

# Love Thy Neighbor in Service

## Disarming Choices



**W**hose arm is longer? It is the strangest of questions to ask. We normally do not pose the question in that

fashion. Normally we have our arm outstretched pointing at the group or individual that has crossed some line we do not deem as appropriate. Rarely is it based upon a specific scriptural reference but is just our opinion of what someone else should not be doing or saying. Worse yet, to confirm their failure, we make sure that another person knows by telling them the fault of others.

The event, statement or decision made by another person that has so offended us can truly be something that he or she should not be engaged in. However, we are rarely honest with ourselves when we make the accusation. The bar is set so high for others and low for ourselves. We can easily dismiss a lie we tell or mistake we make as a small issue yet take almost the identical event in another and make the thing they do who they are as an individual. Honesty in our judgment is something all of us seem to lack.

**M**y most powerful experience with pointing fingers and showing me who I actually am came on the streets downtown. I do not know his name but he was partially lying, slumped on the sidewalk. I asked if he needed any help. He indicated he was

a veteran. Clearly, he had been drinking heavily and my thought was I am not like this man. Dirty and drunk there he sat as a messenger.

As we talked, I was able to get his identification to see if there might be something we could do for him. After making a copy at my office I came back and that is when he delivered the message. Shorty and Ted had lived in an alley for approximately 13 years, across the street from where the gentleman was sitting. They were well known characters being generally affable and often incredibly drunk. They both sat in wheelchairs. That way when they were drinking they could just pass out where they sat.

**T**hrough the cold winters and hot summers the two had lived in the alley only one block from my office in downtown. Ted has actually lost several toes' to frostbite over the years. At the time we had been able to help them get off the street. Since this person was a veteran

like Ted my thought was to tell him of our helping Ted and Shorty and that we could also help him. Immediately he stated he knew them. His next statement was a shocker, but almost the identical thing each one of us constantly engages in. He lifted his arm from his partial laying position on the pavement and pointed directly to the alley where Ted and Shorty had lived and said slurring his words, "Isn't Shorty sorry."

### Pointing Fingers?

The immediate thought in my mind was who in the world are you, a drunk sitting on the sidewalk, to be calling Shorty, another drunk at the time, a sorry person. Can't you possibly see that you are exactly like Shorty in how you are behaving this very moment? Ultimately the fellow did not want any help, and he was left where he was discovered. As I walked away from the scene the truth of the event struck me right in my heart. I was that man.

**S**o many times in my life, and unfortunately to this day, I can so easily point out the faults of others. However, when I am honest and look closely at my own life, I have engaged in some of the identical behavior myself. I can easily look at my mistakes as only a small poor judgment. My personal measuring stick seems to be much longer than the one I am willing to use on others. If I stop and look at

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Love Thy Neighbor

#### Program Services

Christian Counseling

Telephone Resource Services

Shelter

Transportation

Food

Emergency Cash Assistance

*Ask how you can help!*

**Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Matthew 22:39**

**Love Thy Neighbor In Service**

41 Marietta Street  
Suite 1020  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Phone: 404-688-1638 (*John Chapman, Jr.*)  
404-577-3152 (*Ministry Office*)  
E-mail: jchapmanjr01@talkamerica.net

**jchapmanjr01@talkamerica.net**

Please feel free to contact John at his new email address. We look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your support of our ministry.

**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.

*Love Thy Neighbor In Service is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation (IRS#17053159005021). Gifts are tax deductible in accordance with tax law.*

(Continued from page 1)

my own life carefully it is full of mistakes I would rather not admit even to myself. When I compare myself with a perfect and holy God my whole life looks like one never ending supply of failures. I am pointing at everyone, particularly the group whose sin I have never had a problem with, and stating what mistakes they seem to be making with their lives. I am the man on the sidewalk, and I can barely see it in my own self deception.



One clear look in the mirror does however drive me to a simple answer. I need forgiveness in the largest way and no small amount of it. Fortunately, God is love and has provided the answer for us. We simply have to stop for a moment, put down our pride (well at least us men have to) take the time to find out who and what his son Jesus Christ came into this world to do for us and accept him. Anyone would quickly tell the man on the sidewalk he needed help. Looking into another's life and seeing the faults is always so easy.

As I did for years, many will incorrectly believe they are just fine and need no assistance. "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9 NIV) If I am not really a sinner I really do not need any help or forgiveness. Unfortunately, in

our world, money makes the process even easier to hide from ourselves.

Stop, take some time and really look at who you are. Pick up a Bible (NIV Life Application is a good one), find out just who Jesus really is and what He actually calls you to in your life. The surprising answer is He calls us to simply follow and accept Him. He has already done everything for you.

May God bless you!

**John Chapman, Jr.**