**Daryl**

When I was the pastor of the Camarillo church, I received a letter from a layperson in our church at Lompoc who asked if I would not try to contact his son who had a whole host of problems but had been raised in church. He send me Daryl’s phone number and address and I was able to reach him, and he was willing to see me.

I pulled up in front of this house which was somewhat kept and in a nicer part of town and he came out to my car so we could talk in private. We formed a good relationship right away, but later I learned that his father was paying his rent and sending him money to live—which may have been why he was so willing.

As we continued to meet from time to time, he had no interest in coming to the church at that time, but seemed to enjoy our talks until his father ended the money flow. I think he may have thought that I told his father about the drugs, but I had not. Our relationship improved when he learned that the owner of the house was the one who had phoned his father.

Daryl was broke and on the street with few belongings. He started attending our church, made some friends, and the church helped him get a garage apartment in a poor part of town. One evening when I came by with a hamburger for him, as I often did, he decided to accept Jesus, and had a genuine conversion. I was able to raise the funds for a 30-day program of detoxification from sources in the church.

After he “graduated” from the program, I picked him up to return him to his room in the garage apartment, and with some food, I tried to talk to him about what his future might be. He told me that he had wanted to be an electrical engineer, and I told him of a program in Oxnard that I knew about in which he might enroll with support of the government. He did. He ate one peanut butter sandwich a day, and sometimes missed the bus. When he did, he then had to walk the five miles to class. But two years later, he graduated and had his certification.

Then the real challenge occurred. The program had promised that they would find those that graduated with a good job, and Daryl went everywhere applying with no luck. He finally even went to minimum wage job openings and could not be hired there either because of his record with drugs. He was devastated, angry at God and at me, and angry at life in general.

I tell this first part of the story to try and illustrate how we need to stay with the people trying to walk on the path with Jesus. It is often messy. It often requires more of us than we thought we first signed up to do! But if God is at work, it is an investment that is well worth making.

The second part of the story is that one day Daryl came into my office almost in tears. He was so devastated, and asked me why after his commitment to Christ, after all the work and sacrifice which he had done to become qualified, God would not give him a job. I said I would pray about it and try to find an answer, because of all the people I had ever tried to help, he certainly had tried.

In a few days, Daryl came back to see me, and ask if I had found an answer. I had him sit down, and then I said, “Daryl, I know you know that I care about you, and I do believe that I have found an answer as I have prayed—but you are not going to like it.” He said, “Tell me, pastor.” I said to him, “I believe God has said to me, ‘How can I bless him if he is not willing to tithe?”

**Daryl was so mad.** He jumped up and yelled at me, “All that you Christians care about is money!” He stormed out of the office slamming the glass door so hard that I thought it would break. I thought to myself, I may not ever see him again, but Lord you know I tried to tell him what I thought you had said. If I was wrong, Lord, show me and I will go and apologize.

The Lord seemed to confirm that what I had said was what I should have said. And sure enough, Daryl was not there that Sunday, or on Wednesday night either has he had been. The next Sunday, before Sunday School, Daryl stormed into my office and threw an envelope at my face. He said, “Now are you Christians happy?” He again stormed out of the office, did not stay for church, and I looked inside the envelope, and there was twenty-six cents.

But guess who found a good paying job the next day, Monday. It was in the field that he had been studying. It was hardly any time at all that he received many raises and started doing well. Guess who came back to church, who started tithing regularly and is still tithing to this day, though he moved away to a better paying job in a city several miles away. Sometimes you and I must be faithful to follow Jesus even when we don’t see how it will bring success and when we may even fear that it will bring disaster. **To follow requires us to be faithful.**