

Shiloh Messenger

February 2010

What Does Love Look Like?

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1John 4:10-11).



On the table lay a pistol, heroin and cocaine. He was at the end. He hated his life and wanted to die, but he couldn't bring himself to pull the trigger. "It all started with hanging out with the wrong crowd. I remember the first time... he got the needle, spoon, and the drugs. I was curious and terrified all at the same time. I was just a scared kid. So I tried it. And that first time was when I fell in love with it." At the age of 16, Jason Zikovich began his addiction to heroin and other opium drugs. His mental and physical addiction led him to quit high school, and like many addicts, Zikovich's main purpose in life became obtaining and using drugs. Heroin is a highly addictive and illegal opiate drug derived from morphine, a naturally occurring substance found in poppy plants. It is usually injected, snorted or smoked. Opiates' effect on the brain and central nervous system creates a "rush" for the user, which causes drowsiness, alleviates pain and slows cardiac function—sometimes to the point of death. Daily worries and life pressures to find a job and pay bills caused him to abuse heroin multiple times a day. Even when Zikovich didn't have any he would stab himself with the needle all day long. "I loved the feeling of the needle; the feeling would instantly remove all worries. It was a scapegoat out of reality," said Zikovich, an Ohio native, who began going to government funded rehabs when he was 17 years old. One rehab program he attended cost \$15,000 for two weeks. Most rehabs he tried were short-term residential programs based on a "12-step" recovery plan. Success rates for heroin addicts range between 40 and 60 percent, but the longest Zikovich made it out of rehab without heroin was two weeks. "I went to about every rehab in Northwest Ohio," Zikovich said, and estimates he "roughly went about 10 times, and they never worked." After many failed attempts to recover, all he was left with were thousands of dollars of debt and the ever-present company of addiction that still plagued him; Zikovich was left in despair. When he didn't kill himself he began to pray to God: "If you are real, I need your help." In July of 2006, Zikovich, 22, ended up in Liberty, Texas at Shiloh Ministries. From appearance alone, he did not think he was at the right place. Zikovich was used to expensive, government-funded rehabs in the city, but he was in the "middle of nowhere."

Shiloh is a non-profit program established in 2000 by Pastor Rocky Fondren and his wife, Debbie, for men 18 years and older with substance abuse problems. It is an intensive Bible-training, year-long residential program equipped to house 14 men at one time. Men of many ages, ethnicities, backgrounds and various parts of the USA have come to Shiloh for healing from their substance abuse. Shiloh is a full faith Ministry, a 501c3 charitable organization that is recognized by the IRS. There is no charge for the students. Monies to keep Shiloh in operation are received through donations. A long way from Ohio and familiarity, Zikovich did not want to be there. In fact, his plan wasn't to stay the full year. He wanted to "kick" the habit and get out of there. For Zikovich, the first 30 days were filled with lots of thinking and many questions. He calls those days "worry central." He was constantly thinking about past failures, and questioning whether this time would be the time he would get his life back on track. This difficult period is usually the deciding factor upon who stays and who leaves. The physical withdrawal process from heroin should and has lasted weeks and months, but this time, it only lasted two days. At Shiloh, days begin at 6 a.m. with breakfast and an hour of worship and prayer which quickly became Zikovich's favorite part of the day. Bible class is taught from 9 to noon, and then there is a break for lunch. After lunch the men perform afternoon work details on campus and in the community. Zikovich liked to cook, so his job was to stay at Shiloh and cook for the men. The men return at 5 p.m. to take showers and eat dinner. Bedtime is 10 p.m. for the men whom live in a dormitory style room, lined with bunk beds and closet chests. For at least three months, the men have no contact with the outside world besides mail from family members and weekly 15-minute phone calls to family. Thursday nights were Zikovich's designated phone time. During the fourth, fifth and sixth months at Shiloh, family members can visit once a month on a designated Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. Being from Ohio, Zikovich's family only drove down for one of the visits. The seventh, eighth and ninth month allow students to leave Shiloh with a family member for five hours, once a month, on a designated Saturday. One of the counselors took Zikovich to a movie and dinner because his family lived quite a distance. Students are given the biggest privilege during the 10th and 11th month: a weekend away from Shiloh. Again, Zikovich was unable to enjoy this freedom because his family were unable to come.

When there is bad behavior, privileges are revoked. It was infrequent to see Zikovich's name on the board. At the beginning of his stay, his name appeared after sleeping in and not making his bed. The first few times a man's name is written on the board it is likely his punishment will be dishwashing duty without any help. After that, Saturdays, the most looked forward to day of the week, can turn from a free day into an eight-hour work day as a form of punishment. Repetitively breaking the rules is grounds for dismissal. Shiloh works by using Godly love and some discipline to reinstate these men back into their lives, families and society. In July of 2007, 12 months had gone by and it was Zikovich's turn to graduate. His graduation became a tearful celebration when his classmates and teachers who had come to know him during the past year stood up to give congratulatory speeches. Graduation for Zikovich was more than just a special moment; it marked the beginning of a new life. His life was completely restored—180 degrees different from where he started one year ago. Zikovich's purpose in life is no longer based on drugs, but instead on teaching others about true deliverance from the bondage of addiction. His "rush" now comes from serving God, not from heroin. "I had never finished anything in my whole life. I either messed it up or quit. Graduation was a humungous sense of accomplishment," Zikovich said. After graduation, upon the request of Rocky and Debbie Fondren, Zikovich returned to Shiloh as a resident counselor. As resident counselor it is his responsibility to know what every man is doing and where every man is 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Zikovich orchestrates "work detail" with different members of the community. He grades the men's assignments from Bible class. He sorts the mail and makes sure it is from family only. He talks to many lawyers and judges on behalf of some men who are in trouble with the law due to their illegal substance abuse. He answers the phone and prays with men who are considering coming to Shiloh. It has now been over three and one half years and Zikovich has proved his dedication to The Lord, God's Ministry Shiloh, Pastor Rocky & Debbie Fondren, and to his oath in protecting the men from their pasts. Now, in place of the pistol, heroin and cocaine lays a Bible, a prayer workbook, student's papers waiting to be graded, a pile of mail to sort through, and theology school books from Reign Bible Institute. "I realized the real problem with substance abuse is the separation from man and his Creator. I'm blessed and passionate about what I do. I am saved from myself. It's not just happiness, but joy, which is beyond happiness," Zikovich said.

Testimony of Jason Zikovich was taken from a previous journalism assignment by a University student who asked Jason for an interview.

Profile Of A Servant Heart

Jeremiah 29: 11

“For I know the plans I have for you says The Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

Hello let me tell you a story about how God changed a ladies desires to His desires. God did not reveal his complete plan at once or she would have said, “I would never want to that.” He led her one small step at a time to do His will. It was much like following a trail of cookie crumbs.

The lady and her friends were cleaning the kitchen after her Church’s Wednesday evening meal. There was a lot of food left over and the Kitchen crew did not want it to go to waste. They decided a group of men at a place called Shiloh would enjoy it. While taking extra food to Shiloh over a period of time, the lady enjoyed everyone’s fellowship and felt God’s presence there. One day she heard there was a need for a GED Teacher. A thought popped into her mind, “I can do that.” and Shiloh had a GED Teacher. Teaching was a delightful experience because she was helping men who had a desire to learn, and she had a feeling of success when her students passed the test. She knew she was where God wanted her and this gave great contentment, joy, and peace.

Ok, by the way, the lady in the picture is me and my students. My name is Barbara with Michael on my right and Steven on my left. If you should visit Shiloh on a Thursday morning you will find us having a good time studying for the GED.

Barbara Page



Shiloh Ministries gives the LORD honor and praise for lives that have been delivered from a life of drug addiction. We celebrate Kingdom Life here at Shiloh. All of our supporters make a tremendous contribution towards lives that forever are destined for eternity with God. We ask and encourage everyone to give financially to help with the cost of restoring lives. The LORDS Ministry at Shiloh is free to the men who seek restoration. It is a walk of faith for our financial needs to be met every month. Would you please consider being a monthly supporter? God always speaks to those He has asked to give. We believe that His people will respond out of a heart of gratitude for what He has done & continues to do for them. Thank you, for your generosity in giving & co-laboring with us in the LORDS Ministry at Shiloh. (Shiloh Ministries is recognized by the IRS as a 501C3 Charitable Organization)

Prayer needs: Can goods & meat (hamburger, chicken & pork) for meal preparations.

CONTACT US AT:

Shiloh Ministries

P.O. Box 10226

Liberty, TX 77575

Phone: 936.334.8616

Fax 936.334.0061

E-mail: shilohmin@sbcglobal.net

Info. about us & to give financially on line, our web address is:

www.shilohmensministries.com



**Rocky & Debbie Fondren
Founders & Pastor’s of Shiloh Ministries**