

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - July, 2025
Newsletter for April, May, June, 2025
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Loveliftedmerecovery.com

The Purpose of a Bible-based 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 old “graveclothes” around. **Doing a good 12-Step program is also 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, April 5, 2025 - Our monthly outreach today included Tom (staying home to pray for us), Dottie, Kathleen, Dominic, Sheldon, Victor, Felipe, Ulysses and Ricardo. We had 183 lunches, lots of socks, used clothing, knit hats, towels, shoes, and hygiene/toiletry packets for the homeless, and dog food for those with dogs. Kathleen and I headed for the north end of the Venice Boardwalk, but before we even got there, we saw many homeless people in tents on the street, so we stopped and gave out probably a fourth of our lunches and clothing to all of them. Robin was the first person we saw, and she got a lunch, clothing, and a towel and washcloth (she was really happy to get those), and dog food for her little dog, “Mama.” Then she led me around the corner to find more people in tents, and Kathleen stayed by the car giving out clothing. At the Boardwalk, we saw Matthew, Nick and Charles, who all received clothing and food and toiletries. We finally found Jean, who lives in her van, and she said she’ll be ninety-one years old next month. She was very happy to see us, and we gave her all sorts of stuff. We saw Denise, who was in a wheelchair, and she was blessed to receive 2 lunches, toiletries and a pair of shoes. I helped her put them on her feet, because she was only wearing socks. I said, “I’ll be Prince Charming and you be Cinderella, and we’ll see if they fit you.” They fit her perfectly, and she said, “Oh, they feel so good!” We gave out all of our clothing, food, toiletries and everything. Nick asked if we had any sandals, and one pair fit him perfectly. Kathleen spotted a person with bare feet, and they were very happy to get some shoes that fit. Other people we blessed with food and clothing

were Ian, Charles, Aaron, and many whose names we didn't get. Aaron was walking barefooted on the hot pavement, so Kathleen offered him a pair of sandals, some food and a bag to carry his other stuff in. She said he seemed so confused that she would even care about him, and he just stared at the sandals for a bit until he finally put them on. One of the vendors, Nicky, asked for the last knit hat we had. He said, "Could I please have that colorful hat?" Another vendor had a sign advertizing palm reading and fortune-telling. At first, she refused a tract, but then asked what it was, and when I told her it was about Jesus, she took it. Sheldon, Victor and Dominic went to the south end of the Boardwalk. They gave out all of their lunches, and most of the clothing and things. Sheldon said they had a nice conversation with Michael Spencer at his table where he gives out Bibles and gospel tracts. A young man helping Michael said he would like to go on the outreach with us, so Sheldon will contact him for next month. Felipe, Ricardo and Ulysses took to the streets of Venice and West L.A. to find homeless people, some in tents or motorhomes, and they blessed many people with food and clothing in the name of Jesus. Felipe said, "There was a high demand" and they ran out of our lunches, so he went to the food bank and got some donations from them to give to other homeless people. At the Boardwalk, one of the security guards waved at us, so I went over to see him. He said he remembered us from last month, and he took two gospel tracts and a little Easter booklet that we had from "Our Daily Bread." His name was Dennis. We also handed out gospel tracts and the Easter booklets in both English and Spanish to people walking along the Boardwalk. We all had a great time doing the Lord's work!

Saturday, May 3, 2025 - We had Tom, me, Felipe, Ulysses, David, Kathleen, Andrew (his first time), and Ricardo (just out of the hospital, but he still wanted to go) to go out and give out the gospel and food and clothing to the homeless. Kathleen, Andrew and I went to the north end of the Venice Boardwalk, and Felipe, Ulysses, David and Ricardo went to the south end. We had 182 lunches, lots of socks, used clothing, shoes, several blankets, knit hats and "beanies", hygiene/toiletry packets, and dog food for those with dogs. Tom stayed home to keep us covered with prayer, and when we got to the Boardwalk, we got a surprise - it started raining! No warning on the weather report, so we didn't have anything to cover the lunches, so some of the paper bags and clothing got wet. We got wet, too, but it was okay - no big deal. We still managed to hand out most of the lunches and clothing, and what was left can go out during the month to homeless people we find on the streets. We found 90-year-old Jean, who lives in her van, and she said she'll be ninety-one in just a few days. We gave her a lunch, and Leon, a young man who helps her out a lot got a lunch, too. Everyone was very happy and thankful to get all the food and clothing and hygiene items. We had clean T-shirts and they were in big demand. A man who was wearing shoes way too small for him got a nice pair in his exact size, and he was very happy. We saw the men out in their yard at the Phoenix House, a half-way house for men. We gave a bunch of gospel booklets to the supervisor and he said he would give them to the men. The homeless people with dogs were very grateful for the dog food, and there were quite a few of them this time. Esther, a Christian lady who is not homeless, came out of the store she runs and asked for some lunches to give to homeless people she sees, so we gave her a few and some dog food. Andrew really enjoyed helping out today, and even though there were fewer people than usual because of the rain, we all had a good time serving the Lord. We gave out gospel tracts in English and Spanish to people on the Boardwalk, but again, because of the rain, there were fewer people out and about. Felipe said that he and his group gave out all the food, clothing, dog food and everything, as they went later than we did, and the rain had stopped. Felipe said it was "incredible" that Ricardo was able to go with them, and they were all so happy and had a great time. In case you don't know or forgot what's in our lunches for the homeless, they contain a small can of Vienna sausages, a fruit cup, some cookies, several peanut butter or cheese crackers, and several granola bars or other "goodies" for dessert. Also, a bottle of water, a napkin and plastic spoon or fork, and a gospel tract. One man today said he really liked the "Oreo" cookies in his lunch, and he had a big smile on his face.

Saturday, June 7, 2025 - The Lord provided "laborers for the harvest" today, including Tom, Dottie,

Kathleen, Kaela, Christina, Sheldon, Johnny, Andrew, Victor, Felipe, Ulysses, David and Ricardo. We had the usual 180 lunches, lots of socks, used clothing, shoes, several blankets, knit hats and “beanies”, hygiene/toiletry packets, and dog food for those with dogs. Kathleen, Victor, Andrew, and I went to the north end of the Venice Boardwalk, and Kaela, Christina, Sheldon, and Johnny went to the south end of the Boardwalk. Felipe, Ulysses, David and Ricardo went to the streets of Venice and West L.A., and also did part of the Venice Boardwalk. Tom stayed home to keep us covered in prayer. Kathleen, Victor, Andrew, and I gave out all of our lunches, and most of the clothing, shoes and toiletry/hygiene packets. Everyone was very thankful. Victor said it amazes him that so many people said, “God bless you for what you’re doing.” One homeless man named Chris said he had been told he was dying of cancer, but he told me Jesus was keeping him alive. We gave him two lunches and some other items, and he was praising Jesus for everything. Roberto is one of the vendors, but he always takes a gospel tract from me in Spanish, and this time he asked for a lunch, also. Kathleen gave a pair of size thirteen shoes to a man who said they were exactly his size, and he was so happy. Andrew said he was just thankful for this opportunity to do the Lord’s work and help people in the name of Jesus. Johnny said their group had a good time, but nothing unusual happened. Sheldon said he saw a young man named Justin, who goes by the nickname of Dragon, and he did not look good. Justin confessed that he had been doing drugs, but Sheldon said he was just not in his right mind. Their group also gave out a rolling suitcase, and they found someone who said he knew a guy who could really use it. Kaela said they gave out all the dog food to homeless people with dogs, and she said they had a “fun time” doing it all. We’re always happy to see so many homeless people getting food, clothing, socks and hygiene items for their physical needs, and each lunch contains a gospel tract for their spiritual needs. We continued giving out gospel tracts in English and Spanish to those who were just passing by on the Boardwalk. On Sepulveda Blvd. by the freeway, Felipe’s group found a family living in the bushes, and they gave them lunches, clothing and dog food. They also found people living in their motor homes and tents and ministered to them. They had a great time, and gave out all their lunches, clothing and dog food. Afterwards, Felipe took his guys out to lunch, and as they were eating, a homeless man came in and was rooting in the trash can for something to eat. David saw him and got up and gave the man his lunch.

Prison Ministry

God has blessed us with a prison ministry that reaches men and women in every state prison in California, some federal prisons around the country, and prisons and jails in several other states. We have 350 or so people doing our Bible studies and 12-Step program by correspondence. Most of them have found the Lord in prison, some have made rededications since coming to prison, and some have come to know Christ through our ministry. 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:

Rodrigo Rangel, Mule Creek State Prison, Ione, CA - “I would like to thank you Tom and Dottie for everything that you have done for me for the past five years, and it’s been the best years of my life. Thank you for letting us be a part of your lives, because this is so helpful for those of us who have nobody by their side, no family or friends, like me before I made a decision to change my life. May God bless you, your friend Rodrigo”

David Ross, Salinas Valley State Prison, Soledad, CA - “Thank you for being there for me in my recovery and in your prayers. Thank you for the calendar, and the extra one that I was able to bless my neighbor with. Also, I have a brother here that I’ve been ministering to, and what a blessing and praise report! The Lord is really working in his life and his walk with the Lord. You guys will continue to be in my prayers daily. I love you and thank God for you in my life. In Christ’s love, Brother David”

Rocio Santoyo, California Institution for Women, Corona, CA - "I just wanted to say "thank you" for the beautiful Easter card and for the photos of the outreach. Every time I get photos of your outreach, I feel like I am out there with you guys. I appreciate the time you take to send the pictures, and to tell us what you do. It's a chance to leave this place for a little bit. With love, Rosie"

Oscar A. Garcia, CTF North, Soledad, CA - "I thank God every day for all the knowledge and wisdom from your Love Lifted Me Recovery program. I know God is always smiling down on you. Thank you so much for teaching me the biblical 12-Steps and the Bible study lessons. Many of these Scripture verses are seared in my brain and heart. I choose today to practice these Spiritual principles and teach them to family, friends and peers. In Christ Jesus' love, Oscar"

Abraham Hade, CSATF, Corcoran, CA - "Thank you so much for your program. This week's lesson on prayer and meditating on God's living word is an absolute blessing. I also enjoyed the Bible study about knowing that we are God's elected and chosen people because of our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are truly grateful for His sacrifice and that we now have everlasting life. I would like to start doing the John Bible study and the Proverbs Bible study, if it is possible, may I do both? Thank you again for this week's lessons, especially during Passover week, Good Friday and Easter. God bless y'all. With love and blessings, Abraham"

Cynthia M. Jackson, California Institution for Women, Corona, CA - "I did your 12-Step program back in 2021, and I would like to do it again. I'm preparing for the Parole Board and I need a refresher course before my hearing. I have been sober for 25 years now, I'm sixty-two years old, and this will be my second time going to the board. Please keep me in prayer, and I'm thankful for your support and help. I hope this letter finds you blessed and highly favored by God. Sincerely, Cynthia"

Carmelo Soto, CTF North, Soledad, CA - "I truly believe God brought me to prison to be free of the self-imposed "prison" I had myself locked away in for all those years. For me, incarceration offered me the opportunity to step back from "life as usual" and to be sober and face life directly, to reevaluate, to learn, to heal. In this seemingly most unlikely place of prison, a place where degradation and fear are ordinary, there is a unique opportunity to be lifted up, empowered, and to find peace. Of course, it can only be found in our Lord Jesus Christ. So with that being said, I would like to continue with your Bible studies. Your brother in Christ, Carmelo"

Geno Gomez, Centinela State Prison, Imperial, CA - "I had my parole hearing last month, but was denied for three years. I will continue to put my faith in God and Christ, knowing that the Lord holds the keys to open these doors. An interesting thing happened, as the commissioner asked me if I had a sponsor, and I said I had Tom and Dottie as my sponsors. He said, "Oh, everyone uses them!" I told him I write to you on a regular basis and have been doing your Bible studies for years. I told him I have a stack of letters, and the last one was from just a month ago, and he backed off. I should have another parole hearing by July 2026 or so, and if God is for me, who can be against me? Your brother in Christ, with love, Geno"

Erik Boettcher, CTF North, Soledad, CA - "Thank you for the photos of the beach outreach. It's awesome to see the Lord working through you guys! Also, thank you for supplying the 12-Step course. I've been sober for over ten years, but these steps and principles help with all negative behaviors. I'm trying to eliminate all things that separate me from the Lord. It's not easy. Loneliness, hopelessness, guilt and shame afflict me pretty much every day, but I believe and have faith that I'm not alone, and nothing is in vain. I am a work in progress. Your brother in Christ, Erik"