

June 2019

→ **MINISTRY UPDATE** ←

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UPDATE

Praise be to Him from whom all blessings flow. It is so good to know God is with us, and it is good to know He works all things for our good if we love and trust Him. God does everything He can to train us in His ways. When we go our own way, He always waits for us to come back to Him so He can treat us as His own and give us the home and family we will never find anywhere else. The depth of His love is beyond our ability to understand.

We know we love Him when we desire to keep His commandments. Being a voluntary servant gives us access to everything. God deserves our praise and submission. When we do these things, He helps us to overcome. Thanks be to our Lord and Savior.

Our books are finally finished, and our new system is in place. By the end of the month we will know what our next step will be. We have several options, so we trust God will guide us. We have enough beds to make it to the end of this month. Pray God will provide for next month. I'm feeling a lot of pressure, because we don't want to be the cause of approved clients having to sleep in tents somewhere. We need a miracle now.

I want to give honor where honor is due. Roger Nichols turned down a church that would have provided good pay and benefits. He did this so he could rebuild a congregation which cannot yet pay him.

He has been working on this for one year, and progress has been made. There is still a way to go, but here is the sort of faith which shocked us and will surely get God's attention. Roger invited us to minister at the church he is building. All the churches in Oklahoma, and all but two churches in other places, stopped helping us because we refused to stop helping sex offenders.

We help all offenders, because Jesus did. He even became a sex offender on the cross because of exposure. Voluntary or involuntary, He felt the shame as the crowd reviled Him. Realizing the religious climate of today, Roger took a huge step of faith when he invited us to speak at his church. It is not because I am his brother either, but because he believes Christ died for all, and he is putting his life on the line for it.

We appreciate the other two churches also, because they are also taking a stand not popular today. Living for Christ brings persecution, and it always comes from religion of one brand or another. Christianity and followers of Christ can be two entirely different things. Make sure you know which you are. Many followers of Christ gave their life, because they refused to join religion. Talk is cheap. Action brings real change. You are welcome to join us.

We must say it is the faithful individual supporters who help us grow the most. We make every dollar stretch until it cries. If we can buy something used instead of new, we buy it.

Here is a list of materials we need.

- Tons of sheet metal .26 or .29 gauge
- Concrete blocks
- 3' by 5' windows
- Carpet tiles and linoleum tiles

- Treated lumber for porches
- Showers or shower bases
- Motel type heat/AC units
- Deck screws, all lengths
- Good paneling or sheet rock
- Experienced volunteer builders

If you have something you think might work, call **405-236-3349** and leave a message. I will call you back. Thanks to all of you who care. If you are our enemy, we love you anyway, and we pray for you.

— *David Nichols*

BLESSED ARE THE
PEACEMAKERS. FOR
THEY WILL BE CALLED
CHILDREN OF GOD.

MATTHEW 5:9

TESTIMONIES

I remember my mom taking my brother and me to church when we were very young. We stopped going to church, but, when I was 10, I went to vacation Bible school at my grandmother's church. My mother and I began attending that church around the same time, and I attended Sunday school there.

My dad didn't attend church, and neither did my brother. My brother didn't want to go to church. My dad and I went to a local coffee shop one Saturday morning when I was 12. My dad had coffee with his friends, and I had hot chocolate. I asked my dad why he never went to church with us, but he didn't answer my question.

I was in a near fatal automobile accident when I was 15, and I ended up in an intensive care unit. My mom and dad were standing by me when I awoke after surgery. My dad decided it was time to get right with God. It took a long time to fully recover from the accident.

I gave my life to God during my senior year of high school, and my parents were there when I did. My father sold the farm, and we moved into the local town. I moved to Oklahoma after this, but I visited my parents. They were both up in years. We were having coffee on a Sunday morning when I was visiting them, and my dad said, "Son, get ready, because we are all going to church."

I got married, and my wife and I attended church. We had a special needs boy, and later we adopted a special needs boy. My wife had a daughter the same day we adopted the boy. My wife had an affair, and we divorced after 16 years of marriage.

Much later, I went to prison, and that woke me up. God told me He had a plan for me. During my morning devotionals, I got on my knees and asked God for forgiveness. I asked God to show me His plan. God said I already had the plan, and He said I should put it to use after I get out of prison. I got out of prison, but I went back to prison.

I went to Hand Up Ministries after I discharged from prison the second time. I got a job working at the landfill for \$7.25 an hour. I had to pay court costs, probation fees, counseling fees, and program fees, and I also had to buy food. I was on probation for two years. I got off probation four months early. I had four different probation officers. The last one saw something different in me.

Thanks to David Nichols for accepting me and starting Genesis One at Hand Up. Genesis One is a great program. The reason I got off probation early is because I told my probation officer about Hand Up being a prison aftercare program with Genesis One accountability groups. I worked at the landfill until I paid my court costs in full, and then I

retired. I go to church and prayer meetings every week. I have been a Genesis One group leader for two years, and I write inspirational articles. I often share a message at prayer meetings.



“Thanks to David Nichols for accepting me. I have been a Genesis One group leader for two years, and I write inspirational articles.”

— Virgil Taylor

When I was a young boy, going to church was like going to school. School was the law, and so was church. School gave you an education, and church gave you an education in the Bible. I learned the stories in the Bible, but to me they were just stories. Like the stories of history and health in school, the Bible's stories didn't mean much to me. For this reason, I stayed away from church.

During my teen years, I did things which seemed good at the time, but which were, in fact, bad. I took things from other people, and I used people for my own gain. It was all about me and what I could get or use. When I was 14, I started using drugs and drinking alcohol. I started using pills when I was 17.

When I was in my twenties, I would walk around with at least an ounce of weed and two bottles of pills. I drank day and night, and I didn't know what it was to be sober. I continued to drink and use drugs after I got married, and I lied to my wife so I could get what I needed to get high. I am now in my forties, and I have been married two times.

In 2011, I was arrested for a crime I committed, and I was sentenced to 17 years in prison. This was a rude awakening. After eight years in prison, I needed a real friend and a new idea for life. I got down on my knees, and I asked God to forgive me for my sins. I asked Jesus to come into my life and change me. I wanted to know His ways and

do His will. I attended church, and I took classes to learn the real way of Jesus. I was lost, but Jesus found me. I now have a master's degree in theology.

The time was approaching for me to be released from prison, and I didn't have a place to go. I had no place to use what Jesus gave me. Someone told me about Hand Up Ministries. It wasn't a hand out. It was a place to help me get back on my feet. I sent an application to Hand Up, and I was accepted. I now have good job, a car, good friends, and a blessed family at Hand Up. This is only because of what Jesus did for me on the cross. I thank God for putting Hand Up in place for men like me.

I still today praise the Lord for giving me a new start. I would tell anyone who cares about living for Jesus to give Hand Up a chance. You will find faith, hope, and love in the brothers at Hand Up. Trust in God at all times, and good things will come in His time.



“Anyone who cares about living for Jesus to give Hand Up a chance. You will find faith, hope, and love in the brothers at Hand Up.”

— Jimmy Dunn

FROM THE EDITOR

One of the many blessings God has given to me is the ability to help my dear sweet mother. She is legally blind and mentally ill. Sadly, many of her friends and family members, with the exception of her best friend and me, refuse to read the Bible to her. She doesn't ask for much. She only asks for someone to read the Bible to her once or twice a day. Most people I know ask for more than this. They want tangible things.

After hearing the Life Church message Sunday night about chasing carrots, I thought

to myself, "This is an area that God has blessed me with more than enough. It is an area where he wanted me to give back."

Since I heard this message, I have started adding more reading topics to our daily ritual. I first read her the verse of the day from You Version. We then focus on more topics and devotionals. While we tend to spend about 20 minutes reading, since mother cannot focus longer than that, it is still one of the greatest gifts she receives. She loves the time spent with her son, and the time offers her special moments with God.

If you have someone you can help, whether it's reading, doing laundry, or caring for them in some special way, I urge you to take the time and help them. Not only is it rewarding to them, but the sense of love and peace that comes from helping others is something I cannot put into words.

Another thing I wanted to mention is finding God in everyday activities. I once thought I could only find God during prayer, devotion, or church. Man, I was seriously mistaken. God is everywhere. He can be found in school, on the bus, or even while you are shopping.

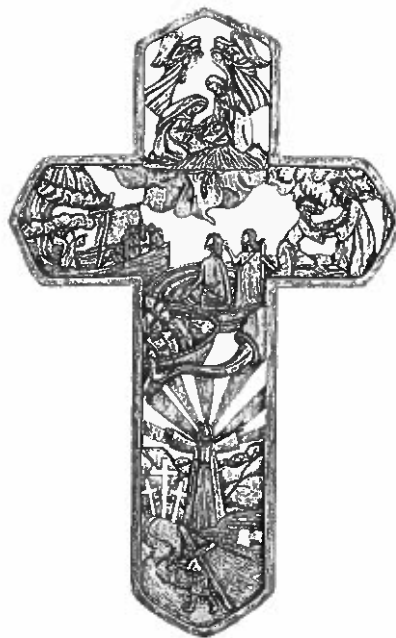
Last week I was helping my mother purchase a gift for her best friend Elizabeth. She wanted to buy her a new Bible and devotional calendar. I saw some crosses on sale and looked at some for her. One cross that really captured my attention was The Life of Christ. It had scenes from His most important events. But, it was the poem that really caught my attention. I want to share the blessings this poem and an image of the cross so it will also bless you.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

His birth was such a miracle that angels would appear; He grew in love and wisdom and in grace, year after year. God sent the Holy Spirit Who descended like a dove, to testify He was indeed the Son that God so loved.

He taught in all the synagogues, the words He spoke, divine; He ate and drank with sinners, changing water into wine. And on the hill at Calvary where men left Him for dead, He overcame that final blow, and rose again, instead."

— Poem by *Alda Maria*, Copyright Dicksons



"Helping other gives your live meaning and brings satisfaction. Seek to do a kind deed everyday."

— *Mark Smith*

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