## How Does One Find Peace and Hope in a World of Conflict

When I walked into Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen in downtown Houston for the first time, I was completely unprepared for what I would see and hear. In an effort to complete my service hours, I decided to venture to Loaves and Fishes because I was sure it would be a challenging assignment. I knew that Loaves and Fishes served over three hundred homeless men and women a hot meal daily, buy I had no idea how erim the situation was in actuality.

Billy Shepherd, the proprietor of the soup kitchen, literally lives in the midst of conflict. He lives upstairs from the dining area with women who have been battered, beaten, and raped. When they have no one else to turn to, Billy takes them in, feeds them, and arranges for medical appointments for them. In addition, every day, he wakes up much too early to cook a meal for men and women who have fallen victim to alcohol, drugs, poverty, prostitution, and mental and physical disease. Compared to most people today, Billy's life is much more difficult, and he struggles daily in the midst of his own problems and the troubles that more than three hundred bring to his doorstep. And these are not trifles - these people are truly suffering, and wrapping my head around this took several minutes.

Despite his situation, Billy is one of the kindest, most laid-back men I have ever met. Considering that his pantry is almost always empty and he must rely on completely random donations to prepare meals, one might expect him to be nervous, lonely, and miserable. So many men and women literally have nothing but the meal they get at Loaves and Fishes, and I was sure that Billy felt the weight of this tremendous onus on his tired shoulders. But Billy has one thing that many do not - his faith in God. When I talked with Billy and asked him how he could deal with all of his problems, he told me something that changed the way I thought about life. He showed me how to find peace and hope amidst the many conflicts that trouble every human being. "God will provide, Colin, and I trust that He will take care of me and the folks that come in here."

Billy finds his peace and hope by trusting that God will provide and help him to carry his burden. Talking with Billy taught me that if I learn to trust God with all of my troubles, I can always find peace at the off the day and hope when I rise in the moming. Whether it is a calculus test, a college application, or a grueling basketball game, I have learned to give it to God so that I may feel confident, calm, and hopeful in the face of daunting challenges.