

# Love Thy Neighbor in Service



## A Trip To Jesus' Woodshed

A simple statement and a profound truth. Jesus so often made seemingly simple

statements that ultimately have great depth and truth.

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:3 NIV).

**T**he statement upon first reading appears to be an admonishment to make sure we are not hypocritical in viewing or suggesting solutions to others. I had read it that way for many years. However, as always seems to be the case in a journey with the Lord and Christ new meanings come up over time. One of the oddest results of my seeking the Lord (or His opening my eyes) was that we ultimately ended up with a ministry serving the homeless in downtown Atlanta.

It was not my intent to do this but I simply had to find out if Jesus, His commands and the Lord were real. I figured the best test was to simply do what He said. If He was Truth and still existed, something would happen. It did and HE showed up in an amazing way. HE is still showing up today, and the ministry is alive by HIS grace.

**T**he depth of the statement for the speck of sawdust and beam came later in the journey. It is interesting to note that Jesus states each one of us has a beam in our eye and our neighbor only has a speck of sawdust. By my reckoning I have never had anything larger than a speck in my eye but almost everyone I see has a big beam. Jesus, as

always, knew the real truth. We each have a beam to remove.

Think of the effort it takes to move a beam versus a speck of sawdust. Clearly, the dramatically larger effort is involved in moving the beam. Jesus' statement simply means 99% of the work you and I have to do is on **ourselves**.

When I was younger I was certain I could have a dramatic effect in others' lives simply by telling them how they ought to do things. Whether I was already living my life the way I recommended they live theirs did not matter. I have, however, found as I have gotten older that people believe what they actually see you doing versus what you are saying. After they see you living your life a certain way they deem desirable, then they ask you to speak into theirs.

**T**he desire for each one of us is simply to speak into a life and not look deep into ours. Jesus' plan, like most of His recommendations, is the reverse of the way the world want us to do it. He says, "Come follow me.", (the same invitation He gave to each of

### Love Thy Neighbor Program Services

- Christian Counseling
- Telephone Resource Services
- Shelter
- Transportation
- Food
- Emergency Cash Assistance

**Ask how you can help!**

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

### Love Thy Neighbor In Service

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### The Holidays are Here!

Plan to spend a little time ministering to the men & women we serve. Details of our Christmas celebration are on the way. Mark your calendar!



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the 12 apostles), to each one of us. Then He wants each one of us to work hard on removing the beam in our own eye.

**I**nitially thought you might actually get the beam out of your eye. I have, however, found removing the beam from one's eye is a life long endeavor. Beam removal requires daily effort. After 6 years (I am an infant in my Christian walk), He is just beginning to use me to speak into others lives. My focus still remains on the work I have to do in myself as well as the work I must allow Jesus to do in and through me. The actual fact is that each one of us

is only given control over ourselves. No amount of effort or activity can move anyone else on a permanent basis.

Power, fear, threats, trickery may all last for some period but they rarely work in the long-term. However, as Jesus knew, if I work hard on myself (bible study and prayer are the most basic free weights of a Christian work out), over time He can use me to help others get the speck out of their eye. Speck removal would not seem that important or dangerous.

**F**irst, if you are the one who has a speck in their eye, it is both painful and hardly anything else is of much concern until it is removed. So being available when someone needs help is of great importance to the person in need. The real danger however arises when we begin to believe our importance in the

### 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.*

process of speck removal. Men have a great problem with pride. My assumption is that women have somewhat the same problem, but I know it is very large for most men.

**W**ithout persistent work in the scriptures to remind me of how short I fall, I begin to believe I am the reason for whatever may be happening. The glory is all God's, and I need constant reminding of the fact. Jesus is waiting on you and me to begin and keep at the beam removal process.

May God bless you!

**John Chapman, Jr.**