

Love and Compassion Ministries

In the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit

July 1, 2011 In The Year of Our Lord

Volume 6, Issue 7

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WE ARE 235!

Can you believe that? The United States will be 235 years old July 4? In those 235 years since we became free from the British, we have grown from a country of 2.5 million citizens to about 311.5 million citizens this Fourth of July. That kind of growth suggests something good, something people like! Yes, we have the greatest country!

In the Declaration of Independence Thomas Jefferson wrote, *"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."*

With that declaration we became a great free nation, but that greatness and freedom were not free, and are not free. Our forefathers fought a tough revolutionary war to free us from the British. Throughout the past 235 years we have fought many wars to keep that freedom. After the Civil war, Abraham Lincoln reminded us to remain devoted to that freedom in his Gettysburg Address, when he said, *"It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to the cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom– and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."*

Today, we are still fighting wars (some say too many) to keep our freedom, but we are free! Yes, 235 years after our forefathers fought for our independence, and 146 years after Abraham Lincoln gave his famous Gettysburg Address, **we are still a great, free country.** Let's remember, that as we watch the parades and fireworks, cookout with friends, and watch Old Glory wave in the breeze, that we are celebrating our **FREEDOM.**

On this Fourth of July, and in the future, let's remain dedicated to the freedom our troops have fought for:

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- Pray Thank God for our freedom and ask Him for wisdom, knowledge and strength to keep it.
Pray that we are the nation He wants us to be.
- Support our troops Join local organizations that support our service people.
When you see a man or woman in uniform, thank them for their service.
- Fly the Flag Show that you are proud of your freedom and love your country.
- Vote As God leads you, show that we are a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY and GOD BLESS AMERICA

THANKS FOR THE SHOES, STREET WATCH MINISTRIES

As part of our Youth Ministry, we have wanted for some time to be able to show each young men who graduate from Crossroads Wilderness Institution how proud we are of them. We wanted to provide each of them a pair of much needed shoes to go home with when they graduated, but our funding just did not permit that. David and Fran Strever of Street Watch Ministries heard about the need and presented the undertaking to their board of directors.

Street Watch has served the needy of our community for over 30 years. They have worked with us for many years helping many of our needy families and homeless people with food. A few days ago David and Fran told us their board of directors has decided to join us in helping the youth at Crossroads by providing these shoes to the graduates. We thank God for blessing us with Street Watch Ministries as our friends and partners. If you wish to help in providing the much needed shoes or food, please contact Fran at 239-574-1128 or send a check to Street Watch Ministries at 1106 SE 4th Street, Cape Coral, Florida 33990. Thanks

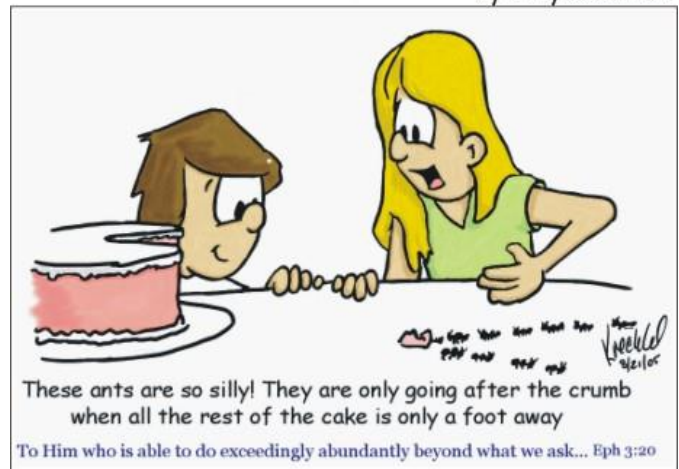
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"I'm not ready for a big commitment. Could I just pal around with a sidewalk a little?"

KARTOON KNUGGETS

By Troy Knechtel



These ants are so silly! They are only going after the crumb when all the rest of the cake is only a foot away
To Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond what we ask... Eph 3:20

<http://www.christiancartoons.com/kartoons> copyright 2005

AN INTERVIEW WITH A CLIENT AND FRIEND

By Lyle Smith

I first met James Ervin in 1999 as he was leaving the Lee County Jail on his way to prison. A friend of mine, having been convicted of drug related charges, was also leaving the jail on his way to prison, and he and James had become close friends. His prison records show James as a big man 6 foot 7 inches and 365 pounds, but I know he was bigger than that; I think for awhile he was around 400 pounds. At any rate, he looked big enough to put fear into anybody. But as I got to know James, I found his heart was even bigger than his body.

Although he loves the Lord, and he can quote a Scripture for any situation, James has struggled with drug addictions for many years. We always corresponded while he was in prison, and nearly every time I talked with him, he shared how he was able to help a fellow inmate through a difficult time by sharing his love and knowledge of the Lord. I know he has changed many lives! Ron Willis and I have spent much time with James helping him change his life.

James continues to be my friend. Two weeks ago we celebrated the birthday of my friend, and his friend from jail, at my house. I might mention our friend is also celebrating six years free from drugs. (I'll get an interview with him someday) James visits us frequently and always spends Thanksgiving and Christmas with us.

He has begun studying to become a certified peer recovery specialist with Southwest Florida Addiction Services (SWFAS). He has already been assisting by leading some of their groups. Hoping that his love and experience might help some of our readers, I asked James if I could interview him.

What was life as a child like? Did you know God?

I grew up in atmosphere where both parents believed in Christ. Later, I found out these were my adoptive parents, but they loved me as if I were their very own. They christened me with the name of Buddy which stuck with me throughout my childhood as an adequate description of the character I grew up to be. Besides, my mom said we're all little friends of Jesus.

As I was growing up, I began to have identity problems --- not knowing exactly where I belonged because the other children of the family treated me differently. I was baptized in the Caloosahatchee River at the age of 9 or 10, and that was in April. What an experience, I knew Jesus Christ and I knew exactly why I was being baptized. Even at an early age, the love of God penetrated my heart with a compassion for the hurts of others, and from that moment, until now everything I've been through, whether favorable or unfavorable, was by my choice, but I was designed by God for the very purpose of being an empathetic person for those going through troubled times similar to mine.

Can you tell me why you started into drugs?

As a child, my dad introduced me to alcohol at a very early age. His premise was that if I didn't like it at an early age, I wouldn't like it when I grew up. He was partly right. I can't stand liquor now, but feeling alone and isolated, from those I cared most about, I looked elsewhere for friendship and love. I was introduced to cocaine and heroin by a close friend I hung out with. He was older than I was, saw my distress and said try this. Again, he was partly right, but by hindsight that's where the hell began for me.

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Did the drugs take away the isolation and pain?

Yes, temporarily. But, then the effect of the drugs wore off, and as the drugs wore off, the feelings I was trying to escape from came back with a vengeance. And it was back to the races to get more drugs to get rid of the feelings.

Why did you think the drugs would help if they hadn't before?

Because, then it had become a chemical dependency. I was chasing the effect of the euphoria the drugs had brought.

You told me many times you counseled people in prison about a relationship with God, why did you suggest they find solutions in Him?

Because looking in the eyes of a suffering soul really does a lot to me. And, realizing their hurt, I knew that love was the only solution, and God is love. God is love because that is the essence of who He is. Everything He does and plans is from a heart of unconditional love, not based on what I do, but based on who He is. This is something that was given to me as a gift the moment I broke the surface of the water in the Caloosahatchee River at my baptism. But, before I could begin the process of growing and touching the hurts of other people, I first had to embrace my own hurt. I couldn't deny my own feelings and hurts no matter how much I wished them away.

Why couldn't you continue to depend on God as your way to freedom and the answer to the problems you were answering with drugs?

In the process of learning God's way, I was holding on to God instead of allowing God to hold on to me. What I mean by that is when He had answered my immediate need I would let go of Him or give Him permission to back into His little box until my next crisis came up. My desperation to be nurtured and loved led me to many compromises that didn't allow the effectual love of God to take hold. To me, my relationship with my Heavenly Father had become one of convenience instead of one of necessity. As the saying goes, I was looking for love in all the wrong places.

What is the most important thing you credit with being drug free today?

God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit! And the reason I say this is what has been impossible for me has been very possible with God! And what has made this so prevalent in my life is that through quiet introspection He has shown me His love, His protection, and His presence. Whether I acknowledged Him or not, He kept His promise. He loves me unconditionally. And the reality of the fact is my agreement and cooperation with Him leads me to humbled submission, one of supreme gratitude -that the promise of that love never fails is indeed true.

What advice would you give to parents, spouses, and friends of addicts?

My first advice would be to love unconditionally and realize that addiction is a disease, and that is not a hopeless, nor incurable condition. Just as any other disease it can be treated, arrested, and overcome through the involvement of everyone, but most importantly, through God and prayer.

Parents, spouses and friends of addicts often become frustrated and angry, would you advise them to forgive the addict?

Yes! I would very much ask of everyone to forgive the addict, but not to save him from the consequences of his behaviors because feeling these consequences, no matter how unfavorable or severe at the pre-

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sent time, are the experiences that will later on become his most valuable assets. Keep in mind that God Himself doesn't undo what we set into motion, but His promise is He will never leave you or forsake you. And that means he is going through these trying times with you. The temptation to become frustrated, I've learned, comes from our fears and hopeless beliefs that the loved one has not gotten well enough fast enough for us, so patience is the key, tolerance is the door all of us will have to walk through, and in this walking the problem child is going to have to learn that you are always there. And anger, if we look at it honestly, is rooted in fear and hurt because we just don't understand, and we question ourselves and place upon ourselves unrealistic guilt of believing it's our fault.

What advice would you give young people to keep them off drugs?

When someone advocates that drugs are the answer to feeling better, think long and hard because the feelings you are trying to escape and the way you feel about yourself are not worth the long term hell that you will experience through a chaotic existence that will push you to the very brink of self destruction. There is saying I've adopted in my life that helps me today deal with anything that comes my way; This too shall pass. And what I mean by this, is no matter what these feelings are eventually they will go away, but I have to aim to speak more honestly with myself in the light of God's truth because, in actuality, this is where my true worth comes from, and the only feeling that I need to experience is the love of God embracing the love of me. Then, there won't be a need for something outside of you to make the inside of you feel good.

What advice would you give to an addict?

The first step is recognition and admission that no matter what you do in and of yourself, this enemy will kick your butt every time. Secondly, it's about submission, it's about me stepping off the throne and allowing God to take His rightful place as Lord of your life. The third step is willingness. Being willing to do whatever it takes to receive the help I need. Also, remember that your situation and state is not a hopeless one. You can overcome with the help of God, others, and the cooperation of yourself.

Anything else you want to say?

It's always been a blessing to me to be a help to others, but it's also been a blessing to receive and accept the help of others. My journey is not yet over. It's a work in progress. And, today, I'm not in such a hurry to out run God and time as to allow myself to miss the blessing of enjoying life the way God intended. Today, I'm allowing God to hold on to me, and that's a blessed security, because no matter what happens, whether good, bad, or indifferent, **all things, all things**, work out for the good of those who love the Lord. I have some very important people in my life today. I have a spiritual father who has shown unconditional love since the year of 1999 and whose mentoring is only excelled by Jesus Christ Himself. I have a well spring of friends that advise and stand in front of me to intervene when self has gotten in the way, not afraid of running the risk of me getting angry. I also have someone in my life today, affectionately known as my Angel, who helps me with my heart situation. So, to anyone out there suffering or have someone suffering from addiction, my love, my empathy, my prayers, and my God, I pray, will forever be with you. AMEN.

Brother of Jesus, Son of God, and your friend,

James

LOVE AND COMPASSION MINISTRIES WELCOMES TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Johnson and Stacey Davis recently joined our board of directors.

Mark completed the Ten Month Regeneration Program at Dunklin Memorial Camp in 2004. For several years he served in the leadership at Dunklin, a Christian Drug and Alcohol Regeneration Program located in Okeechobee, Florida. He is completing his bachelor's degree at Life Christian University. Mark was ordained in 2007.

Mark is married to Claudia from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and they have two sons, a 15 year old going to school and living at home, and an older son in the military, stationed in South Korea. Mark and Claudia work full time jobs and are very active in their church, Riverside Church.

Stacey is a very sincere Christian man. He is married to Marcia, and he and his wife have two children, Kaleb and Sydney. He has a bachelor's degree from Savannah State University and an MBA from Hodges University. He has worked for Southeastern Freight Lines and Novartis Pharmaceuticals. He is also a former professional baseball player. He attends McGregor Baptist Church.

Stacey has known the Lord nearly all of his life, and gives Him and hard work credit for a successful career and family life.

These men join the following directors:

Ron Willis, President

Frank Blake from First Assembly West

Jim Cossairt from McGregor Baptist Church

John Domino from Faith Fellowship World

Outreach Ministry

Mark Decker, Vice President from McGregor Baptist Church

Tony Distaffen from Faith Fellowship World Outreach Ministry

Lyle Smith, Treasurer from McGregor Baptist Church



Stacey Davis



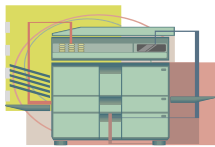
Mark Johnson

Please Pray For All These Godly Men.

LOVE AND COMPASSION MINISTRIES NEEDS:

INK CARTRIDGES - HP 95, 96, 97, & 98 POSTAGE STAMPS FINANCIAL SUPPORT

**Volunteers to drive people to doctor and hospital appointments
and to drug and alcohol recovery programs.**



NEW COPIER FOR PRINTING OUR NEWSLETTER

**You can now donate safely and securely to LCM using
PayPal at www.LoveCompassion.com**



Love And Compassion Ministries

Good Friends,

The U.S. government may think that we are in a recession, but I know, like many, who are living on our streets, that we are in a hard depression. Even if you haven't been affected yet, you are probably cutting back and setting money aside to weather what may be rough months ahead.

For many, charitable giving might seem like the easiest and first expense to eliminate. But giving is even more important now than ever before, and I believe we should consider increasing our efforts to give instead of cutting back. You don't need to be wealthy to make a big difference in the life of someone who lives in poverty. People who are already struggling are impacted more by rising costs or the loss of income. You might feel like you're barely making ends meet, but chances are you are reading this from a nice home with running water and lights that work.

This economic downturn is really bad in Southwest Florida, and the people who are being affected most are the people who were already struggling to provide the basics for their families, and the most effective way to support these families is through charities that help provide the means for them to lift themselves out of poverty. This is truly a time when every dollar counts.

Most of the charities I know run on a shoestring, doing as much as they can each year to help people in need. This year, things are particularly tough. Donors are cutting back, and at the same time, needs are increasing dramatically.

Love and Compassion Ministries is receiving twice as many calls as ever before. Many times we have to turn people away because we just do not have the resources to help. This summer we are working with the youth of the community showing them how they can have an impact on the hurting people of this area, and now, we are working to help other 501 c (3) ministries help others. We are working with a local hair stylist to find a suitable salon where people in need can get a haircut. A good haircut can make a world of difference to someone who is applying for work.

Look, the bottom line is that I want you to join us in giving the help these people need. A little Love and Compassion will go far, and you will be blessed at the same time. If you are not planting seeds in good ground, and you are only eating your seed, one day you will have eaten all your seed, and then what are you going to do? If you have a place where you think is better ground than LCM to plant your support, then we need to support that non-profit also.

I enjoy being on the front line of a giving ministry. I would say this is really one of the best times in my life. I love connecting with people and sharing my ideas, time, and resources. Sometimes it's not about the "feel good" emotions that come with it, but rather the person you become in the process. It helps you understand that life is more than you. It's not always being in the "grind" rather it's about true and genuine relationships you develop along the way.

In the Presence of our Lord,

Ron Willis

Ron Willis, President
Love and Compassion Ministries, Inc.

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**We're on the Web!
www.LoveCompassion.com**

Stamp

**SEND YOUR PRAYER REQUEST TO ...
PrayerRequest@LoveCompassion.com**



If you would like to be a part of our exciting prayer team, please send us your e-mail address and we will send you updates of people who need our prayers.

It is a great privilege that we have, as

sons and daughters of the KING, to be able to come into HIS presence with our needs, our hurts, and our cares.

We know that we can leave them at HIS feet because HE cares for us and will always answer us in our time of need.

Prayer requests are very important to us! We always need people who are caring and willing to personally pray for others' needs.

As we pray for their physical, moral, and spiritual needs, we must understand that because of JESUS CHRIST'S love for all of us, we are

able to do this. CHRIST is the answer to every human's needs.

As members of the BODY of CHRIST, we have the privilege and responsibility to pray for our Churches, our missionaries, public officials, other ministries, and each other.

It is so exciting to see prayers being answered. May we always give CHRIST the Glory!