

# Love Thy Neighbor in Service

## A Disciple's Faith



HIS way in HIS time. Recently (July 2007) the events surrounding the ministry have been very difficult. We almost ran out of money and that is one of the great stressors of the ministry for me personally. We have had a change in the day to day leader for the ministry. It is the fourth time this has happened.

**S**erving the Lord by serving the homeless is a daunting activity. As a result of the background and the way their parents treated them (65-85% of homelessness is caused by child abuse) these individuals ended up on the streets. The streets are a desperate place where Satan is King and folly abounds. Lying is part of the culture and saying

whatever you have to say to get whatever (typically drugs or alcohol) you think you need is the norm.

**P**utting someone trying to serve the Lord into that mix for extended periods of time will open up and reveal whatever weakness a person may suffer. If you have a history of any drug or alcohol use in your past, facing the individuals daily will bring back that weakness in a strong way.

Imagine every individual you talk to for a day is likely lying to you. Then throw into the mix an honest person in great need periodically. Finally, try to be a good steward of the money that the Lord has provided through giving to the ministry. It is like operating in a fog in the dark of night. Nothing appears real and trying not to become cynical is difficult.

The pace that money can be spent at \$10, \$25, or \$50

an individual is staggering. By the way, we try as much as possible not to just hand money to individuals as we know that great risk. However, some money is almost always spent in some form. The result is a situation of great pressure for the individual at the point.

### Point Man

I liken it to the individual in Vietnam who was the point man for a platoon heading into the jungle on a seek and destroy mission against the North Vietnamese. The stress level is continuous and daunting. Also, the life expectancy for the individual was not too long.

**T**his has unfortunately been the case for those at the day to day lead position of the ministry. It simply is not surprising. I have been able to survive only by the Grace of God, and the fact that I am just enough removed from the

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day to day activities to get rest.

It was with all that frustration on my mind and my rather cynical view that the Lord reminded me why we are involved. I was walking down the street and ran into a man whose face I knew. I could not remember his name as I had not seen him in several years. However, he was looking quite good. He reminded me his name was Devin Dickerson. He had been involved with us for 1-2 years in the early days of the program.

Devin said, "He had been clean now for three years." He also said, "He was learning more about himself as he continued with his bible study, church attendance, and being mentored through a drug program partner." He was deepening in his understanding of the Lord and had not gotten involved with a woman. Involvement with anyone of the opposite sex (men or women) always leads to disaster in recovery. If you cannot handle your own problems adding another person to

the mix only makes things worse not better.

We talked about his journey, the new relationship with the Lord and the new life he was finding. He said, "Whatever problems he had experienced in the new journey of life with the Lord were always better than any of the problems he had going his own way." He said, "He had wanted to reconnect with us and give his testimony at the next Thanksgiving dinner." I told him I would be glad if he would do that. We parted ways, and I had a renewed view.

### What can you do?

We need your prayers! It is the most important thing you can do for the ministry.

*"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."*

(James 5:16 NIV)

LTN is committed to spreading the Gospel by Christ's example to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 22:39. To this end, LTN has designed programs with the purpose of helping clients build a relationship of faith in God, regain their dignity and eventually, regain their self-sufficiency. Contact us to learn more about the services and programs.

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It always seems that the Lord waits until you have just about had it and then He sends a messenger to remind you why He has called you this way.

I know Devin is not the only person whose life has been redirected by being involved with the ministry. I just forget sometimes when the tornado is spinning around the ministry that HE is in charge and the change I want in a week typically takes years. HE calls us only to serve. He is in charge of the curing.

I used to wonder about the twelve disciples and why they always seemed to need a new miracle. When I first

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***Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.***

**Matthew 22:39**

*Ho! Ho! Ho!*

Love Thy Neighbor would like to invite you to our annual Christmas Dinner Thursday December 20 at 6:00 p.m. at Techwood Baptist Church. Please let us know if you will be attending so that we will have enough food.

May you and your family be blessed this Christmas season and have a safe and prosperous New Year!

*Merry Christmas!*

**Miracles Do Happen**

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read the bible, I knew if I just saw one miracle I would never forget and that would be enough for me for several life times.

**W**hat the actual occurrences of miracles have taught me is that I am weak, forget that they happen daily and need a new one every time I turn a corner. I have a new respect for the disciples. I have not yet had my life threatened and mostly have individuals support what we are doing in serving the homeless.

Despite that I still often feel frustrated with the individual's behavior and wonder where God is in this mess? I need constant reminders as I assume we all do.

God bless you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JCH' or similar initials.

**John Chapman, Jr.**