

From Turning Tricks to God

Male street prostitutes are some of the most overlooked and  ignored people. It's hard to find statistics and research on them, let alone ministries that target them. But John Green says that's exactly why he has dedicated the last 20 years to these sexually broken men.

Emmaus Ministries, which Green founded, sends workers to the slums and back alleys in urban areas in search of men who are trapped in lives of prostitution, drugs, and sometimes mental and physical sickness. Green says the ministry workers aren't pushy, but instead allow the men to come to them.

"We try to have a pastoral presence, prayerful presence," Green says. "We're definitely open to talking and engaging with guys but we really let guys come to us."

About 75 percent of the male prostitutes that Green knows identify themselves as heterosexual, yet the majority of their clients are males. Male prostitutes often turn to drugs to numb the experience. This usually creates a deadly cycle as they continue to prostitute themselves to pay for their eventual drug addiction.

The Chicago-based Emmaus Ministries reaches out to men with both physical and spiritual solutions. Ministry workers intentionally build relationships with these men on the streets. During the day the men can come to their ministry center and receive a meal, shower, clothing and laundry services.

The center also provides prayer, discipleship and it helps men transition off the streets. Green says Emmaus is clear to the men about its biblically based position against homosexuality.

"We state very clearly to guys what we believe," Green says. "It's a very welcoming spirit and very welcoming one of

compassion and love.”

He warns the men who want help but don’t want Christ that  they are risking their lives.

“We’ll do our best to help you out of prostitution,” he says to them. “But you need to know that if you’re not going to base your recovery on Jesus Christ, you’re really at risk.”

Many of the men were sexually abused as children, and Green says he’s worked with men dying of AIDS and in and out of jail. But he has also seen God completely transform lives and has watched as some of these men recover, accept Christ, become leaders in their church and even get married.

“That’s what Emmaus is,” Green says. “This is sometimes the Lord’s last chance in reaching one of these guys.

“It’s been a joy to watch how the Lord has carved out lives coming out of such chaos.”