# Ine Loved Bible Project

I put my hope in your word Psalm 119:114

### Or Mission

Our mission is to transform lives to find hope in God's Word and while doing this, be transformed. God's Word refreshes the soul, gives wisdom, gives joy to the heart, enlightens the eyes and endures forever.

Psalm 19:7-9 New International Version (NIV) 7

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.
The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous.

Our ultimate goal is to bring more people into God's Word. For new believers and old, we've found this project impacts both.

#### Be Transformed:

- By 'working' on this project, you are brought to a commitment of stillness and meditation
- Through prayer, you transform knowledge into intimacy and you can recognize God's voice more clearly
- When you move into the mindset to search God's Word to highlight how it can encourage, comfort, and give hope to someone, your eyes are again opened. And once again, it allows us to stop and be amazed by God and His grace.
- And let your heart will be nourished and your mind sharpened as you rehearse the truth of the gospel.

#### For the lives it transforms:

- A Loved Bible is a gift of promises from an Awesome God who sent His son to die for us All of us.
- A Loved Bible shows love for the receiver just as God loved us.
- A Loved Bible is sharing the wisdom and knowledge of eternity.

# The loved Bible Story

By Anne Marie

It all started with a potty.

It was December 2015. Several things happened that I would soon realize were all part of God's plan.

At the end of the year, I spent time in reflection and a devotional question resonated with me. "Are you willing to step out of your comfort zone to help show the love of Christ?"

When I started to think about where I was uncomfortable, I was drawn to get involved with the homeless.

- I am not familiar or surrounded by individuals with addiction
- I do not know much about mental illness
- Some may (just may) call me a little germ-a-phobic (But I don't entirely feel like I qualify since I do believe eating week old Cheezits off my van floor will boost your immunity)
- I am not comfortable being in the dark, in the city.
- And to be completely honest I'm very pragmatic. I do not usually side on the side of compassion; I'm more of a problem solver versus a hugger.
- And guite frankly, everything about it made me feel uncomfortable.

So I started my journey getting involved with the homeless. I researched missions, organizations and individuals who were serving the homeless.

I came across a local woman named Christy. She was also new to this. But Christy was fearless. She was going under the bridges, in the alleys and into every corner helping the homeless, one by one. She wasn't with an organization, she didn't have a lot of money, but she had a huge heart. I would later learn her incredible survival story and her heart for the Lord.

Christy talked about 'needs' for the homeless and one material problem caught my curiosity. There were middle aged and older individuals climbing down snow covered embankments to go to the bathroom. I was shocked and humbled and decided to take a huge leap of faith and buy a portable camping toilet off of Amazon.

When I went downtown to drop off the potty and meet the homeless, I was confident a group of dedicated individuals could change the world. My eyes were opened very quickly with my first close encounter with the homeless. I later found it articulated perfectly in the book "Under the Overpass" by Mike Yankoski.

"The world is not yours to change. None of us is big enough, influential enough, or powerful enough to end any one of the world's major issues. The only person powerful enough to eradicate poverty . . . is Jesus"

#### The first homeless woman

Uncomfortable. That was me. There was a woman with eyes and cheeks sunken in wearing no coat, shivering and throwing up in the sewer. She was coming off of a heroin high and unable to get a fix. I was pretty sure I was seeing her die right in front of my eyes. She lay right there on the street, hopeless. I tried to move her over to a cleaner spot; she was shaking, weary and confused. When I asked her how I could help her, she said, "I just want to die."

And then I had to leave. I had to go pick up my boys from practice and relieve my mother-in-law from babysitting. I went back to my warm, safe, comfortable house. But I couldn't sleep that night. Her face haunted me. Every night, I wanted to forget what I saw and just move onto somewhere else to invest my time and my mind. Some place where I thought I could help. I left confused. I didn't know what to do and my heart was heavy with no clarity. I was hesitant to give and help – was I enabling people? Was I making the problem worse? Would my donations turn into crutch to not get off the streets? Would my money turn into drug money?

It was pretty clear God did not want me to look away. My days and nights were literally haunted by this young woman. What could I do?

#### The Loved Bible

I felt the safest thing to do was to donate a Bible. So along with my potty I wanted to send Christy with a Bible. But I was still worried, would it be used as firewood?

I thought if I invested time into the Bible by personalizing it, highlighting scriptures and writing notes, maybe someone would at least give it a chance and flip through it. I bought a small (4x6) Bible so it was easy to carry along in their plastic grocery bag filled with limited belongings. I started highlighting, adding flags, inserting bookmarks and post it notes with encouragement, hope, scripture and reminders of God's promises. I would pray intently over the Bible. It was so loved.

And off it went.

When Christy returned she told me the receiver had tears in his eyes. To receive something so personal and special it was a gift of more than God's Word. But it was a gift of His love. She said those around him wanted one too. And then I had a list of 3.

After 3, the list grew quickly to 5 and then 10 and then I couldn't love on them fast enough. I didn't want to mass produce them, so I said, "1 a week". And it still wasn't enough time.

I threw a cryptic Facebook post out to all my friends. I said – If you have a heart for the homeless and want to help me with something, let me know.

Once I pitched the Loved Bible idea, I had two volunteers. Not even very close friends – actually my son's 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and a soccer mom. I got them Bibles and they worked away.

Through the process I thought I was working on the Bibles to transform the receiver and I left transformed. The quiet time I forced myself into allowed me to draw closer to Him, to sit in stillness, and recognize His voice. I felt the Holy Spirit stirring inside me and I felt my heart softening and growing in compassion. I felt His Grace, His Mercy, His Love. His Word spoke to me in such a new way. I was refreshed.

I thought – I must share this. And as I told my story of the Loved Bible throughout the last 3 months more and more people have joined me. And I see God working in miraculous ways.

Over the last month, I've begun to expand and created "The Loved Bible Project". I am still in the early stages and working out details on communication and process, but fundamentally we just work on one Bible at a time for one person at a time. Praying and loving and trusting God to do the rest.

I struggled those first few times on what to bring when visiting the streets. Now when asked during our street ministry, the answer is abundantly clear, "Just bring yourself" The greatest gift we can give the homeless is our time and heart and just to listen. In fact, this is the greatest gift we can give anyone. The most important thing is that we do not want them to see a person as someone who can meet their material needs. They need to see you as someone who can meet their emotional and spiritual needs. When I go downtown to spend time with my homeless friends I show them my loved Bible. We flip through and God just seems to draw me to a verse or a page and fears of saying the wrong thing immediately leave me. And then at the end of our time, I ask them for a prayer request. And I write a prayer in the Bible. And give it to them.

As much as I/we want to help people, I believe we have to leave room for God to work. If being homeless ever becomes more comfortable than living in a home, we have not helped them. The key is to provide a hand up, but not a hand out. For us to show them the way to the reconciling work of Jesus and be reminded that all have sinned and while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. All of us.

## How to love a Bible



I have learned absolutely ANYONE can participate in The Loved Bible Project. I only ask for 15 minutes of your week. My 91 year old grandmother is loving a Bible, friends with full time jobs are loving a bible, husbands and dads are loving bibles, my quadriplegic uncle is loving a Bible and my 4, 6, 8, and 10 year old children are all loving bibles. Will you?

#### To love a Bible:

- Spend time in prayer. If this is all you do, it is enough. Pray for whoever may receive the Bible and for Jesus to reveal Himself to them. Pray for this ministry that it may touch the lives of all.
- Highlight verses in the Bible. Verses of encouragement, worry, fear, courage, grace, strength, rest, mercy, love and salvation.
- Write prayers
- Write words of encouragement
- Draw or doodle
- Write your testimony
- Ask them for prayers
- Make bookmarks
- Add stickers
- Carry a stack of post-it notes and write down God's commentary during your day

Ready to get started? The following pages will continue to show you examples of how others have loved their Bibles.

## Just one rule

Do not include your name, address, or any identifying information. The Bibles will contain an email address for the receiver to contact if necessary.

## When you are done...

Take up to 3 months to love your Bible. When complete contact me for my address or give your Bible back to your leader.



Follow "The Loved Bible Project" on Facebook @TheLovedBibleProject

91 year old grandma and my 6 year old daughter working on Loved Bibles



# Testimonies from Bible lovers

"Doing the Loved Bible Project has been so eye-opening for me. God's Word really has become fresh and new to me as I think about how it could bless, encourage, and convict someone else. It is doing all of those same things to me too but in a new way."

"I have fallen in love with the Loved Bible project!!! To be able to allow God to speak through me and through His word so that He can minister to and draw closer to His beloved is simply overwhelming. I have found myself in His Word so much more throughout the day as He is pressing verses, thoughts, and songs on my heart. As I enter into this to serve Him, He is ministering to me and drawing me so much closer! I am just so overwhelmed by the dwelling of the Holy Spirit!"

"I am really feeling the Spirit pull on me concerning the loved Bibles! I believe that through this "project" that God not only wants to move and bless those we have been directed to but also He wants us to be open to be moved and changed in serving Him! How he wants us to pour over His word and seek Him!!! What better way to truly do this and then to give it away. Our Bibles become so sacred and intimate but God wants us to share all that knowledge and insight He has given us! What an awesome way to do that! I believe that as we pour into these Bibles our personal ones will be open right beside us because we don't want to lose the nuggets God is revealing and opening to us! Helping someone understand and know the love of Christ though our notes and prayers in His word is just awesome! We can open ourselves for God's "commentary." What an awesome way to allow God to speak!"