

The
Matthew 25:40
Project

Love God. Love Your Neighbor.

Why Don't They Get a Job?

By Mike Bencheck CEO Matthew 25:40 Project

You might see someone who is homeless standing on a corner “flying a sign” as it is called. While there are some “professional” panhandlers in the area, most people who are panhandling are trying to get enough money for something to eat, a motel room, a beer, or some other substance. They fly the sign for a while and either receive enough money or they get a ticket. Panhandling is illegal. Police give out tickets, \$100-\$300 fines, for panhandling. Of course the people holding the sign to get money don't pay these tickets so they turn into warrants. Then instead of getting a ticket for panhandling, people get a trip to jail, either the Garland Jail, or Dallas County Jail, depending on where the ticket was issued from. “Sitting out” the warrant is the time spent in jail until the fine has been paid by time rather than money. For most of these tickets a day or two in jail is all that is required and then the person is right back in the same situation they were before they went to jail.

Why not just get a job? Wouldn't it be easier? Wouldn't working every day be less stressful than dodging the police and relying on the kindness of others?

Many homeless people want to work. They want to have the dignity that going to work and getting a paycheck at the end of the week brings to you. There are several things that cause them to struggle though. They don't have an address. They don't have a phone. They can't fill out an application online. They don't have transportation. Most importantly they don't think they deserve a job. They have been turned down so many times, they just give up.

We can help them overcome other issues with computers, emergency housing, and bus passes. What we cannot overcome is the total lack of self-confidence that we see in many of our homeless friends. They need to be reminded that they are deserving of a place in this world. They need to be reminded how to show up to work on time and ready to work. They need somebody willing to give them some of their time to make them feel cared about. They need special people to come alongside them and walk a few steps with them.

Finding a homeless person a job requires employers who are willing to give someone a chance. They may be rough around the edges. They may not be able to clean their clothes every day. They need an employer who wants to help solve homelessness. They need an employer who is ready to look past their current state and see the potential in each person.