

November 2016

→ **MINISTRY UPDATE** ←

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# UPDATE

My mother is now with the Lord and I'm trying to get back to normal. But normal has changed, so I'll have to get used to it. Pray for us.

The loan process is beginning to come together. So please pray for Dondino as he works to finalize the process. Many of the politicians have changed as well, so please pray for favor in that process. We are hoping to have a chapel and maintenance building up soon. The tent is packed on service night, so more growth could test our system.

Everything I have stated has come to pass. The number of sex offenders living in tents is now at 434, with over 1200 not registering at all. While 90% of them may not be a threat to anyone, making them homeless definitely will cause them to steal to live. Many panhandle to

make a little. The only difference between these men and the leper is that the leper received pity and support from most people. Our society hopes they die and eat each other. When do they get through paying for what they did or didn't do?—*David Nichols*

# MY THOUGHTS

In our religiously, politically correct world we live in, it is easy to justify whatever one wants to believe. It is especially common in judging others. Some just say, "I am just using righteous judgement" about that person or those people. Do we understand righteous means "love like Christ had". Are we really caring about that person or people? I have been involved with the prisons for around 24 years now. God instructs us in Matthew 25 to visit them. I think it means to care about them in their troubles. However, and this is fac-

tual, 90% of them have never had a visitor. Many of the people who go into prisons, go to preach at them or to them, but are not to be seen when the prisoner gets out. Matthew makes it clear that the least of these are important to God. If we deny them, it appears to me that we are denying Christ. No one would say they would deny Christ. But in action, maybe they are. Most of the people I receive are among those of the 90%. And most of those I receive are denied fellowship once out of prison. And we wonder why the world is going crazy. It's amazing what just a little bit of God's love can do. We know it's unlikely in the last days that the churches and their people will become that love to prisoners. But if you read this, you can change you. Don't deny Christ by denying your brother or sister. Loving others is not an option. It is a commandment! You don't need to throw caution to the wind and not use wisdom in safe living to have love, and to put that love into action.

Happy Christian living!

—*David Nichols*



## MY TESTIMONY

I was saved as a teenager, and I continued in the faith for several years. I drifted away from the Lord when I was a young adult, and I spent twenty years going about life as everyone else was. I was always aware of God's love, and I knew He was providing for me. He was willing to guide me, but I wasn't listening.

I was arrested, and I had time to look at my life and think about the things that had occurred over the years. I thought about how I had accepted the beliefs and practices of the occult. I started reading the Bible again, and my thinking changed. I saw that the lies I had accepted weren't the truth. I also began to

see through the lies I encountered in everyday life. I stopped lying, and I started speaking the truth. I also cleaned up my speech.

I went to Hand Up after I was released from prison. Not only did God provide me with a place to live, but He also provided me with a job. This gave me the means to pay my court costs and buy non-food items. Hand Up has been a safe haven while I get things in life straightened out.

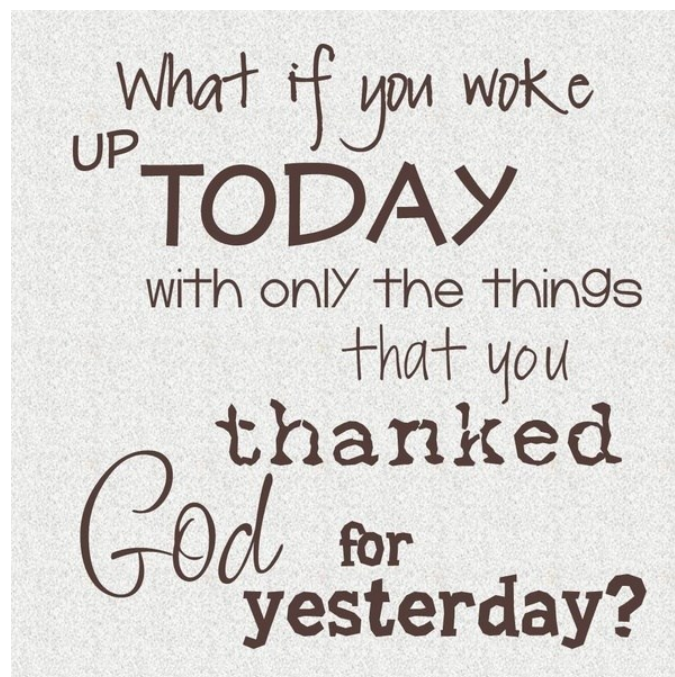
My relationship with God is growing. I am drawing closer to Him, and my life has been filled with His blessings. I look forward to the years I will spend in His presence.—*Gary Griffith*

## MY TESTIMONY

I continued to walk with Christ after I left prison, and the Lord has continuously blessed me with jobs. He has also blessed me with a godly woman who has supported me and encouraged me in my walk with Christ. She always reminds me that He cares about me and that He forgives me. She has helped me to remain strong in the faith.

God has blessed me with jobs, love, and a great probation officer who keeps me in line. My life has never been as godly as it is right now.

The Lord has changed my life. I believe I can do anything with the support of my girlfriend and my brothers in my Genesis One group here at Hand Up. Thanks to David Nichols for the chance to better myself through the program here at Hand Up.—*Weston Provancher*



## THANKSGIVING

What are you thankful for? We gather, every year at this time, to reflect on the blessings of God over the past year. But in most families, Thanksgiving is less about real gratitude and more about stuffing your face, watching football, and hanging with the family. Some actually dread Thanksgiving, because they're forced to sit in a room with people they really don't enjoy.

Now I'm all in favor of food and football. But this year, let's make Thanksgiving about giving and about thanks. This year, more than any, might force us to dig deeper. For some, it will mark a year since they've had employment. For others, Thanksgiving will bring another reminder that they haven't found that significant other. A few will be reminded that are no longer allowed to see their children. And there are those couples who have to face the family questions of why they still can't have children.

For many, this was a year marked by pain. So how do we summon the gratitude? Well, if you're a Christian, your basis is not your circumstances, but something greater. Paul tells the people of Thessalonica that they could "give thanks in everything." Why? Because this was the "will of God in Christ."

In other words, followers of Christ believe that every piece of hardship is a grace gift from the Lord, sent for their growth, sanctification, and further intimacy with the Almighty. We don't believe we're here on this earth all alone. We believe God is firmly in charge.

Though life may get hard--and it does--it all falls under God's sovereign will. And so we give thanks.

As Americans, we really have cause for gratitude. I have to periodically remind myself of this. We so easily get caught up in the easy lust for

more stuff. Bigger house, nicer car, better clothes, newest gadgets. But then I think about others living in third world countries, where they've seen real poverty--and real gratitude on the part of the Christians there.

Tonight, I'll go to bed with a full stomach. I'll have a roof over my head. I will ride in a nice car. I have a future. All of those are things many people in the world don't have. And so, I should be grateful.

Let's not sit around the table carping about politics, complaining about our job status, whining about injustices from friends. Let's instead reset our gratitude meters and offer genuine, heartfelt thanks to God. For salvation in Christ. For His daily care. And for friends and family He graciously provides. Oh, and our Thanksgiving hosts that allow us to stuff our faces and watch football.—*Jeff Wendel*

*Give*  
THANKS  
*to the Lord*  
*for He is good; His love endures forever.*  
—1 Chronicles 16:34

**We appreciate all our partners and donors. It is your support that enables us to assist individuals back into society as new brothers and sisters in Christ.**

