a deeper understanding of God's word. My relationships are being restored and strengthened through my commitment to studying God's word. I thank you both and our Lord, as all the glory goes to Him! I look forward to doing the Bible studies now that I have completed the 12-Step program. Sincerely, Daniel"

Dave Murphy, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran, CA - "I thank you, Tom and Dottie, for all the beautiful things you do, especially for reaching out to the lost. Reading about your outreach has touched me in a way I thought I would not believe. I know that it is Jesus who dwells in me, and by good works and obeying Jesus I'm going to be all right. I hope I will have a chance to go out with you on your outreach one day. Keeping you all in prayer, sincerely, Dave Murphy"

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 3:5-8