

help cries

A Guide That Builds a Bridge

My silver hair, their orange hair. My settled attitudes, their unpredictable unexplainable behavior. My empty days, their daily rush to go somewhere, anywhere. My cherished quiet moments, their multifocused blur of sights and sounds.

Our Purposes

- Recognize and understand the cries for help from our teens.
- Be fully persuaded Jesus Christ fills their every need (and ours).
- Establish scripture as our pinnacle 'how-to' manual.
- Accept my generation's responsibility to reach out to them.
- See that my silver-haired generation is the best suited to do this job.
- Show others we believe that time is running out, by our actions.

(In this resource, “senior” means “silver-haired adult”.
“Ex-teens” cover the ages 19 – 20 something.)

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My Value of the Harvest

#1 - SOS... SOS! ... SOS!

BUT THAT'S JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG!"
We've all heard the phrase that emphasizes a greater portion not easily seen.

For me, one of the first images that come to mind is the sinking of the Titanic Passenger ship and the loss of 1500 passengers, most of which froze to death in the frigid Atlantic waters of 1812. While many factors all worked together to cause the never-forgotten calamity, I read of the arrogance of the ship's owners and builders saying the Titanic (with its latest technology) is indestructible; unsinkable. This incident is a bold clear testimony of the futility of man's inventions and creations.

That iceberg was following one of God's laws that man will never change – ice floats in water and always with a definite fraction of itself submerged. Another law is that man's devices pitted against God's will always loses.

This Help Cries Workshop is a guide to better understand more of the depth of the 'disparity' iceberg in the lives of most of our youth today. Scientists say we see only one-ninth of the iceberg above sea level. Can you imagine what portion of the unseen distress of ex-teens?

To get a clearer perspective of these hidden dangers and hidden distresses amid God's creation (and control) we need only to search the scriptures to see many examples of ships and the perils they faced. The greatest ship that comes to my mind was built by an amateur surrounded not by water, but by a sea of skeptics flooded with their own ego and sinful

ways.

I smile thinking of the passenger list of the Ark Noah built according to God's blueprint. There were only 8 humans sharing ship space with a zoo comprised of animals all enemies of each other. If there was ever a place for animals to pick a fight with no zoo security force to calm things down, it was on that ship.

While it's my own belief, I've convinced myself that God shut the ark's door, as reported in scripture to prevent any of the humans on board from opening the door. They would have opened the door to let in the drowning humans that were crying for help clawing at the sides of the Ark.

God's plan for life on earth, amid all of His laws, physical and spiritual, are flooded with His redemption, mercy, love, and grace..... and.... HIS timetable and justice. The Titanic's radio operators radioed the Morse Code distress letters SOS... SOS. An additional code radioed to anyone who'd listen was CQD... CQD. One of the CQD's meanings is COME QUICK! DROWNING! COME QUICK! DROWNING! Even though many ships and landbased radio stations heard the Titanic's SOS screams, the closest responders were at least 4 hours away.

Our youth today are signaling us with just as much effort, "WE ARE DROWNING in this deadly sea of technology. We don't know where our lifeboats are, or even if we are allowed in one."

The difference here is that God has placed you well within reach of at least one radioing COME QUICK! I'M DROWNING! What is your response? It helps to get to the right answer is you imagine someone you love is on that doomed ship. ...

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#2 *Didn't and Couldn't*

Robbed, Beaten and Dying – A story-lesson Jesus told. Previously we saw two ships surrounded by death. Neither was just a story – but literal history. In each case cries for help were heard by others, but no help was given. Help for the Titanic passengers was just too far away to get there in time. The people outside the the Ark Noah's family was in, had previously chosen to not trust in God's warnings that judgment for man's sin was coming.

Now we'll bring this 'help-cries' lesson closer to home with a very well known Bible lesson Jesus used to teach several principles most everyone can understand and should apply, as Christians.

In the 'help-cries' lesson in Luke 10, Jesus teaches how often our prejudices prevent us from giving lifesaving aid to those we 'rub elbows' with. The lesson is well known to us as The Good Samaritan and answers the question, “Who is my neighbor?” That question was posed to Jesus, trying to trick Him, in explaining the 'royal law' of love stated in Deut. 6:9 and Lev. 19:18.

Our dictionary defines PREJUDICE as “*an unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason.*” Take a few moments and look at each keyword in the definition just stated. In a very real sense, those keywords all become a recipe for disaster. My mind keeps coming back to the bottom line of so many of the Bible references to brotherly love, “*and love thy brother as thyself.*” To me that means to look at that other person as though I see them with my face in place of theirs.

In the Good Samaritan story-lesson, I just can't see the preacher (priest) passing by on the other side, if he'd viewed the dying victim as easily as being him. Nor when the Levite

acted with the same indifference as the priest just did. Now we must be careful as we consider the character and actions of the Samaritan who did help the victim... and continued to help him in several ways. The word describing his attitude is very important here, because it gives the motive for the help given.

He had COMPASSION, which means, *“a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.”*

So you and I have a spiritual thermometer with the marking “Prejudice” at the low end and “Compassion” at the high end. Your temperature of love (another as thyself) is measured for all of heaven to see. And also that our actions reveal.

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#3 You're Not Worth a Hamburger!

Less than the price of a hamburger.” That's what scientists say each human is worth. These researchers look past the character, personality, talents, and abilities and place a value on our chemical ingredients. Can you imagine looking at a baby taking its first breaths of air and saying, “See that? She's not worth more than \$3.00.” And, “Oh, mister scientist. You cured the dreaded spread of Malaria. But you're still not worth more than \$3.00.” The idea here, is that no matter what language you speak, no matter if you typically wear a suit worth hundreds of dollars or a jungle skirt, WHAT'S INSIDE is still worth less than a hamburger.

Maybe another value comparison would be looking at a human and also looking at a robot that has something of the

appearance of a person. The scientist would look at them both and would likely say, "Well sure, that robot has \$84,000. worth of motors, gears, and computers inside it. But the human... he's worth a little less than \$3.00."

Yes, the comparison is rather unlikely, because the real value of a person is that of his spirit and intellect. A flesh and blood person designed and built the nuts and bolts robot he's standing next to. To consider a robot designing and building a human is unthinkable.

Is it possible that we place a reasonable value on a teen or ex-teen who's appearance, attitudes, and actions are close to what you and I consider normal; that fit closely to our own appearance, attitudes, and actions. But change any one of the three a's and we consider them trash, and maybe even dangerous trash.

God's Word, our bible, is (and must remain) our ultimate guide for placing value on all things, in and around us. God gave the prophet Samuel in old testament times, one of many fantastic directives that must be part of our own criteria also. In 1st Samuel 16:7, God's directive was, "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

In today's speaking we'd say, "Don't judge a book by it's cover." That's the OUTWARD part of a person that we should NOT be focused on. The other part of the verse says we should strive to look on (and be a blessing to) one's heart... his/her soul and spirit.

This and the first two segments of Help Cries have taken extra time to help us dig deep into our own hearts and make sure we have the God-driven attitudes and value for His harvest field. That's the harvest field of ex-teens and those youth that society has shoved into shadows and out of our

sight and focus.

Our focus and ultimate goal appears in the 15th chapter of the Gospel of John. What we are to measure is our own love against the pinnacle stated here and demonstrated on Calvary's Cross where Jesus Christ showed His love for us and those with orange hair and all their trimmings. The 13th verse boldly says, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." So... What is my value of the soul of an ex-teen? Do my attitudes and actions show it... do they show them? [~]

The Field of Harvest

#4 A Rudder Their Size

All throughout our HELP CRIES journey we emphasize our need to create and deepen our sensitivity to the HELP CRIES of our youth; whether we see odd appearances, sense strange attitudes, or not.

I shall never forget that incredible day I had just met a 20 year old boy with crippling Multiple Sclerosis wheeling himself along our trailer park road on that very hot July afternoon. There was no one else there to push his chair or be his buddy for the moment.

Maybe not so much for Good Samaritan purposes, but just wanting to learn more about ex teens and their attitudes about life, I stopped and found him a friendly respectful person willing to talk a bit.

My heart begged God to guide my lips and not foul this up. I was the 71year old grandfather and with 40 plus years experience as Sunday School teacher, but little did I realize the blockbuster lesson God had for me from this wheelchair friend. I had explained the new things I've been

learning about teens that outwardly show they aren't comfortable with the inside obstacles that life has dealt them.

I mentioned to my new friend about the "Preppies" that dress very stylish with a mindset they want to make decisions and manage their corner of the world for the better. The second prominent group is the "Goths". Their fashion includes an abundance of facial jewelry, chains, black clothing, that often includes black makeup. It seems the word 'control' often plays a part in their attitudes.

But I was blown away ... I mean really ... by my young teacher with MS as he corrected my thinking about the third group - "Emos". Until that hot afternoon, I thought the emos cut themselves because there was some kind of satisfaction in seeing their own blood. **BOY WAS I WRONG!**

I learned that afternoon, in no uncertain terms, that emos inflict pain on themselves (blood or otherwise) "Because that is the only pain in their life **THEY CAN CONTROL.**" My new friend said that cutting pain was something they could control the beginning and somewhat the end. That's the only one they knew they could control.

When I heard that, I dropped my cane and almost fell off the tailgate of my pickup truck.

As I spent the rest of the day and many that followed, I thought about how "CONTROL" played a part in each of the three ex-teen attitudes.

It would be good to review each of the three with the 'control' facet in them. Before I left my new wheelchair buddy that afternoon, I asked him what phrase he had tattooed along the bottom of his left forearm. He said, "Oh. That. It says **NEW ENLIGHTENED AGE.** I read about it each day. I figure this is better than settling for this screwed up world and all its dead ends." As I began telling him about my Savior, Jesus Christ, he said he had no faith in himself right now but he's looking.

Each moment I think about my new friend with "no faith in me yet" I think about a ship in a storm. I think about that ship's anchor and its rudder.

Can you imagine the despair and maybe even horror you'd experience in the middle of an angry storm, not far from a rocky shoreline, and your ship has no rudder. With no rudder you have no control; no way to direct your ship to safety; away from certain destruction. But a ship must also have an anchor; a way to settle in, a place of calm and safety; a home port, to aim for.

We'll see in a later segment that our silver-haired generation is perfect for reaching out to the preppies, goths, and emos with the promises of God to be that rudder in a life adrift and no lighthouses to be seen. Our generation has a crucial responsibility to reach out to those drowning in the flood of technology with its empty promises and dead-end directions.

We must prepare ourselves simply with Bible verses we can present as anchors; as home ports of peace, purpose, love for each ex-teen. We must clearly simply show that God wired us for wanting control in our lives. And His word continually proclaims Him and His power to exactly fit that need and those to come.

We must show Heaven's greatest sacrifice of innocent shed blood on Calvary as the supreme example of control; God's control in a world adrift in the destructive seas of sin. Calvary wasn't God's 'Plan B' or a fix for His plan derailed by Satan. It was the willful act of God's own Son; the fulfillment of a prophecy stated in the Garden of Eden. God is in control and always has been. Each page of His inspired word is written proof. Read it. Rest on it. Reach out to others with it.

#5 The Volcano in Shoes

I'm not a psychologist, geologist, vulcanologist, or any other kind of 'ist'. But I'm sure all of us are acquainted with pressure that builds up to a 'breaking point' and what happens next, even if it's just blowing up a balloon larger than it was designed for.

Our school books and newspapers have spent years teaching us what happens to a volcano when the pressure builds up to its breaking point; its erupting point. And the results are most always catastrophic in unthinkable proportions.

I'm going to blow my top soon!

Volcanoes and earthquakes can occur most anywhere, even on the ocean floor. What's fascinating is that God has fashioned this earth in such a way that volcanoes give us some warning signs that it's going to blow its top. According to scientific studies, earthquakes always occur before every eruption. Other ways vulcanologists begin approximate predictions of an eruption is by measuring gas fumes leaking out of vent holes to the surface. They also use satellites and other surveying equipment to discover the slight swelling of the surface around the area.

It's like God is using volcanoes and earthquakes to remind us of His power that reaches beyond our means to control, or even accurately predict. God tells us there are powerful things happening that are not easily detectable, if at all, by our futile technology.

God also gives us subtle warning signs when someone around us is about to blow his/her top. In a volcano the pool of super hot melted rock can no longer be held back and the Earth pushes that rock, called magma to the surface where it sometimes creates new land, but often becomes a blanket of death over towns, people, and animals. This may sound like catastrophe destruction by a God we say is loving.

In many ways God does show His love and provision for us through volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. But to understand, we must be 'on His wavelength'. We must be trusting Him and all He does, to bring man closer to Him and His provision. After all, isn't that a basic purpose of our life on this earth? We're in a school full of lessons that prepare us to learn and know all that we can about God, His power, purpose, judgment, and love. This prepares us for fuller fellowship with Him in Glory, where we'll be spending eternity with Him.

It's my firm opinion that humans are somewhat like volcanoes. That is, continual fear of life's obstacles build up and up. Soon the human mind can take no more and explodes like an angry volcano on anyone nearby. I believe the troubled mind of most ex-teens build up fearful stresses and pressures inside with no knowledge how to controllably vent those ongoing fears that erupts as fits and actions of anger.

In my heart, I sincerely believe that ex-teens don't want this to ever happen, but are powerless to know how to deal with the stresses and fears inside. Their self esteem takes a nosedive and they see the fear and distrust in the eyes of adults around them, which snowballs into an ongoing cycle of deeper depression. We silver-haired folks must see and trust God's power and protection as we reach out to youth that may very well be under pressures we don't see, but yet need God's leading by still waters.

For the ex-teen Psalm 23 promises God's power to, "...maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

For the silver-haired generation reaching out to others, Psalm 23 promises, "...Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a

table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”

Timing becomes the uncertain unpredictable facet of volcano eruption and youthful outbursts. So the logical and loving thing to do is to be prepared and be diligent in watching and partnering with those ex-teens God has placed near you.

We humans can easily experience our own pressure that builds up to our breaking point that can produce horrible results, like prison sentences, and even murder.

As the purpose of this HELP CRIES WORKSHIP we must learn about those human volcanoes and what causes them and even

We silver-haired seniors must 'listen' to the teen help cries of orange hair, chains, tattoos, black facial paint, sudden fits of anger for no apparent reason, hidden cuts and piercings of torment.

So many years ago, I remember my mom putting meat and vegetables in this big heavy pot with a lid made about like an army tank. She called it a pressure cooker. I guess it was supposed to cook things more tender and faster.

But the little thing that she put over a spout on the top of the lid was NEVER to be touched by me and to stay away from. Some years later, I learned our hot water heater used one of those little things too. And even the propane gas tank outside had one too.

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#6 - Worse than Crying for Help

During World War II an American Bomber got lost, and its crew parachuted out. The aircraft crashed about 16 miles from the crew, who all perished, 400 miles inland in the Libyan Desert of Central North-Africa. The diary belonging to one of the crew told of gruesome efforts for survival in trying reach help.

More horrible than the accident of the “Lady Be Good” B-24 Liberator in 1943, was that none of the crew knew where they were at, nor did they know how or where to find help. The crash site wasn't even discovered until 15 long years later.

Nothing about needing help can deepen the spirit than not knowing how or where to find help; especially when navigation technology had failed to lead you to your goal.

At present there are over 30 Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites with 6 to 9 of them being accessed simultaneously by our GPS receivers in our airplane, farm tractors, automobile, or even most smart telephones. With GPS farmers can plant rows of crops over hilly fields with an accuracy of plus or minus four inches for that and other non-military purposes.

TIME is a 3rd crucial factor in needing to get help. Like the bomber crew... their time ran out in the hot arid desert conditions far more dangerous than the skies of Naples, Italy where they dropped their bombs to end the war between nations.

The time regarding the downed fliers had right hand – left hand aspects to it. On the one hand the stranded crew knew they had one canteen of water to share among them all. If only they had known there was a desert oasis just a few miles away, the history book accounts would have read quite differently. On the other hand was the time and resources the

searchers were limited to, in the middle of this gigantic war. Time was running out in the minds of the family members back home who knew nothing of all this that God had full knowledge of.

Isn't it ironic that on every hand, man is restricted in some way by time. Yet the hands of the Creator of time, with those nail prints are never, in any way, restricted by time. Those are the very same open hands stretched out to us with the help cries of stranded lost souls, very near to us looking for the way 'home' to the salvation, purpose, and love of the One that rescued you and I on the far away hill called, "Golgotha".

The manger of Bethlehem, we sing about each Christmas, is a testimony of God reaching out to all of mankind that was lost and not knowing which direction to call for help. God's own Son left Heaven and stepped into this sin-cursed defiled world to show and provide for a way home for you and I.

Now, the name Christian, means "Christ-like". So if we are Christians deep on the inside as well as the outside, doesn't that define our task to reach out to those who have no spiritual home or how to get there? Many examples in scripture teach us to first be a friend to the lost. Next be a mentor to them, not out of pity, but of passion. Then we must show them the true direction finder, Jesus Christ and His mission to offer His love and righteousness as a free gift to all those ex-teens not knowing which way their eternal home is. [~]

Training for Harvest

#7 *You're Off Your Rocker!*

I've been told many times I was "off my rocker". This long-ago accusation that seems to tell someone their idea or action is strange; it's out of place; it'll never work. My imagination tells me of some obscure Israelite man in a seven day parade around this humongous walled city, called Jericho. He elbows the one next to him and whispers, "This'll never work – it's absurd – whoever dreamed up this parade around these walls taller than I've ever seen... well that person had to be off his rocker. This time would be better spent if we were home sitting in our rocking chair and listening to the sheep in the fields."

"After all", this fictitious person goes on to say, "If God wants this city to be broken down, why, He could just snap His fingers in heaven and it'd instantly happen. Our God made the dirt that Jericho sits on. He can just as easily level the walls and town, in the blink of an eye."

This person doesn't realize that God includes people in His tasks so we can learn deeper meanings and value of His power and purpose. But you and I consider those around us, today. You might shout, "But my silver hair and their teen-aged orange hair just won't blend - not in a million years!" Maybe a quick question might open some doors here ... When Jesus hung on that bloody cross looking down through time; at your sins and mine, do you think His eyes, filled with agape love tears, also saw orange or blue hair?

God has prepared us seniors to be the best flesh 'n blood friend to today's ex-teen. ESPECIALLY better than most of their peers! (And CRITICALLY better than ANY of their online 'friends'.) I've begun a list of reasons why our

silver-haired generation is best suited for reaching out to those youth around us. Maybe a first step would be to prioritize and comment on these before adding your own.

_____ Mentoring teens helps us to recall our 'long ago teen years' and the growing God brought us through then.

_____ We're mature, experienced and settled ... in a word - anchors.

_____ We have more time to listen

_____ We can get teens to help us - begin the silver/orange connection.

_____ We're not saturated with technology torment

_____ Our knowledge of related scripture

_____ Scripture authorizes us to mentor teens, and even their parents

_____ Our daily testimony should already be speaking to them

_____ Our days are often too empty and fruitless

_____ Our daily health reminds US to redeem the time

_____ We can spend more time in fervent personal prayer for them

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#8 Strangely Sweeter Than Honey

It's sweeter than honey! That's the truth! The king said so! More than that, God agrees! What the king was talking about, certainly was no cooking ingredient for cakes or cookies. HELP CRIES has a powerfully important mission of showing our silver-haired generation how to recognize the distress signals from ex-teens; those young adults from 20 to about 23 or so.

Because God has charged you and I with reaching out to these souls that God loves, we should be following a 'how-to' manual that shows us the way, gives case histories, and especially a guarantee if available. Well, God's precious written word does exactly that and a whole lot more. Even Satan demonstrates his great respect for the Bible by how hard he has tried for centuries to stamp it out; to corrupt it and undermine its perceived value in this day of computers and technology.

God has made His word available in so many ways and so many languages, you can't hardly list them all. Though a bookstore will sell you a Bible for \$3.00 on up, I praise the Lord that He provides us His word for 'less than nothing'. I mean, you and I can download God's word to our computers for free. But more than that, you also get programs that help you search for words and phrases. There are connected dictionaries and concordances too. If that wasn't enough, these programs even let you make notes and build lessons, to share with others. See? It truly is God's word for less than free.

There are libraries upon libraries of resources that help us discover the diamonds of truth and peace in its pages. But I take great joy in knowing that God provided a heart-to-heart Teacher to us for scripture. He's called The Holy Spirit. In

these days of technology and texting, God's word even provides us a whole storehouse of tweets we can (and should) share with others. Never let anyone think God's word is out of date. The storehouse of tweets are all grouped in the book of the Bible called PROVERBS.

Let's step back and get a short big picture of our unbeatable 'how-to' manual that comes with its own Teacher (Holy Spirit).

All the PRINCIPLES and TRUTHS of scripture fall into four simple purposes, listed in 2nd Timothy 3: 16. *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”* The four groups are: doctrine (rules), reproof (testing), correction (penalties), and instruction (learning).

The largest chapter in our Bible is Psalms 119. Does it surprise you that the total of it, talks about God's law, precepts, and testimony? That's what became our Bible. While we're there, notice what King David tells us about scripture in verse 103. Now you know where we got our 'sweeter than honey' title.

So if we skip down just two verses we can see the four groups of PERSONAL APPLICATIONS of scripture.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Ps 119:105. This simple verse about lamps and lights actually gives us a quartet of groups of APPLICATIONS.

A 'lamp unto my feet' is going to show me the conditions of myself (my shoes) and if my feet are on the path. The 'light unto my path' will show me the direction of the path and any dangers along the way. Do you see the four groups of applications? Think about how these applications might apply to that ex-teen that God has placed in your harvest field. Discuss this with a Christian friend. Maybe make a diagram that would show the application of these four groups.

Talking about groups, how about getting together with some of your silver-haired friends and see how you can develop this diagram even further. It'll be a blessing you won't forget. Be sure to ask your personal Bible teacher (Holy Spirit) to help out. That's just what He's really good at. He has a strangely wonderful way of taking a principle and showing you how apply it, in a different way than He did for another challenge you had at another time.

Note: in a later HELP CRIES segment, we'll develop these applications even further.

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#9 Learning How to Love-Listen

Now listen up!" It's a strong statement we hear a lot, but many of us don't really know how. We find ourselves 'half listening all the while digging into our mental toolbox for our advice ready to enlighten the one we're hearing. Maybe a tool we need most is the ability to really REALLY listen. For now let's just call it Love-Listening. Picture this kind of listening (hearing) as adding color and shadow to a black and white picture of what someone is saying to us. Love- Listening would be the total focus on what our ears are picking up, as though we were sure to soon hear something that would really become a spark in our own world. The trick though, in Love-Listening is to use it among our ex-teen generation. The frosting of Love-Listening is the anticipation of blessing to us, no matter who is doing the speaking.

Love-Listening actually begins in our mother's arms, even before we learned our ABCs or could dress ourselves. Earlier generations would have a family member read portions of God's precious scriptures to them. Almost like a

flesh and blood Holy Spirit, that parent would open those scripture truths to our young lives in ways we could picture ourselves standing beside David with the giant before us. Our young hearts drank in visions of God removing our enemies before us, sending Satan packing.

To be truly effective in reaching out to our teens and young adults, we need to relearn how to Love-Listen. We need to step out of our typical Fixit-Listening mode that greatly hinders our getting the frosting of what our ears and heart are wanting to savor. Love-Listening might be compared to the soft clay on the potter's wheel. It must be soft and fully ready to receive the directions of the potter's hands.

So ...

1. We've learned how to Love-Listen and savor it before we could walk and talk.
2. A special kind of Love-Listening is cherished as we listen to God's word shared with us.
3. In that scriptures we first heard long ago, we saw evidence of terrible results of people who were stiff-necked and unwilling to yield to their Creator's hands.

It's ironic that high on an ex-teen's want list is for someone to listen; to really listen; to Love- Listen to them and their struggles that they feel have no remedy. We silver-haired seniors must 'listen' to the stressed confused youth help cries of youth with orange hair, chains, tattoos, black facial paint, sudden fits of anger for no apparent reason, hidden cuts and piercings of torment.

Even if you have a tear-filled burden for ex-teens, you must first and fully, place yourself on the Creator's pottery wheel. You must begin reading scripture with anticipation; with expectation, that develops your "Love-Listening" skills as the Holy Spirit envelopes your soul and spirit with truth and love.

You can tell if this process is working in you, because the flames will grow; those flames of compassion brighten and spread in your burden for teens all around you.

Love-Listening to scripture colors and sweetens our 'Victory-in-Jesus' attitudes to see this is only half the truth. Whether it's fighting giants before us, reaching out to teens, or savoring the 'More- than-conquerors' principle of Romans 8:37, Love-Listening to scripture is where it all starts - and continues each day.

Love-Listening in Prayer

In our hurried daily agendas, our prayers are bursting with our talking. Yes we praise our Savior for His abilities, His goodness to us, and telling Him our needs that increasingly crowds out the first two. It's like we're sending Him an audible telegram, sandwiched between other daily events we often put higher priority on than talking (and listening) to the One giving us the very best Heaven had to offer.

But anticipating exciting things from scripture, I can still remember the library chair I was sitting in, many years ago. The Holy Spirit drew my attention to an unusual phrase in the inspired letter Paul sent to the church in Thessalonica as recorded in 1st Thess. 4:11. We expect libraries to admonish, "Please be quiet. People are studying."

But now notice how Paul turns that around. He doesn't say to be quiet to study, he says to study to be quiet. I always relish applying that concept in my intimate communication with God. It's like Paul is telling us we need to be quiet in a way we can show respect, we can devote our full attention to what we're hearing or reading - it's worth it - it's frosting to our faith.

Love-Listening in prayer is really tapping into God's

direction for our lives each day. Make the MAJOR portion of your prayer LISTENING; Love-Listening to your Potter as He molds you into beauty; maybe even a lighthouse in the life of an ex-teen headed for a rocky future in torment.
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The following chapters are a part of book #234

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