

"Newsletter – Number 11"

Looking for Just the Right Gift This Christmas...

Searching for just the right gift to give at this time of year can be a challenge, a joy, and a strain, but regardless of the difficulties involved we all will search won't we! Sometimes we hit the mark and the one who receives the gift is overjoyed. While at other times we miss the mark all together and the person is less than overjoyed by our choice. One Christmas, when our son was quite young, he opened a gift on Christmas day, he was so excited, that is, until he opened the gift...it was clothes. You could see the joy drain from his face.

May I suggest a special gift we all can give this year that will bring joy to everyone who will receive it! The gift is "unconditional forgiveness." Are there people in your family and circle of friends who would love this most blessed gift given by you?

The author, Philip Yancy once said: "The scandal of forgiveness confronts anyone who agrees to a moral cease-fire just because someone says, 'I'm sorry.'"

The Son of God, our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ not only offers unconditional forgiveness to all who will call on His name, He also taught us how to give the same gift to everyone we come in contact with on a daily basis. In the written Word of God Jesus said:

"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matthew 6:14-15, NIV)

"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. "" (Mark 11:25, NIV)

Forgiveness was not only important for Jesus to provide to His children, He also wanted His children to live in this most amazing grace giving to others just as He gave to us.

The Apostle Paul reminded us just how special this gift can be for everyone.

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32, NIV)

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Colossians 3:13, NIV)

In his book, "21 Unbreakable Laws of Life", Max Anders tells us just how vital forgiveness is for everyone every day.

"You must be willing to forgive and be forgiven or your wounds will never heal and your conscience will never be clear."

"An unwillingness to forgive, or an unwillingness or inability to accept forgiveness, has robbed the joy from as many lives as almost any other spiritual problem."

One other statement he said really hit home to me – "Forgiveness is essential to freedom..."

Can you imagine what joy the people will receive when we forgive them just as Jesus has forgiven us! The most common Greek word for forgiveness means to release, to hurl away, to free yourself..." This has to be the greatest gift we could give; freeing the ones around us and being freed ourselves by the One who loves us more than we could ever think or imagine.

You see, Jesus really is the reason for the Season!

2009 is fast approaching! We are looking for regional locations to share our Ministry to Ministers and Church Leaders gatherings in the New Year that is coming.

If you or your church would like to host these important times please give me a call – 812-595-3898 or 812-752-2634.

What's involved is not only a frequently asked question it is a great question to ask.

We ask that the host church will provide a breakfast to begin and a lunch to end our meeting time. The mailings and program will be provided by Living Hope Ministry. It is good if the host church can provide accurate addresses for those who would benefit from a meeting in your area.

This past year God has allowed us to share our work in 7 different states. If you would like to be a part of this work just give me a call and we can discuss the details. If you interested it would be good if you could call before this year is over!

Expanding Ministry/Expanding Costs

Isn't it amazing how those two phrases go hand in hand? Yes, I know we are in tough economic times, and that stretching the dollar is difficult at best. However, we need your help. If you have been blessed this year please consider helping this ministry to continue. Your gifts are tax deductible and you have no idea the number of people who will be reaching. This past year over 700 ministers received encouragement through the work of Living Hope. Won't you please join us in this amazing work!

Just a reminder: Our web-site is alive and well if you would like to view some of our offers as well as listen to our radio program. The address is www.Living-Hope-Ministry.Com. We also have an e-mail address: Living_Hope_Ministry@Hotmail.com. We would love to hear from you. Yes, I will respond believe it or not.

“What Kind of People Ought We to Be?”

Such an intriguing question from scripture should make all who claim Christ as Savior and Lord search for the answer. Someone has well said, “Christianity is not a playground, it is a battle ground.” As soldiers of Christ how are we to then live? What are the choices we will have to make that will decide just how effective we are going to be in the spiritual battle that we find ourselves engaged in right now?

Our first responsibility is to choose who we are going to serve!
“But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”
(Joshua 24:15, NIV)

“Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing.” **(1 Kings 18:21, NIV)**

“Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” **(Mark 10:21, NIV)**

““You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.” **(John 6:67, NIV)**

Our second responsibility is to decide what we are going to do when we have decided to follow Jesus.

May I list 10 things every child of God can do if we choose too!

- 1. “Love the Lord, our God, with all of our heart, all of our mind, all of our soul, and all of our strength...”**
- 2. “Evangelize the lost...”**
- 3. “Encourage the household of faith...”**
- 4. “Be true to the Word of God...”**
- 5. “Exalt the glory of the church...”**
- 6. “Be salt and light in the community...”**
- 7. “Find a place to serve and do it joyfully...”**
- 8. “Lift up those in need...”**
- 9. “Live in a faith that requires God to succeed...”**
- 10. “Pray without ceasing...”**

