



Inspiring You to Live a Fantastic Life

KERYGMA

NO. 310 VOL. 27

MAY 2016



Philippines P100
 US \$8.14
 AUS \$8.14
 Euro 5.07
 UK 4.49
 CDN \$7.95
 SING \$9.42
 HK \$51.83
 RUPAH 103,000

ISSN 01170-7710

9 770117 771001

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THE POWER OF ONE: GOD

THE POWER OF SMALL THINGS

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Windang ka ba?

You know, 'yung feeling na hindi mo na alam ang gagawin mo sa buhay. Tanong nga ng isang kanta, do you know where you're going to?

Kung unli-questions na lang ang peg mo araw-araw, katulad ng...

“Bakit pa ako naging ako?”

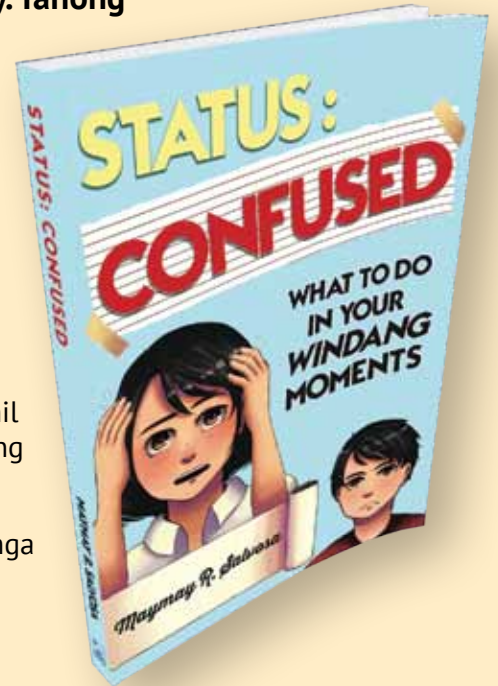
“Magshi-shift na ba ako ng course? Ng career?”

“Maghihintay ba ako, magho-hold on, maglelet-go?”

“Siya na ba talaga, Lord?”

Huwag ka nang mag-alala. It's time to say goodbye to your windang moments dahil ito na ang librong para sa'yo! Tutulungan ka nitong malaman kung ano nga ba ang dapat mong piliin.

Basahin mo ito at alamin kung paano nagwagi ang Patrona ng mga Windang sa mga katanungang ito. Kung kaya niya, kayang-kaya mo rin. Be windang no more!



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Magnificent Mornings

By Bo Sanchez

Every morning, I'm like a painter with a beautiful painting on my mind — and I want to bring it out into a canvas. My mornings are like an empty canvas. I would want that canvas to be as empty as possible.

Because mornings set the tone of the entire day.

Many people become so burdened the whole day that they feel lost on how to face their daily challenges. But I've learned one little secret that helps me overcome a long, stress-filled day. Want to know it?

Make your mornings magnificent.

Why? You need to rejuvenate yourself before your day begins. Here's my belief: You don't win the battle in the battlefield; you win the battle before the battle begins.

I know a lot of people who allow others to dirty their canvas. How? The first thing they do in the morning is to pick up the newspaper and read all the bad news that's happening in the world. Result? They expect bad news throughout the day.

Younger people do the same thing, but in digital form: Upon waking up, they pick up their phone to read their email and check on their FB. When you do that, you're allowing what others consider urgent to set the tone of your day. You're allowing others to dirty your empty canvas.


How can you paint what you want to paint if the canvas is already dirty? How can you do what you want to do if your mornings are filled with other people's agenda?

Jesus had magnificent mornings: "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mark 1:35).

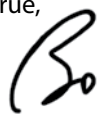
And we can experience it, too! Here's how to have a magnificent morning: List down the things that rejuvenate your spirit. That empower and energize you. Stack up all these activities in the morning.

Examples? Exercise. Prayer. Meditation. Journaling. Inspirational reading. Listening to Bo Sanchez's YouTube videos. (Ha, ha!) Healthy breakfast. Kissing your wife. Hugging your kids. Taking a walk around the village.

If you want to go to bed as a victor at night, start taking the little steps toward winning your life, day by day. It's the small things that make great changes, really.

My advice? Make your mornings magnificent. And see the amazing result unfold before your very eyes. 

May your dreams come true,




My heartfelt gratitude for inspiring me every now and then. I am a regular reader of *Kerygma*. This helped me a lot in dealing with life's puzzles and burdens. May God continue to enlighten and shower you with bundles of blessings.

Raymund D. Jandayan
Tagbilaran City, Bohol

I am a regular attendee in Feast Bay Area. I'd like to thank The Feast for the free *Kerygma* magazines that they distribute to attendees every month. It is a great tool for me to evangelize to my family in my own small way.

Thankfully, through the magazine, my husband and teenage daughter are now attending The Feast too.

May you continue to touch more people!

Rea Samson
Parañaque City

You don't know how grateful I am to your magazine. I was in a rut for many years – in a dead-end relationship – and through the teaching articles in *Kerygma*, I learned how to value myself and to believe that God has a better plan for my life.

Now I am free from my abusive boyfriend and looking forward to the day when I will meet my One True Love. In the meantime, I am continuing to deepen my relationship with God.

God bless and continue your mission!

Jean Jaylo
Makati City

This magazine is heaven-sent. I am overwhelmed at how it is so simple and yet so powerful in impacting people's lives.

Kudos to another 25 years!

Doris B.
Cebu City

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By Rissa Singson-Kawpeng

All You Have to Do Is Call

Because God never runs short on supplies

Mylene Paquette is a Canadian who attempted to be the first woman solo rower to cross the Atlantic. She left Halifax, Canada on her seven-meter-long rowboat on July 6, 2013. On Day 83, she was hit by a storm. She lost her satellite phone, anchor and other essential items she needed for two more months before she completed her odyssey. She wanted to quit. But instead she asked for help.

You can imagine her surprise when the Queen Mary 2, a luxury cruise ship, came to her rescue. The ship slowly circled around her rowboat until they dropped four watertight containers into the sea. They contained not just what she needed, but also fresh fruits and vegetables, bread, pastry, coffee and chocolates.

Forty-six days later, she arrived at the coast of Lorient, France.

This story is a great illustration of what happens to us when we seek God's help. Down and out, we think that the only thing left for us to do is to throw in the towel. To give up. To label our efforts as a failure.

But God's resources go beyond what we can conjure up on our own. This is how Ephesians 3:20 expressed it:

Now all glory to God, who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. (NLT)


We can't kick sin on our own. It's a monumental task. No matter how hard we try, it's just not in our power. For this we need God's saving grace that He made

available to us through Jesus Christ. When we accept Jesus into our lives, it's like having the resources of a Queen Mary available to a one-man rowboat!

And what did Paquette do to get what she needed? All it took was a call for help.

I never fully understood this until I attended a Life in the Spirit Seminar (LSS). I got into the habit of saying bad words as an adolescent. Every year during our school retreat, I would resolve to rid my vocabulary of cursing. But I would never last longer than two weeks.

Until I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the LSS. By unleashing God's power in me, I was able to sanitize not just my speech but my life. Things that were difficult for me to give up — like cheating, pride and rebellion — became easy to conquer by God's grace. And when I would feel powerless or at the end of my rope, I'd call on God and He'd never fail to deliver me.

God's resources can never be exhausted. I've learned that when I am in lack, it's not His fault but my failure to avail of the "glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Because oftentimes, all I have to do is ask. 

May He enlighten your innermost vision that you may know the great hope to which He has called you, the wealth of His glorious heritage to be distributed among the members of the Church, and the immeasurable scope of His power in us who believe. (Ephesians 1:17-19, NAB)

Email me at justbreatherissa@gmail.com or follow me on Facebook.

A SPECIAL SHOUT-OUT:

Last New Year's Day, the Lord gave me a powerful impression that we should **start raising funds for a permanent home for Jeremiah Foundation (JF)**, where I serve as chairman of the board. JF is one of the mercy ministries of the Light of Jesus Family, which is **a home for sexually abused girls aged 18 and below.**

Currently, our 15 girls stay in a rented house in Pasig, but it easily floods at the slightest of rains. Will you join me in **dreaming for a safe home** for them? **For donations, you may deposit to Jeremiah 33:6-7 Foundation**, BDO account number 3970-1332-40.



MASAKIT BA MAGHINTAY?

Naranasan mo na bang maghintay? Ang hirap 'no? Waiting hurts!

Kailan ba talaga ang tamang panahon? Bakit ba natin kailangang maghintay?

Sabi ni Lord, "He has made everything beautiful in His time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). May saysay ang bawat paghihintay sa buhay natin. Waiting makes us better people and prepares us to be the best version of ourselves.

Dapat dumaan tayo sa proseso. May mga kailangan kang pagdaanan bago ka makarating sa tamang panahon. Ang mga taong nagmamadali, kadalasa'y nagkakamali. Matuto tayong maghintay. Beautiful things take time.

Kung naiinip ka na, kalma ka lang, friend! Darating din ang biyaya, tagumpay at pag-asa.

Anong dapat mong gawin habang naghihintay ka? Ito ang tamang panahon para magmahal. Tamang panahon din para maglaan ka ng oras para sa mga importanteng bagay sa buhay mo tulad ng pamilya, mga kaibigan at mga pangarap.

Isa na namang masayang karanasan ang pagbabasa sa aklat na ito na kapupulutan ng aral ng mga taong maraming hugot sa buhay. Read while waiting (huwag lang habang tumatawid) at matutunan mo ang mga mahahalagang bagay tulad ng:

- The Art of Letting Go
- Lab U (Loving Myself)
- Ang Mga Gusto ng Babae at Lalaki
- Mga Bukas na Liham sa mga Taong Maraming #Hugot
- #Hugot from A-Z!

Dreams do come true, in God's time! Basahin mo ito para makalma ka while you wait. **Ang bawat paghihintay ay may saysay.**



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About Our Cover Model

Standing 4'9", our cover model proves that great things come in small packages. When Erilou Marisse P. Tabanda, or Lulu, stepped in the photoshoot set, her radiant smile and charm illuminated the room. Blessed with beauty, brains and heart, she works as an Accounts Associate in Philippine Airlines and serves as one of the youth heads and worship leaders of The Feast Manila.

Discover more of God's awesome works in and through her on pages 39-40.



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1

“Do not forget that the greatest legacy that you can give to your children is faith.”

2

“God offers a special, exclusive, privileged relationship of love.”

3

“The mercy of God, who acts in baptism, is stronger than our divisions.”

7

“When Christians of different Churches listen together to the Word of God and seek to put it into practice, they take important steps toward unity.”

8

“Experiencing mercy renders us missionaries of mercy, and to be missionaries allows us to grow ever more in the mercy of God.”

9

“The concrete sign that we have truly encountered Jesus is the joy that we show in communicating it to others.”

1 3

“The Lord continually offers us His pardon and helps us to accept it and to be aware of our wrongdoing so as to free us of it. For God wants not our condemnation, but our salvation.”

1 4

“Every word of the prophets is a passionate appeal full of love which seeks our conversion.”

1 5

“God wanted to save Pilate as well as Judas, everyone! He, the Lord of Mercy, wants to save everyone. The difficulty is in allowing Him to enter our hearts.”

1 9

“The Lord, who has been so generous, will not fail in His promise. But we have to ask Him for it. We have to knock at the door of His heart.”

2 0

“Mercy cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of the oppressed, to the cry of those who are subjected to violence, reduced to slavery, condemned to death.”

2 1

“Let us never tire of feeling in need of His forgiveness. For when we are weak, being close to Him strengthens us and enables us to live the faith with greater joy.”

2 5

“God’s mercy always operates to save.”

2 6

“Let us open our heart in order to reach everyone with the works of mercy, to work the merciful legacy that God the Father showed toward us.”

2 7

“To the extent that we accept the grace of mercy, we become ever more fully the people of God.”

4

“The vocation to be an apostle is founded not on the human merits of Paul, who considers himself “unfit” and “unworthy,” but on the infinite goodness of God, who chose him and entrusted the ministry to him.”

5

“The mission of the entire people of God is to declare the wonderful deeds of the Lord, first among them the Paschal Mystery of Christ, through which we have all moved out of the darkness of sin and death into the splendour of his life, new and eternal” (cf. 1 Peter 2:10).

6

“Hope is only in the Lord. Money will never give it to you.”

1 0

“Like St. Paul, and like the faithful to whom St. Peter writes, we too cannot but proclaim the same merciful love that has conquered and transformed us.”

1 1

“There cannot be an authentic search for Christian unity without trusting fully in the Father’s mercy.”

1 2

“It is the very mercy of God that brings true justice to fulfillment.”

1 6

“To encounter Jesus is to experience His love.”

1 7

“His is the heart of a Father who does not treat us according to our sins nor repay us according to our faults, as the Psalm says.”

1 8

“Dear sick people, offer up your cross every day for the conversion of those far from the light of Christ.”

2 2

“His love transforms us and makes us able to transmit to others the power it gives.”

2 3

“We are all ‘Christophers.’ What does that mean? ‘Bearers of Christ.’”

2 4

“The mercy that we receive from the Father is not given as a private consolation, but makes us instruments that others too might receive the same gift.”

2 8

“Mary, Mother of Jesus, help us to share the wonders of the Lord with all whom we meet on the way.”

2 9

“In today’s society, in which forgiveness is so rare, mercy is ever more important.”

3 0

“If you drop the bomb of gossip in your community, this is not closeness: this is waging war! This is distancing yourself, this is creating distance.”

3 1

“I believe that in order to fight the temptation to lose hope, we have to pray more. And pray tirelessly.”



MAKE YOUR MAMA SMILE

Mothers are heaven's gift. Here are some ways to pamper them this mothers' month:

- **Raise the white flag.** Surprise her by being extra-understanding to your siblings. No war on Mothers' Day, please. And if you can extend it – it will also be a bonus if you and your siblings clean the house together for her. What a lovely day it would be!
- **Treat her out.** Movie? Spa? Bring her out to a relaxing treat and enjoy your quality time together.
- **Three words.** When was the last time that you said these words to her: "Thank you," "sorry," and "I love you"? Let her know how much she means to you. She may have been imperfect, but life would lose meaning without her.
- **Chat her up.** While some of us still enjoy the presence of our mother, there are many others who have no more mother to chat with. So make the most of your time with her.

In whatever way you can, reach out to the most important woman of your life today. And make her smile.

Source: <http://lifestyle.allwomenstalk.com>



Quick Health Tip

Chamomile is a daisy-like herb commonly used to treat sleeping disorders and digestive problems. A modern study shows that chamomile can also be taken to reduce anxiety and menstrual cramps. Traditionally, chamomile is mixed with other herbs to cure indigestion, diarrhea and irritable bowel syndrome. Chamomile tea can also treat gingivitis and mouth sores.

Source: <http://www.medicalhealthguide.com>



MORE ISLANDS, MORE FUN IN THE PHILIPPINES!

7,107. That's the number of islands that make up the Philippine archipelago, as we've been taught in school since we were kids. But in the latest discovery of National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), there are 400 new islands in the Philippines, which are mostly found in Mindanao. NAMRIA is DENR's central mapping agency, depository and distribution site.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Ramon Paje confirmed the report during the Philippine Environment Summit held in the first quarter of 2016. According to Jose Cabanayan Jr., deputy administrator of NAMRIA, that before a landmass will be considered an island, it should be above sea level and high tide and where plants and animals can survive. NAMRIA verified the study through the use of Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar (IFSAR) technology.

Currently, almost 2,000 of our islands are occupied. Luzon, the largest island in the country, ranks as the 15th biggest and fourth most populated island in the world.

Source: <http://www.mb.com.ph>

WYD 2016 ON THE ROLL



Three years after being launched as the host, Krakow, Poland, the birth place of St. John Paul II, is now in full steam for the 14th World Youth Day (WYD) beginning on July 26 to 31, 2016. Included in the preparations are improved transportation such as road and rail links, a new airport, and a convoy of "dream buses" which will go around Europe to broadcast the celebration.

With the theme, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy" (Matthew 5:7), WYD 2016 organizers will arrange a "reconciliation zone" with hundreds of confessionals. Pope Francis will also lead a televised Way of the Cross procession,

to be followed by a prayer vigil focusing on youth issues, then a concluding Mass. Sixteen archdioceses and 28 dioceses of Poland committed to accommodate foreign visitors. WYD spokesman Father Tomasz Kijowski projected that WYD would give an "activating effect" to Polish youth. He said, "The young have been leaving the church here – we need some shock, some impulse, to halt and reverse this trend."

St. John Paul II, WYD founder, lived in Krakow for four decades before he became a well-loved pope in the Catholic Church.

Source: <http://www.cbcpnews.com>



Saints-at-a-Glance

St. Pachomius

Feast Day: May 9 | Birth: 292 | Death: 348

Born in Egypt, St. Pachomius was enlisted in the Emperor's Army against his will when he was 20 years old. He converted when he experienced the compassion and kindness of Christians to the soldiers. After his baptism, he became a disciple of a hermit named Palemon and lived in simplicity and holiness. Eventually, he established a monastery where hundreds of monks joined him in community living. Before he died, there were already 7,000 monks in his houses. He organized the monastery living and created a Rule which became the premise of the works of St. Benedict and St. Basil. He is known as the founder of Christian cenobitic monasticism.

<http://www.catholic.org>

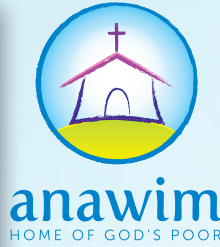


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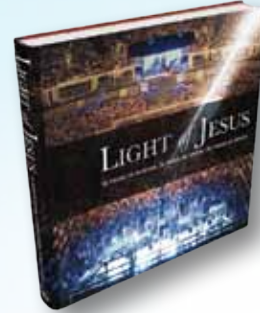
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MARIAN PILGRIMAGE



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4. See posters and print ads for details.
5. Deadline for submission of entries is on December 29, 2016, 5:00 p.m.
6. Raffle draw for the *Kerygma* Conference VIP Tickets is on October 14, 2016 4 p.m. and the raffle draw for the Marian Pilgrimage is on January 12, 2017, 4 p.m.

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26th Anniversary Raffle Promo MARIAN PILGRIMAGE



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Grand Prize: 1 Winner of Marian Pilgrimage

1. All Silver KMP, Gold KMP, and Platinum KMP subscribers qualify for the Marian Pilgrimage raffle draw.
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 - b. Gold KMP- P5,500.00
 - c. Platinum KMP- P10,000.00
2. Entries received from March 1, 2016 until December 29, 2016 qualify for the Draw. Grand draw will be on January 12, 2017 at the Shepherd's Voice Publications' office, 60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City, 4:00 p.m.
3. Marian Pilgrimage Prize inclusions: Round trip Airfare, hotel accommodation for 15 days and 14 nights with breakfast, airport transfers, tour in Fatima, Lourdes and Rome, exclusive of travel tax. Airport transfer is from NAIA Manila to Lisbon Airport.

Minor Prize: 1 Winner of Five (5) Kerygma Conference VIP Tickets

1. All regular one-year subscribers qualify for the Five (5) Kerygma Conference VIP Tickets. (Regular 1-Year: P800.00)
2. Entries received from March 1, 2016 to September 30, 2016 qualify for the Draw of Five (5) Kerygma Conference VIP Tickets. Draw on October 14, 2016 at 60 Chicago St. Cubao Quezon City, 4:00 p.m.
3. Prize inclusions: Five (5) Kerygma Conference VIP Tickets reserved seating in all classes and plenary talks, plus a limited edition Kerygma Conference T-shirt.
4. Kerygma Conference 2016 is on November 17-20, 2016 at the SMX Convention Center.

Guidelines:

1. Lucky winner will be drawn. A participant can only win once.
2. A notification letter will be sent via registered mail for confirmation. Instructions on where to claim the prizes will be detailed in the letter.
3. The winner of the trip to Marian Pilgrimage and his/her companion will secure their own passport.



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HOME OF GOD'S POOR



4. Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash.
5. The winner of the trip to Marian Pilgrimage shall shoulder all the taxes and documentations related to the trip, and the 20 percent tax for prizes exceeding P10,000.
6. Validity of international trips is within six months from claiming date.
7. The winner of the Five (5) Kerygma Conference VIP Tickets will shoulder 20 percent tax, if exceeding P10,000.
8. Prizes must be claimed within 60 days from receipt of notification.
9. Unclaimed prizes will be forfeited in favor of SVP with prior DTI approval.
 - a. Winners shall claim their prizes at the Shepherd's Voice office at 60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City. Winners must present the notification letter, official receipt of subscription, claim stub with control number and valid ID with photo (e.g., driver's license, Company ID or passport).
 - b. Winners may send a representative on their behalf provided they present letter of authorization from the winner, proper identification/any valid ID with photo (e.g. driver's license, company ID or passport), letter sent by SVP, and official receipt of subscription payment and claim stub with control number.
10. The promo organizer's decision is final with the concurrence of DTI representative.
11. All SVP employees are not eligible to join the raffle promo including their relatives up to the 3rd degree of consanguinity or affinity.
12. There will be a DTI representative to witness the draws on October 14, 2016 and January 12, 2017.

Per DTI FTEBSPD Permit No. 2807, Series of 2016.

THERE'S MORE! Kerygma Mission Partner Mercy Package

1. Platinum Kerygma Mission Partners (with donation of P10,000.00 and above) are automatically entitled to Kerygma Mission Partner Mercy Package.
2. KMP Mercy Package includes a Kerygma Books package worth P500.00, The Light of Jesus Coffee Table Book, a sponsored visit to Anawim (Home for the Abandoned Elderly), with transportation and a gift package to the Anawim resident.
3. The sponsored visit to Anawim will be scheduled within 60 days upon receiving the cash donation.

HOLY DOORS OF MERCY: A JOURNEY TO CONVERSION

By Maymay R. Salvosa

Since the 15th century, passing through a *porta sancta* or holy door has been a tradition for many penitents. It marks one's journey from a sinful life to a grace-filled conversion. But the change of heart completely happens when we realize that there's more to the holy door than just the physical threshold that we go through — Jesus is the door. As Pope Francis remarked, "There is only one way that opens wide the entrance into the life of communion with God: This is Jesus, the one and absolute way to salvation. To Him alone can the words of the Psalmist be applied in full truth: 'This is the door of the Lord where the just may enter' (Psalm 118:20)."

Pope Francis declared the period of December 8, 2015, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, to November 20, 2016, Solemnity of Christ the King, as the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. Jubilee is an exceptional year for universal absolution of sins. This year is extraordinary because a Jubilee normally takes place every 25 years, the most recent one being the "Great Jubilee" in 2000. This year's theme focuses on mercy "so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father's action in our lives" (Pope Francis' *Misericordiae Vultus*).

We hope to enlighten our readers about the significance of this sacred tradition. Check out the following "Frequently Asked Questions" and be embraced by God's mercy at work:

How is the Holy Door chosen?

St. Peter's Basilica in Rome is the primary Holy Door of the Catholic Church. In addition, bishops all over the world can designate other basilicas, cathedrals and major places of worship to open a Holy Door. According to Pope Francis' *Misericordiae Vultus*, "In every local church, at the cathedral — the mother church of the faithful in any particular area — or, alternatively, at the co-cathedral or another church of special significance, a Door of Mercy will be opened for the duration of the Holy Year. At the discretion of the local ordinary, a similar door may be opened at any shrine frequented by large groups of pilgrims, since visits to these holy sites are so often grace-filled moments, as people discover a path to conversion."

What are the benefits of passing through the Holy Door?

When one enters the Holy Door and does the indulgence work and acts of mercy, he can obtain plenary indulgence. It also marks a journey to conversion. "By crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God's mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us" (*Misericordiae Vultus*).

What is Plenary Indulgence?

Indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven (Apostolic Penitentiary). Plenary indulgence refers to the full pardoning of all temporal (earthly) punishments for our sins. The sacrament of reconciliation (confession), on other hand, remits the eternal punishments of our sins. The plenary indulgence can be gained once a day.

Is it enough to just enter the door to be granted with Plenary Indulgence?


No. Before doing the indulgence conditions, one must be baptized, not excommunicated, and in the state of grace. The Apostolic Penitentiary states that plenary indulgence is granted to the penitents who “have the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin; have sacramentally confessed their sins; receive the Holy Eucharist (it is certainly better to receive it while participating in Holy Mass, but for the indulgence only Holy Communion is required); and pray for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff.”

Aside from the usual conditions and passing through the Holy Doors, Pope Francis calls out to the faithful to complete the Jubilee indulgence work with a profession of faith, a reflection on mercy, and doing spiritual and corporal acts of mercy. In his letter to Archbishop Rino Fisichella, Pope Francis remarked, “To experience and obtain the Indulgence, the faithful are called to make a brief pilgrimage to the Holy Door, open in every cathedral or in the churches designated by the Diocesan Bishop... Likewise, I dispose that the indulgence may be obtained in the shrines in which the Door of Mercy is open and in the churches which traditionally are identified as Jubilee churches. It is important that this moment be linked, first and foremost, to the sacrament of reconciliation and to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist with a reflection on mercy. It will be necessary to accompany these celebrations with the profession of faith and with prayer for me and for the intentions that I bear in my heart for the good of the Church and of the entire world...”

“I have asked the Church in this Jubilee Year to rediscover the richness encompassed by the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The experience of mercy, indeed, becomes visible in the witness of concrete signs as Jesus himself taught us. Each time that one of the faithful personally performs one or more of these actions, he or she shall surely obtain the Jubilee Indulgence.”

Should we complete the acts in just one day?

“It is appropriate, but not necessary, that the sacramental confession and especially Holy Communion and the prayer for the Pope’s intentions take place on the same day that the indulgence work is performed, but it is sufficient that these sacred rites and prayers be carried out within several days (about 20) before or after the indulgence act” (Apostolic Penitentiary).

We are given the divine privilege of embracing God’s mercy in this special period. May we not miss the chance to pray for us and for our departed loved ones in this year of extraordinary grace. 

Sources: www.vatican.va and <https://catholicpilgrimagesites.wordpress.com>

The Holy Door Pilgrimage Churches in the Philippines include, but are not limited to, the following:



- Antipolo Cathedral, Antipolo (above photo)
- San Sebastian Cathedral, Bacolod City
- Saints Peter and Paul Parish, Bantayan Island, Cebu City
- Archdiocesan Shrine of San Vicente Ferrer, Bogo City
- St. Augustine Metropolitan Cathedral, Cagayan de Oro City
- Santuario Eucaristico – Sacred Heart Parish, Cagayan de Oro City
- Archdiocesan Shrine of St. Catherine of Alexandria, Carcar City
- Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral, Cebu City
- Saint John the Evangelist Cathedral, Dagupan
- San Pedro Cathedral, Davao City
- Archdiocesan Shrine of St. Vincent Ferrer, Leganes, Iloilo
- Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, Iloilo City
- National Shrine of Our Lady of Candles, Iloilo City
- Parish Church of St Anne, Iloilo City
- St. William’s Cathedral, Laoag City
- National Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Makati City
- Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Malolos
- Archdiocesan Shrine of the Divine Mercy, Mandaluyong City
- Manila Cathedral Basilica, Manila
- Shrine of St Francis of Assisi, Meycauayan
- Divine Mercy Shrine, El Salvador, Misamis Oriental, Mindanao
- Our Lady of the Abandoned Church, Marikina
- Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Pagsanjan
- Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Church, Pasay City
- St. Joseph Parish, San Francisco, Camotes Island
- The Immaculate Conception Cathedral of Cubao, Quezon City
- Shrine Santuario de San Pedro Bautista Parish, Quezon City
- Santuario de San Cristobal, San Juan City
- San Pablo City Cathedral, San Pablo
- Shrine of Jesus in the Holy Sepulcher, San Pedro
- Sta. Rita de Cascia Parish Church, Sibalom
- Cathedral Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, Virac

They Laughed When I Said I'll Teach My Maids How To Invest In The Stock Market, Until They Heard How Much They Were Earning...

By Bo Sanchez



I preach to thousands every week.
I've written 30+ bestselling books.
I also speak every day on radio and TV to millions.
People think I'm pretty big.
So big that I meet only big people.
Well, I do meet big people.

I lead small groups for big leaders and businessmen. I call these small groups Caring Groups and Mastermind Group. In these groups, we share how to prosper our lives and our businesses.

But people don't know that I lead a very different kind of group at home.

Every other week, I lead a Caring Group consisting of my three helpers and my driver. Each week, we also share how to prosper our lives.

I have so much fun in our meetings, I'm able to help them in every aspect of their lives.

My driver is married. So I teach him how to strengthen his marriage and become a great father to his four kids.

My helpers are all single. So I coach them on how to relate with their boyfriends. (My other name is Dr. Love.) I teach them how to remain pure and discern guys.

Oh, we talk about everything under the sun. Their relationship with God. And yes, their personal finances.

And I taught my maids how to invest in the Stock Market. I taught them how to save and invest each month, and make their money grow.

People laughed at me when I told them about what I was doing. One critic said, "Bo, you're nuts. Just teach them to put their money in the bank. And I doubt they can even do that."

Well, they stopped laughing a long time ago.

Because today, one of my helpers has P631,526.77 in her Stock Market portfolio. My other maid — who I promoted to bookkeeper (that's another wonderful story) — has P841,533.91 in her Stock Market investment.

You can just imagine how this has impacted them. Many times, they would cry tears of joy, thanking me for how their lives have changed. For example, my driver knows where to get his college fund for his four kids. Teaching them how to invest for their future has changed the way they look at themselves. It has changed the way they look at their future.

Last week, I told them that if they keep doing what they've been doing, they will hit their first million in less than 2 years. (I'm looking forward to this day, because I can boast, "My maids and driver are millionaires.")

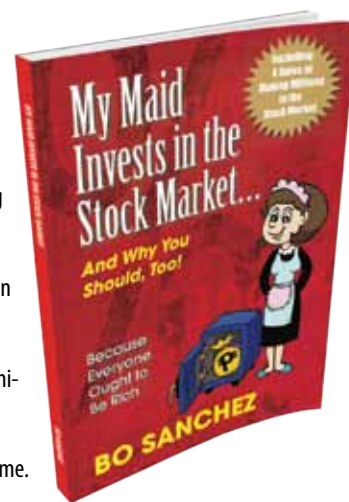
In my for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations, I have more than a hundred employees; I've taught all of them how to invest in the Stock Market. From Managers to messengers. All of them will be millionaires, too.

How did I do it? I taught them a very simple system which I want to teach you. I call it the Strategic Averaging Method or SAM. It's a semi-passive, automatic investing method that requires a little bit of guidance.

Please know that this is NOT a Get-Rich-Quick scheme. (Those things just make you poor.) In my system, you'll create your millions over time.

If you're interested, get my free eBook - My Maid Invests In The stock Market and Why You Should Too - in our website.

Go to www.TrulyRichClub.com now.



May your dreams come true,

Bo Sanchez
Bo Sanchez

P.S. Download it for free. It's at www.TrulyRichClub.com. You'll also watch an 11 minute video I prepared for you. See you there.

Go To www.TrulyRichClub.com Now!

HOW DO YOU HANDLE A PROUD SERVANT?

I head a ministry in our parish and I am having a hard time dealing with one of our volunteers. He doesn't want to serve whenever he's not the "star." He doesn't support any project that's initiated by other team members and complains whenever he's not chosen for a certain event. Many times, he would confirm for an undertaking but withdraw his service on the day itself, which leaves the handling team short of a servant.

We tried to talk to him several times already, but he remains proud and certain that he's the good guy. Should we still let him join the group or let him take a break for a while? We've been considering the latter, but he might think we're ganging up on him and become more rebellious in communicating with us.

What should we do?

Concerned Sister

Dear Concerned Sister,

Peace!

Yes, volunteers can be "lost sheep" themselves. They mean well but are still blind to character defects so that they serve with impure motives and their service does not facilitate teamwork. If your effort has been futile, you can, as the head of the ministry, bring your concern to the parish priest. His decision will be final.

For your part and the members of the team, you can serve as intercessors or prayer warriors for his change of attitude. There may be several opportunities in the parish for him to grow, like retreats and cell group sharing. Jesus loves him and He can find a way to break that pride and transform his efforts to serve the Lord from self-serving motives into authentic pure motives for Jesus.

Keep praying for him. I'll pray for him too.

Cristy

Cristy Galang has been serving San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish for many years, building Basic Ecclesial Communities in the parish and doing catechetical work. She is a licensed guidance counselor and a certified counseling psychologist. She was one of the pioneers of the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center. Email her at cristy_cc@yahoo.com.



Email your questions to editsvp@shepherdsvoice.com.ph. Or if you need to talk to someone, call (632) 726-4709 or 726-6728 to contact a Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center counselor. Pastoral counseling by telephone is 24 hours from Monday to Friday, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Face-to-face pastoral counseling is by appointment. For correspondence pastoral counseling, email lojcounseling@yahoo.com or go to www.kerygmfamily.com.

Or Call **(632) 725-9999**

Pregnant? Confused? Abortion is not the answer. Contact Grace to Be Born at 654-1377. You may also contact Pro-life Philippines at (632) 733-7027.

This book can save you from a lifetime of pain.

“Learn to love appropriately. You need to use your head and test your feelings so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush.” (Philippians 1:9-10, *The Message*)

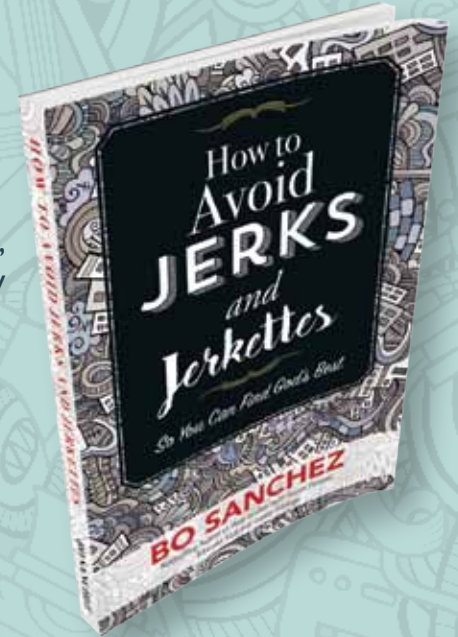
Your choice of a partner in life will give you happiness or misery. Do you want to know how to avoid a miserable life?

Warning: Some of the stuff you'll learn here will be tough. It won't be easy to swallow. But a little pain today is better than a lot of pain tomorrow.

Bestselling author and international speaker Bo Sanchez says that the most important way to save a marriage is BEFORE it starts. In this very practical book, he wants to teach singles (1) how to choose the right person to marry; and (2) how to be the right person.

How to Avoid Jerks and Jerkettes will teach you these crucial lessons:

- 8 Red Lights that tell you the person you are dating is a jerk
- The one thing that's more important than compatibility
- Find out if you're on the same page in values, vision and vehicle
- 6 Wrong Reasons to push through with the marriage
- 3 Steps to Attract the Right Person into your life
- 10 hard questions you need to ask yourself before saying “I do.”



Note: Married people need to read this too — so you can teach your kids! Save their marriage before it starts.

Friend, God loves you. He wants you to make the right decision in life. Read this book.



For orders, call 725-9999 local 101 to 108
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THE FEAST SM AURA IN THE HEART OF TAGUIG CITY'S FINANCIAL DISTRICT

By Gracious Romero



Feast Snapshots

In an effort to reach out to the busy families and the youth of the Bonifacio Global City, The Feast SM Aura was born.

The Feast SM Aura, which is under the Light of Jesus Family Mega Manila, Makati and Taguig District, Incorporated, started with Feast builder George Gabriel and was initially called The Feast BGC. The 5 p.m. Saturday gathering was first held in Mercato Centrale, then moved to the top shelf of Fully Booked for three to four years. Then on June 11, 2011, Randy Borromeo took over The Feast BGC as its builder, and later renamed it as The Feast SM Aura.

Randy admitted that it was not an easy decision to transfer from Fully Booked to SM Aura. It finally happened on February 7, 2015. He said, "It was a leap of faith. We knew we needed a bigger audience so the move was a carefully thought of plan as we initially wanted to close The Feast or transfer. Funds have always been a problem. But eventually we decided to give it a try and we have been growing slowly since then. The Lord has always provided funds for us. We're in a metro city here

in BGC and we felt that church was not originally a priority in this place, but we needed to tell the people that God is in this city."


Indeed, with the transfer to a bigger and more accessible venue, The Feast SM Aura attendees reached to more than 150 compared to the previous venue, in which they only had an average of 80 to 90 people.

Randy plans to strengthen The Feast SM Aura's ministries. They are currently working on their youth and kids ministries. They now have 60 servants and the number is growing. With this goal comes another plan to open another Feast session at BGC this year, probably on a Sunday, in order to reach about 10,000 Feast attendees per week. "But we don't just want to be a Feast per se. More than the number, we want to be an influence in Taguig. We want to be the top of mind when people are talking about church and faith," Randy pointed out.

As preparation to Bo Sanchez's long-term Feast vision of one million disciples, The Feast SM Aura also aims to have more Light Groups (LG).

Also the builder of Feast Makati

Legaspi and Feast Glorietta, Randy shared his strategy to achieve this goal. "We are doing something different. First, we have a dashboard or a 'governance team' of five people in charge of attendance and experience. Everyone who comes inside The Feast SM Aura should have a good Feast experience. Second, we have the 'new people's network' because we want to reach out to those who come for the first time and make sure that they come back. Then we encourage people to join Light Groups, to volunteer, and to start giving back to the Lord."

Randy also imparted words of encouragement to anyone who want to experience "heaven on earth." He said, "I'm excited about the potential of The Feast here. We want to be here for the long haul, we want to establish connections and better relationships with the people around BGC. We want people to know that there's a Feast here and there's a place where they can go to and feel loved and accepted. The Feast SM Aura is not an exclusive place for saints but a hospital for sinners," he added. 

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UNWANTED

FINDING MY PLACE, FINDING MY HOME

By Christian Eric Villaflor
as told to Maymay R.
Salvosa

allow me or else...”

The deep voice of my client echoed in the partially lit room where I worked as a part-time physical therapist. He pulled his gun and glared at me. He repeatedly asked me to do an “extra-service” for him which I firmly refused. Furious, he resorted to his gun and it startled me. I never thought of him as licentious.

I stared at his weapon and my life’s significant moments flashed before me. Sadly, none of those images reminded me of a happy memory. My life was miserable. I was miserable.

Pale and pained, I smiled at him. “Go ahead. Shoot me now.”

My customer pointed his gun directly at me. I braced myself to die. There's nothing else to live for anyway. I had always been abandoned, cast aside, abused. I was tired of living as the unwanted one.

I saw him move. I closed my eyes. So this was how my worthless life would end.

Lost in Our Own Home

I was the third child in a brood of four.

As a kid, I already felt unwelcome. Admittedly, our parents played favorites – the youngest was our dad's pet while my elder brother and sister were our mom's best-loved children. Once, I was locked myself inside the cabinet for some reason and my relatives thought I was already dead when I stopped crying. Fortunately, somebody came and brought me out.

I couldn't explain it, but there seemed to be an invisible wall between my parents and me, until a family friend told me that my mom tried to abort me. My parents were already fighting frequently back then and to have another child meant an additional burden. She hated my father so much that she didn't want another reason to relate with him. She took pills and jumped frantically to get rid of me. But I survived. And I understood – they didn't want me to exist, after all.

Soon our parents parted ways and both of them had a new relationship. Their separation and the treatment that I received from them painted the way I looked at myself. I concluded that I was someone whom people could easily give up and walk away from. I was a nobody. Subconsciously, it taught me that it's normal to just give up on the people you love.

The sister of my paternal grandmother took care of me and I thought I had found my safe place. I was wrong.

Almost Home, But Not Quite

Lola lavished me with love and attention. For the first time in my life, I felt that I was the favored one. Had I

known that it wouldn't last, I should have enjoyed my short-lived reverie more.

A neighbor, whose house was just a stone's throw away from ours, barged in one day and forced me to do sexual acts with him. I was in elementary then. I was afraid and helpless, thus his monstrosity prevailed.

He threatened to kill *Lola* and the rest of our relatives if I said anything to anyone.

The same thing happened when *Lola* invited a family friend to stay in her house. That person molested me repeatedly until the day he left, and I couldn't do anything to defend myself. Hopelessness dominated my spirit. Where else could I go when I was being trampled in the only place I considered my home?

I tried to brush off my hurt but the consequences of my repression showed in the way I dealt with other people. Through the years, I remained distant even to my classmates. I never brought and introduced a friend at home. I was funny and bubbly, but I couldn't establish genuine friendships. It's difficult for me to trust others. When I noticed that something's wrong with someone, I'd walk away. When I felt awkward, I'd walk away. When I got hurt, I'd walk away. Detaching from people became my default mechanism to save myself from further pain.

My strategy worked well, until I stepped in college and became a therapist. As I waited for my death to come, anticipating the gunshot anytime soon, I realized that 70 percent of my life was sorrowful, while the remaining 30 percent consisted of false happiness and absolute fear.

No gunshot was heard.

Instead, I felt his hand all over my body. My heart broke. My spirit crumbled. A tear escaped from my eyes. I'd rather be dead. It's happening all over again.

These series of molestations and my familial distress affected my romantic relationships.

Eric (center) serenades God with deep gratitude by being part of the Music Ministry.



I had two serious relationships. While it was easy for me to cut the strings that connected me to other people, I became too attached with my girlfriends to the point of living with them under the same roof without the sacrament of marriage. My traumatic experiences inhibited me from engaging with them sexually. I just yearned to belong. I just ached to be *home*. Even if I was cheated on again and again, I forgave them. I held on to my past girlfriends and remained blind until they let go.

Eric with his co-Feast Manila servants during the LOJ Discipleship Gathering 2016.





They did. And for the nth time in my life, I was left behind.

Discovering My Way Home

Thirty items. Blank.

It was the Nursing board exam and there I was, staring at my blank paper. The first 30 questions seemed foreign to me. It was depressing! I pushed my annoyance aside and focused on the remaining 70 questions. When the time was up, I submitted my paper to the



proctor and expected to fail.

To my surprise, I passed! It so happened that, around that time, a college acquaintance invited me to a Christian prayer meeting. Since I was so grateful with my success, I went. I enjoyed the music, the small group sharing and the faith experience. But since my *lola* is a devout Catholic, she asked me if I could just go to Mass instead. I agreed with her and out of my joy declared, "I'll be a regular church-goer from now on!"

But I didn't. I got busy with my career and fleeting relationships that I put God at the backseat again. I was fine with it. God to me was just God – a name of someone I know who exists but with whom I don't have any personal relationship.

In 2013, another friend invited me to another prayer gathering. Jervie insisted that it's a Catholic community called The Feast. I kept postponing and declining until one day, I couldn't say no anymore. It was Jervie's birthday and Princess, our common friend, persuaded me to surprise Jervie by attending The Feast Manila. I went – and my life was never the same again.

During the Holy Mass, the talk, and worship, a different kind of warmth embraced me. I felt safe, accepted and loved. My attention zeroed in on the words that Feast builder Obet Cabrillas was saying. Funny, but it was as if the whole Feast adjusted for me and everything that's going inside the cinema was orchestrated to fill my emptiness. Indescribable joy consumed me, but I was embarrassed to let my emotions show. So I kept my tears from falling, but my heart continued singing. Deep within me, a voice cheered in certainty, "This is home!"

Opening Doors

Indeed, I found home in God through The Feast Manila. To date, I only missed the Feast twice – one was due to an emergency and the other to serve at the Love Life Retreat.

Yes, that's how my life had

transformed. I realized that during the times when I felt left behind, Somebody stayed with me who never gave up on me regardless of how much I sinned. That when I was burdened by my own cross, Somebody strengthened me to endure all my pain. That during the times when I couldn't find my place in the world, Somebody was just waiting for me to come home. And He is God. He's real and He loves me.

Inspired by His love, I now serve as one of the council members of the Singles Missions and the Music Ministry. I belong to Light Groups and I am surrounded with loving people I can call my friends.


Through His grace, I am able to reach out to my parents and cross the gap between us. God healed our relationships, and we've never been happier. Today, I have frequent videoke bondings with my dad, and I have to stop him sometimes from boasting about my voice. We get together as a family too during special occasions. I now have four families – my father's, my mother's, my *lola*, and the Feast community. I have also completely forgiven the people who abused me, and it gave me genuine peace. I am free.

I am still in awe up to this point. In awe of how God restored my once worthless life to let me experience profound joy. In awe of how God restored my once broken life and maximized my abilities for His purpose. In awe of how God mended my once pathetic life and opened my eyes to His blessings.

It's amazing what surrendering to God can do. I love declaring it in Filipino, "*Sa Kanya ka lang pwedeng sumuko na ikaw pa ang mananalo*" (It is only to God that one can surrender and still win).

When I gave my life to God, I gained freedom.

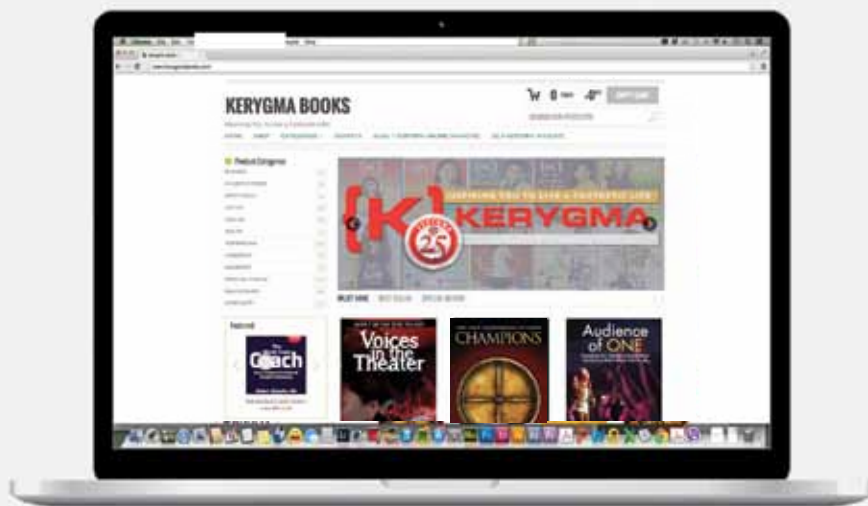
When I found Him, I found home.

This is my place. To God is where I belong. 

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Blessings,

Yo Martinez
Sales and Marketing Manager
Shepherd's Voice Publications



THE POWER OF SMALL THINGS

By Bo Sanchez

I do a lot of great and exciting things.

I preach before thousands of people every week in one of the largest and most prestigious convention centers in the Philippines.

I head the growing ministries of the Light of Jesus Family including Anawim (our home for the elderly), Shepherd's Voice Radio and TV Foundation, and Kerygma Family.

I publish four books a year, write 400 magazine articles and newsletter, and travel all over the world to share God's love.

I run personal businesses and lead several Light Groups. (In our spiritual community, Light Groups are small groups where you can just open yourself and experience Jesus in the other members.)

But above, my biggest responsibility is to be a loving and committed family man to my beautiful wife and to our two wonderful sons.

So how do I juggle all of these without sacrificing the quality of my excellence and relationships?
Simple. By being faithful to the small things.

Cleaning the Graffiti

In New York, the head of its subway system decided to do two seemingly small things: Clean the graffiti in the subways and arrest “turnstile jumpers.” (Every day, there were 170,000 people who didn’t pay their subway tickets.)

Some people criticized the authorities for picking on “minor crimes.” But they pressed on.

What happened? Over the years, they saw murderer, assaults, robberies, and other violent crimes go down dramatically.

And it all started by cleaning the graffiti on subways.

We can apply the same principle in our lives.

Many times, we are so consumed and overwhelmed by the big matters at hand that we forget the significance of the small stuffs.

When the subway department of New York channeled its energy to the manageable offenses, they are able to solve a towering problem. That’s the power of small things. By focusing on the pressing needs and priorities, we can achieve bigger victories.

And that’s my secret to my successes.

I consistently prepare (and practice!) for my talk in private before I speak in front of thousands.

I delegate tasks to my dependable friends and coordinate with them in running the ministries. You see, I’m not very much of an admin person, and I honor them for the love and energy that they give to expand our service.

Before and while doing an article, newsletter or book, I get distracted at some point. But I keep writing. I jot down whatever comes to my mind. I don’t pressure myself that I had to finish a book. I just write, until the words fall into place. Before I knew it, I’m already done.

And my relationships? Oh. I love attending to my Light Group meetings and one-on-ones. I am devoted to my weekly dates with my wife and my sons. And even on regular days, I spend quality time with them. I listen to them, play with them, eat meals with them. I believe that expressing your love is not a one-time big-time grand event. We don’t honor our parents only on their birthday. We don’t only treat out our kids whenever they accomplish something. We don’t only surprise our partners on Valentine’s Day. It’s the little things that we do (and not do) every day that matter. They can either build or destroy our road to our life goals. There will be no tall buildings without the bricks.

Reflect on your life right now. Are you bringing together quality bricks to establish strong future?

In God’s Eyes

But sometimes, even if we have good intentions, we still don’t experience true happiness. Why? Because we think we are the graffiti. We see ourselves as a mess. We consider ourselves insignificant.



I know the feeling. I was once an insecure and mediocre guy. A man who sees myself worthless because of my pornography addiction. A man who sees myself tiny compared to the greatness of other people – mentally, emotionally and spiritually. I felt small, filthy and good-for-nothing citizen of the earth.

But when I met God and experienced His love, my low self-worth was healed. I realize that I have a big God whose mercy can cover all my shame and sinfulness. He’s great and mighty and sovereign, but He pays attention even to a loser like me. When God embraces me, I am enveloped by a love that makes me rise above my negativity and weaknesses. His love saved me from drowning in the ocean of miserliness. And I am able to do great things beyond what I imagined because of God’s grace and mercy.

In God’s eyes, I am big. I am worthy. And I am capable of accomplishing tremendous works for His glory because He loves me.

As St. Paul said to the Ephesians, “God can do anything, you know – far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us” (Ephesians 3:20, The MSG).

God’s blessings and anointing unleash the power in “small” things. 📖

THE POWER OF LESS: EFFECTIVE TIPS TO SLAY OUR VICES



By Rissa Singson Kawpeng

My first book, *Confessions of an Impatient Bride*, is a compilation of articles I wrote for *Kerygma* magazine. My original title for it was *40 Things I Learned Before I Turned 40*. Thank God for Bo Sanchez, who commented that there could be a more attractive title. I ended up changing it and – surprise of all surprises – it became an instant bestseller!

Let me tell you a decision I had to consciously make when I chose my final title. Although the contents of my book weren't particularly addressed to women or to singles, I chose to limit my audience. As an author, I wanted to reach as many people as I could. But I knew that by being more specific with my audience, I would be able to reach them more effectively. By choosing to target less, I gained more readers.

In this world of more, more and more, we need to rediscover the power of less.

Less doesn't have to mean few. It can mean focused.

Less doesn't have to mean not so great. It can mean excellence because you don't have to think of many other concerns.

Less doesn't have to be reduced. It can mean redirected resources to where it matters most.

In this article, we will learn how to shave off vices and vanities in our lives that steal away our time for the things that really do matter.

Four Cs to Release the Power of Less

1. CHOOSE

You can't change *all* the bad habits in your life but for sure you can manage to change *one* thing. Be a laser and focus on one habit that you want to change.



A few years ago, I wanted to make regular exercise part of my lifestyle. I was already middle-aged (how did I get here?), unwelcome wrinkles beginning to show on my face and bulges making their grand appearances in all the wrong places. "To exercise regularly, three times a week" had been listed among the Seven Dreams in my *Novena to God's Love* booklet for some years already, but somehow, the other impossible items would be granted while this one would just graduate into the New Year and remain a fantasy.

Then one day I realized that it was a prayer God wouldn't grant unless I did something about it. No matter how many novenas I prayed, I couldn't stay in bed and hope that I'd get fit and reap the benefits of exercise. So I made a decision: *I will exercise*. I will not pray about it, write about it or read about it. It wasn't enough to be "sports-minded" – just thinking about it. I had to engage in it!

That choice was a small step that launched me into a lifestyle of exercise.

God spoke to His people in the Old Testament and said, "Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you

make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!" (Deuteronomy 30:19, NLT). When we make a decision – especially one that agrees with God's commandments – it's life-giving. Making the right decision gives birth to many other favorable conditions in our life.

Science proves how powerful decision making can be. A Cornell University study discovered that we make 35,000 remotely conscious decisions every day. (Two hundred twenty-five of these are just on what we will eat!) We do things without thinking deliberately because we've already developed habits that shape our actions.

So we make it easy to change our habits when we make a decision to do something in a particular way. Why? Because once we've chosen, we don't need to decide on the matter every time we're confronted with the same situation.

Confused? Let me explain this with an example.

Why is it easy for you to brush your teeth every day?

Unless you're a six-year-old like my daughter, you never forget to brush your teeth the minute you wake up. You don't have to be cajoled every day to take your toothbrush, put toothpaste on it and stick it in your mouth. You don't have to write down in your goals for 2016 that you will brush your teeth every morning. Why? Because long ago, your mom had already convinced you that normal, sane human beings brush their teeth the minute they wake up and before they sleep.

When you wake up each morning, you don't need to argue with yourself whether you'll brush your teeth today or not. You've made a decision long ago! It's a done deal. Because of that choice, you don't wear out your quota for resistance till you reach a point when you're at the end of your rope and you give in to the laziness of not brushing your teeth.

Sirach 22:16 supports this wisdom. "A tie-beam bonded into a building will not be dislodged by an earthquake; so too, a heart resolved after due reflection will not flinch at the critical moment."

2. COVER

After you've made a choice, you need to determine your cover. A cover is something you put over another thing to protect it or shield it. And that's exactly what you need



when you're trying to kick a vice.

People who've tried to quit smoking without a cover or substitute are bound to fail sooner or later. Why? Because nature abhors a vacuum. If you stop yourself from lighting up, you have to do something else than just chanting to yourself, "I won't smoke. I won't smoke. I won't smoke!" This will only wear out your resistance and you'll be back to your ciggies in no time.

Experts suggest you take a shower, exercise or listen to music whenever you feel the urge to smoke. An even more effective substitute would be praying or reading the Bible. Aside from distracting you, these spiritual exercises release a power beyond ourselves that will enable you to change your ways.

Titus 2:12 says that "God wants us to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures and to live good, God-fearing lives day after day" (TLB).

When I teach people how to finish reading the New Testament or even the entire Bible, I tell them to read three chapters before they check their Facebook. Most, if not all, people check their FB more than once a day. By using Bible reading as a substitute, they'll be able to finish reading the New Testament in three months or less, not to mention the intimacy and knowledge of Jesus that this exercise will bring about.

3. CHANGE

Sometimes what keep us from taking new action are our past failures. Decades ago, I started a restaurant business with some partners. It was only a 30-seater but we couldn't fill it unless we had an event. We could never reach our monthly breakeven point and had to shell out money constantly. Our restaurant didn't even last for two years. We bled our pockets dry till the day we closed our business.

Because of that singular experience, I've since professed that I'm bad at business. That I wasn't born to do it. That it wasn't a gift I received when God showered His favors upon His people. I turned my back on doing business and haven't looked back since.

Change Your Self-Talk

If I want to start a restaurant business again – and succeed – I would have to change



my self-talk. I can't keep telling myself that I wasn't born to do business. I would have to quit saying that I can't sell a hotcake. I would have to change the label I've given myself.

St. Paul gives us helpful advice when it comes to dealing with our failures: "Brothers, I, for my part, do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead..." (Philippians 3:13). By putting our failures behind us and taking a baby step forward one at a time, we're changing the course of our lives.

Another thing I would have to change if I want to succeed in this area are the images in my head. Instead of seeing an empty restaurant and recalling the gloom that came with shelling out money to pay for employees' salaries, I would have to imagine a busy eatery where customers line up for their turn to get in.

Change Your Triggers

If you want to change a behavior, you also have to avoid the triggers that lead you to acting that way.

When I wanted to make exercise a part of my lifestyle, I realized that when I woke up late, it would naturally lead to skipping my physical regimen that day. I simply didn't have

the time to do it anymore. So waking up early was my trigger to jump into my workout clothes and walk or bike to church for daily Mass, or swim after that.

What are the triggers that cause you to do what you do? Many people who binge will find that stress is a trigger that makes them yearn for sweets. For me, sitting down in front of my computer for long periods of time make me crave for junk food. I notice this especially when I work at the office. Not even two hours after lunch, I find myself rummaging the box of chips that our cooperative sells. I don't do this when I work from home because, one, we don't always have chips in our pantry. And two, I can stand up and do a chore instead of eating to have a break.

Identifying your trigger will empower you to avoid them or change them. If sitting in your couch in front of the TV will surely lead you to a whole day wasted in front of the idiot box, change your couch into an uncomfortable seat that you can tolerate for only an hour. Or turn on the timer of your TV so that it shuts down automatically after one show is done. If staying up late makes you eat midnight snacks, start sleeping earlier. If studying in your bedroom makes you sleepy and soon finds you

lying down on your bed, go to a café or your library to review. If hanging out with your friends always end up in getting you into trouble, avoid their company.

Change Your Environment

The Bible says, “Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything – and I do mean everything – connected with that old way of life has to go. It’s rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life – a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you” (Ephesians 4:22-24, *The Message*).

When I lived in our community center, it was easy for me to go to Mass daily, pray an hour in the morning, intercede another hour at night, attend Bible study on Mondays, go to a prayer meeting on Tuesdays, have sharing groups twice a week, and lead intercession gatherings on another day of the week. Prayer and service was what we lived and breathed in that environment.

I can imagine that if I had gotten into, say, a drug ring instead of a Christian community, I would be living, breathing and selling drugs.

You have to change your environment to change your habits.

4. COMPANY

Look at the people who surround you. According to motivational speaker Jim Rohn, “You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.”

Choose company that will motivate you towards your goals, not influence to veer away from them. A sure sign that a rehabbed druggie will fall back into his addiction is if he returns to his old friends who are still into the habit.

When I wanted to incorporate the exercise of swimming three times a week into my schedule, I knew I wouldn’t succeed if I started out on my own. So what did I do? I recruited three other friends who wanted to live a healthier lifestyle. I invited them to join me to swim at our clubhouse at



8 a.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. And because they were my guests, they wouldn’t be able to swim there without me.

That was enough motivation for me to get up in the morning, even if I overslept. There were people waiting for me!

It took only a couple of months for me to get into that regimen. Later on, my friends had gotten busy and dropped out one by one. But by then, I had already gotten the habit of swimming come rain, shine or typhoon. I no longer needed company to motivate me to exercise.


Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says, “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him – a threefold cord is not quickly broken.” Find a partner to help you reach your goal and you have greater chances of success.

How the Boy Defeated the Giant

There’s no one who illustrated the power of less better than David. Not a single man in Israel was brave enough to face Goliath except him. When he decided to go against the giant, King Saul suited him with an armor, gave

him a helmet and handed the youth his own sword. But David could hardly walk around with all that gear.

So he removed them and went to battle armed with nothing but five smooth stones in his pouch and a sling. Armed with less, David could move quickly to do what he did best. With a single shot, he slew a seasoned warrior.

By employing the power of less, we too can slay colossal vices that threaten to overrun our lives. And just like David, we can bravely say, “This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head” (1 Samuel 17:46). 



MEDIOCRE NO MORE

My mom trapped me —
and i thank her for that today

Interview with Chris Santiago
by Maymay R. Salvosa



T

wo hundred seventy campers. Eighteen Feasts. Three empowering and grace-filled days.

Whoa. Every leader would agree that heading a number of members is challenging already. And to pull off a three-day nationwide leadership camp is not an easy feat. Thanks to all the servants who readily dedicated their time, skills and hearts, ALAB Camp 2016 was a big success. Among them, one person oversaw the whole event, on top of organizing separate camps, activities, and one-to-one meetings for his youth group. That is Christopher David Santiago or Chris to his family and friends.

Chris co-heads The Feast Bay Area Youth Missions and also serves as one of the worship leaders of The Feast Manila. He works for an international IT company and is the eldest in his family. Chris admits that his responsibilities can be alarming sometimes, but he chooses to focus on what he needs to do and acts on it rather than be engulfed by his tasks. "I can very much relate with King David," Chris quipped. "Aside from the fact that my parents named me after him, I think I am able to conquer my Goliaths by living from my core."

Chris shares how he is able to overcome his mediocre self-image and the big expectations that he faces as a community leader, one step at a time:

Kerygma: Describe yourself before you became the Chris that you are now.

Chris: I've always been an average guy. As a student, I was contented to just pass. I didn't have big dreams. All I wanted was to finish my studies and work like the rest. I didn't have exceptional talents or skills. I was OK with what I had, who I was. I never exerted extra-effort in anything.

Kerygma: How did your relationship with God blossom? What inspired you to say yes to His call?

Chris: My mom started to invite me to the Light of Jesus youth camp when I was 12. I kept refusing because it seemed corny.

Until finally, one of my mom's plans worked. She paid for my camp fee first before telling me that I had to go. I was cornered. The following month, I found myself enjoying the Camp Calye experience.

But my enthusiasm lasted that summer only. God is a funny God, though. He still opened ways for me.

I signed in as an usher at The Feast as a school requirement. It was easy as pie. During the first Grand Easter Feast in SMX, I saw the dance ministers while I was giving away bulletins. Their joy was contagious. Next thing I knew, I was already attending the dance practice. My life had never been the same.

Kerygma: Did you have a hard time adjusting from being a simple camper to being a leader? How did you cope with it?

Chris: Definitely! I never saw myself as a servant, much more as a leader. I struggled with being vulnerable and open to my heads and group mates. I had to balance my responsibilities at school and in the ministry, and it was tough. I was not used to doing something bigger than myself. I wasn't used to giving more. I wasn't used to the attention.

I lacked the ability of becoming a great leader compared to others.

But what I lacked in ability, I compensated with determination. What I did then, I still do today. I keep asking. I keep learning. I don't let the gigantic expectations become my ball and chain. When I am asked to do something, I just say yes even if I don't understand a thing about the task. It feels pretty much like David's battle. All he knew back then was tending to his sheep, but God called him and the rest was history. I was just an expert years back on computer matters, but the Lord had other plans. God blessed me with an inquisitive and committed personality. He prepared me to serve long before I realized it. Accomplishing something great and eliminating something defective in our lives have one thing in common – both entail will and consistency.

Kerygma: Since you became a servant, what is the biggest change in your life?

Chris: I'm no longer shy! Seriously, I learned how to relate with other people in a deeper way.

I live in Tondo. I serve at The Feast in PICC (Philippine International Convention Center). And I see the difference of the youth from both areas. It hurts, and I want to reach out to the youth who need to experience love more.

Today, I strike up a conversation with my neighbors so I could really listen to

what they are going through. I invite them to play basketball until I can encourage them eventually to attend the Feast. Even if they don't, I am committed to be a friend and brother to them. I believe that what we do in the community is just a training ground on what we really have to do outside. We're meant to serve others!

Kerygma: Wow. You have big dreams for the youth. You have big roles now. Doesn't it get overwhelming? How do you deal with it?

Chris: It does. But I choose to focus. To get to our goals one day at a time, taking small steps.

In the youth missions, of course I wanted to love as many as I can, but it won't be healthy and sincere if I just go around engaging with people. I have a few people that I disciple and mentor. I focus on loving and teaching them, so they can do the same with others until the friendship goes around.

Chai (my co-head) and I delegate tasks to our trusted ministry members and look after them. We become more efficient and effective that way.

Personally, I developed more meaningful habits rather than waste my time browsing the Internet or playing computer games. I improve myself. I set aside time to learn.

I've got a plain story. But I realized one powerful truth in my journey – God is in the ordinary. As much as He is in the powerful transformation of some people, He is also in our simplest experiences. He makes every story His story. Victorious. Fruitful. Each one of us can be our own David.

I did it. You can, too. 



SMALL IS POWERFUL



By Kirby S. Llaban

Have you heard of Spud Webb?

Spud Webb is a 5'7"-tall NBA player who made it big in his career. He was the shortest person to win the NBA Slam Dunk Contest. Webb surprised the media and all the spectators at Dallas Reunion Arena with his slam jam exhibitions, including an elevator two-handed double pump dunk, an off-the-backboard one-handed jam, a 360-degree helicopter one-handed dunk, and a 180-degree reverse double-pump slam. The fans raised the roof when Webb perfected a spectacular reverse two-handed jam from a lob bounce off the floor.

Spud Webb didn't let his height hinder him from reaching heights. He's a small guy with big dreams; no less than a Slam Dunk Champion. Many of us see the small person within, instead of the champion. The *Power of Small* is in taking a second look at our "smallness" and turning it into an opportunity to make a great impact. What are your seeming "disadvantages"? How can you use them as your competitive advantage?

You have to believe in your God-given abilities. It's in you. Let's discover the power in the small – but very important – things.

Cutting into Bite-Size

The ability to “chop” your big goals into little easy-to-do tasks is the key to the *Power of Small*. It takes some planning to figure this out. A diagram might help:



The mindset is to “tear apart” the audacious goals into doable goals. If the sub-goal still seems big, break them down into smaller bite-size tasks. Well, you can’t swallow a 24-inch pizza whole; you’ve got to slice it up. You eat it piece by piece ‘til the whole pizza is history!

You have to put a deadline on each of the pieces. One achievement connects to another; make sure you do the right sequence of tasks.

Focus on One Small Problem at a Time

The ability to focus – to zoom in on a problem – gives high quality results. The passion to solve a problem is important.

Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, said: “Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun’s rays do not burn until brought to a focus.”

When nothing seems to get done – focus! When you are distracted by so many other problems, the tendency is to haphazardly solve the problem at hand. To focus is to put all your energy into solving a problem that is the root of other problems. If it’s a debt problem, then focus on getting to zero-debt as fast as you can. If it’s a relationship problem, then seek to resolve the issues and find reconciliation.

The Gift of One Day

We are all gifted with one day – 24 hours. Time can’t be recovered; every second that passes is gone forever. We all age by the second, and if we waste time, we waste life.

One day can accomplish many things, if you know how to maximize it. One day can change your life and the lives of many. “We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right,” Nelson Mandela said. Therefore, let us do what is right with the gift of time.

The *Power of Small* tells us to look at each day with rich potential. Planning your day *and following the plan* can motivate you to act with tremendous productivity. List down your priorities for the week, then distribute them to each day of the week. For every day, break down a priority into smaller tasks and distribute them to each of the hours.

Value the blessing of one day – it is priceless.

THREE GREAT PEOPLE WHO DEMONSTRATED THE POWER OF SMALL

Mother Teresa: Do Small Things with Great Love

Mother Teresa saw God – the Creator of all – in the poorest of people. She was there for the “small ones.” She shares, “We need to be pure of heart to see Jesus in the person of the poorest of the poor. Therefore, the more repugnant the work, or the more disfigured or deformed the image of God in the person, the greater will be our faith and loving devotion in seeking the face of Jesus, and lovingly ministering to him in the distressing disguise.”

To find Jesus in the poor, that’s the *Power of Small*. God is in the small, meek, and humble. We seek God in all sorts of places, especially where we are comfortable. Yet, Mother Teresa teaches us that the face of Jesus, our Savior, is in the least, last and the lost. Who are these people in your workplace?



@istock/annegeorg

Fidelity to Small Things

Holiness is a big word. But Mother Teresa shares her humble view: “Nothing can make me holy except the presence of God, and to me the presence of God is fidelity to small things. Fidelity to small things will lead you to Christ. Infidelity to small things will lead you to sin.”

I have three kids and I love playing with them. I lift them up in the air and hear them giggle. They love being with their papa. I relate this to Mother Teresa’s exhortation to her Sisters: “Unless you become like a child you cannot come to me.’ You are too big, too heavy; you cannot be lifted up. We need humility to acknowledge our sin. The knowledge of our sin helps us to rise.”

The acknowledgment of sinfulness is a challenge for many. Pride has a way of being stealthy. One cannot detect pride when he’s so full of it. Pride becomes him. Pride will drag you. It’s “big and heavy” and takes others along. Heavy with pride, one does not easily forgive. So big of himself, he will not stoop down in humility to restore a relationship.

Children, in their innocence, will easily forgive. I see this in my own kids when they are at play. There was one particular toy that they all want to get their hands on. Out of frustration, the youngest one got another toy and hammered it on his brother’s head! There was crying and chaos. But after the emotions subsided, the “sorries” easily came. In less than seven minutes, they were back at play as if nothing happened.

Pride destroys an organization; it breaks the home. The *Power of Small* is applied when we shrink our pride to inexistence. Like a child, we let our Father in heaven lift us up, but we have to lose the weight of our sinfulness. He delights in us.

Like Zacchaeus, who was physically small. He

had to climb a tree to see Jesus and he persevered.

In life, we strive hard and climb to our goals. For some, it is to climb the corporate ladder, others a social ladder, and there are those who climb the ladder of governance. If motivated by pride and selfish ambition, they climb for the wrong reasons. They are unlike Zacchaeus, because when they reach the top they do not see Jesus. When people achieve worldly success like the rich young man in Matthew 19:16-22, it is harder for them to detach themselves from their wealth. The temptation to preserve wealth than to preserve eternal life with God is strong. Acknowledge your “smallness” as you climb towards your goals. Do not lose your humility. It is a blessing to achieve wealth and influence only if we see Jesus there, and we use this view from the top to let others also see Christ.

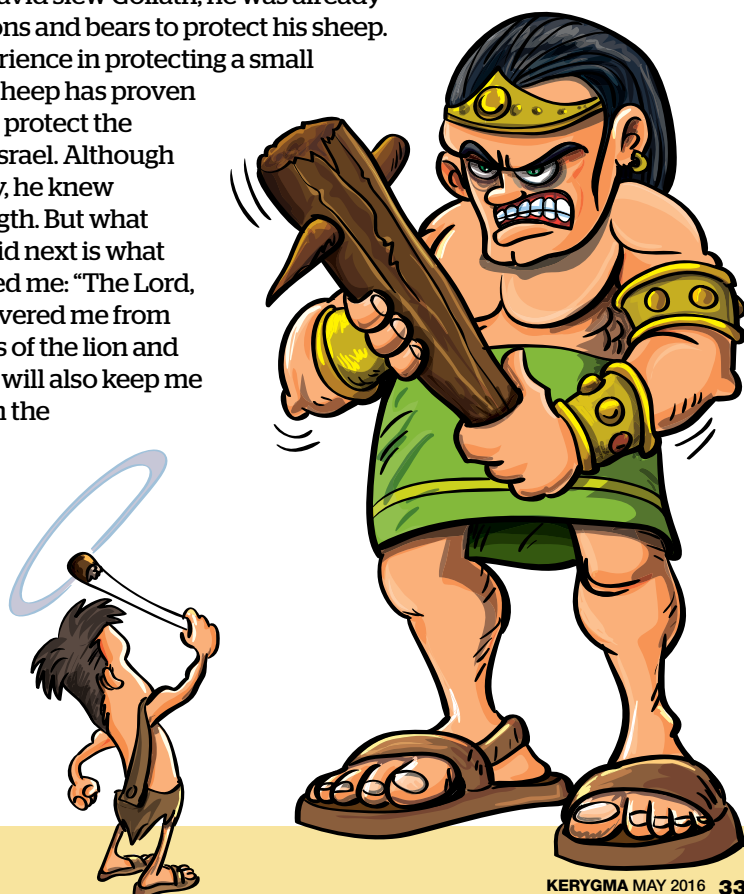
David: The Lowly Shepherd Boy Who Became King

David was a young shepherd boy who was chosen from among his “more qualified” brothers. In the words of the Prophet Samuel: “Are these all the sons you have?” Jesse replied, “There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep” (1 Samuel 16:11). David’s father, Jesse, did not even consider presenting David to Samuel.

The Lord tells Samuel: “Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). God sees our hearts. Beyond our appearance, it is the greatness in our hearts that matters. Like David, your organization or business may be young and not yet getting enough attention from the market. But with the right heart of its workers, it will soon unleash its true potential. The *Power of Small* is in seeing the heart of people and building up their potential. Do not be discouraged of the rudiments of a start-up or an experience of initial failure. These strengthen the heart.

From Defending Sheep to Defending Israel

Before David slew Goliath, he was already facing lions and bears to protect his sheep. His experience in protecting a small flock of sheep has proven useful to protect the flock of Israel. Although still a boy, he knew his strength. But what David said next is what impressed me: “The Lord, who delivered me from the claws of the lion and the bear, will also keep me safe from the clutches of this



Philistine” (1 Samuel 17:37). His confidence was in God, not in his experience. How was God able to deliver you in the past? How will you use this experience to slay the Goliath-sized problems that you now face?

Slingshot Versus Sword

The *Power of Small* is even seen in the choice of David’s weapon: the slingshot. He preferred it over a heavy armor and sword that King Saul offered to Him. He was more adept in it.

Poverty is a giant to slay, both at home and in society. The weapon of choice to conquer giant problems of finances is in our hands, through our talents and skills. The key is to be adept in our gifts. How are you harnessing your skills? Are you practicing with your God-given “slingshots”? No matter how small our talents are at first, it has the potential to win over any kind of giant.

Gideon: Victorious Leader of a Small Army

From least to leader, Gideon wasn’t so proud of his family, nor of himself. He even said to God, “Please, my Lord, how can I save Israel? My family is the meanest in Manasseh, and I am the most insignificant in my father’s house” (Judges 6: 15). So just imagine the level of self-esteem. But the Lord assured him: “I shall be with you” (v.16).

Does your family background affect your confidence? Do you feel insignificant? If so, then you can relate to Gideon’s story. The Lord assures you His presence and, like Gideon, He wants you to be His champion. You are called to champion Him in your workplace, in your own family, and in your service. From being the least, God transforms you to be a leader. The *Power of Small* is to admit the disadvantages of your own background and to make God your only advantage.

300 vs. Thousands

“The Lord said to Gideon, ‘You have too many soldiers with you for me to deliver Midian into their power, lest Israel vaunt itself against me and say, ‘My own power brought me the victory’” (Judges 7:2). Gideon’s army was trimmed from 32,000 men to 300. Gideon had so many enemies that

metaphors had to be used (instead of statistics)!

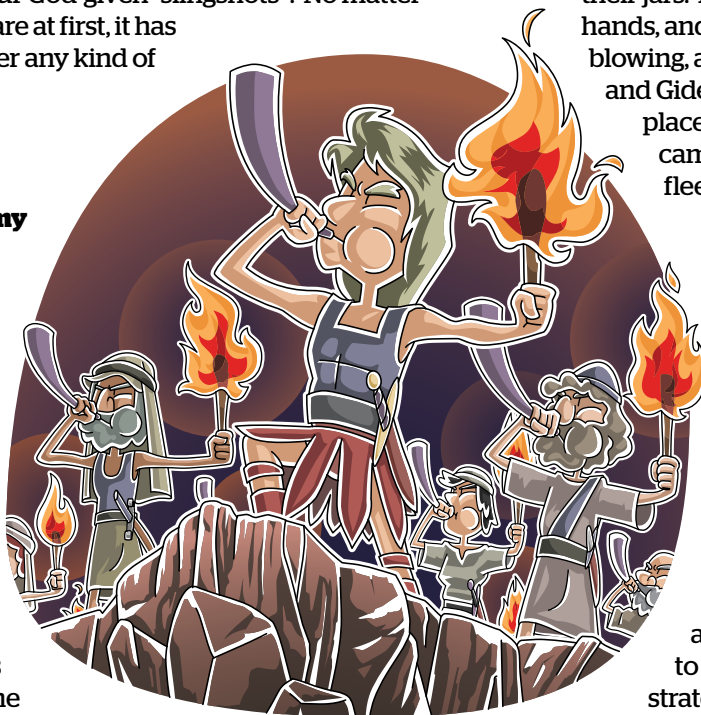
Are you faced with an overwhelming army of tasks? Are you in an impossible situation? Have people abandoned you in facing your problems? The *Power of Small* lies in taking courage and not being fettered by your unending “to-do” list. There is always a strategy, and you have to pray for it. It will come, and it will be amazing – just as the strategy that God showed Gideon.

Win with Strategy: Simple Resources Used with Superior Tactics

With trumpets, torches and jars, Gideon’s 300 won over their enemies:

“All three companies blew horns and broke their jars. They held the torches in their left hands, and in their right the horns they were blowing, and cried out, ‘A sword for the Lord and Gideon!’ They all remained standing in place around the camp, while the whole camp fell to running and shouting and fleeing” (Judges 7: 20-21).

In panic, the enemy tribes fought against themselves and many fled. It was God who showed the way and delivered them to the Israelites. This signifies that God will lead you to the right resources to conquer your problems, even if you may have limited funds to start a business or a few people who believe in your dream for the future. Let God teach you what to do through prayer. Be assured of inspiration. The *Power of Small* utilizes the scarce resources available and applies superior strategies to maximize them. Spend more time in strategizing rather than worrying. God will lead you to a breakthrough solution!



Why Small?

One of my favorite movies is *The Lord of the Rings* based on the book by J.R.R. Tolkien. The main character Frodo Baggins – a hobbit – happens to be the smallest of the heroes in the film. He had to carry the burden of destroying the One Ring of Power. That’s a big job for a small guy.

The empowerment of the small is what humanity needs today. No one is too small or too young, too old, or too poor, to make a difference. Leaders ought to see how every member of their organization – from janitors to executives – can contribute using each of their abilities. No matter how small their capacities are as of the moment, they can grow to greatness.

Small people, small things, small tasks – within these small ones is the potential to change the world.



“I will
have
my own
house...”



The story of a maid who
didn't give up on her
dreams

By Judith Concepcion

S

he was featured in Karen Davila's TV show *May Puhunan*. She was a guest at the Truly Rich Club's Wealth Summit 2013 and inspired those aspiring to be truly rich. Her stock market investment portfolio grew by leaps and bounds in a span of six years.

She's no other than Gina Macahilos – Bo Sanchez's maid and now his bookkeeper. She's the inspiration behind Bo's book, *My Maid Invests in the Stock Market... And Why You Should, Too!*

Never in her wildest dreams did Gina think she'd reach this far. Born and raised in Negros Oriental, the youngest among six siblings, Gina had only one simple dream: to get a college education. But when their family was evicted from the property where they had lived all their lives, her dream had to temporarily take a back seat.

The pain felt like arrows piercing her heart. But she was not the type who would mope in the corner. Young though she was then, she was ready to fight for her family's future: to lift them out of poverty and have a house they can call their own.



She didn't have the barest idea how her dream would come true. And she thought of only one solution: to work as a maid. She told her mother, *"Ma, kapag namasukan ako sa Maynila, mag-iipon ako. Bibili tayo ng lupa at pag may lupa na, magpapatayo ng bahay"* (Ma, when I work in Manila, I will save. We will buy a lot, and when we already have a lot, we will build our house.)

"There is no easy way from the earth to the stars," says Seneca. And this is what Gina's story is all about. Her "journey of a thousand miles" began when she took that first step... and then another... baby steps that led her closer to what she was aiming for.

College Education and More

As a valedictorian in high school, Gina could have grabbed the college scholarship offered by a foundation in their province. But she opted to work immediately so she could earn. She went back to the province after a year of working as a maid in a plush subdivision in Manila, but the offer already lapsed. So she returned to Manila. This time, she found herself at the home of the Sanchez family.

In less than two years as a maid, her employer, Bo Sanchez, entrusted to her the task of handling the books of Bo Sanchez, Inc. (BSI). Not computer literate and without background in basic accounting, encoding the transactions using a certain accounting system was a daunting task. Many

times she would say to herself, "I'd rather do the laundry and clean the house. That'd be easier to finish." She made mistakes along the way but learned a lot in the process. With the patient guidance and mentoring of Weng Cequeña, vice president for Corporate Services of Shepherd's Voice Publications (SVP), Gina learned the task one step at a time.

Heaven heard her constant prayer of finding a kind-hearted employer who could send her to college. Bo enrolled her in a Management course in CAP College's distance learning program. Juggling her time was a feat but she was able to manage it with flying colors. Daytime was reserved for household chores and taking care of Bo's kids. In the evening until the wee hours of the morning was for BSI and her studies. She finished her course after more than four years.

Her other dream – that of buying a property – finally came true in 2008. Gina borrowed money from Bo and used that as down payment for a small piece of land in the province. The balance she paid in monthly installments for the next two years. In 2014 the construction of the house started. As of this writing, the basic structure and a roof already exist. The partitions will follow. In time, her fully-furnished dream house – not anymore a nipa hut but a house made of stone – will be finished and will be enjoyed by her family.

Saving Up for Her Future

Savings was not in Gina's vocabulary back then. Every payday, she sent most of her salary to her family. Whatever was left, she spent for her personal needs.

Bo taught her and her fellow maids a simple system to save up for their future. She apportioned her salary into five different funds: a tithe fund for God's work; expense fund for her personal necessities; support fund for her family's needs; emergency fund, which she deposits in the bank and doesn't touch; and retirement fund, exclusively for her investments in COL Financial (an online stock brokerage firm).


Bo introduced her to the world of stock market investing. He painted a powerful vision of her future in her mind and she liked what she saw. With an initial investment of P15,000 in February 2010, her stock portfolio grew to over P800,000 – not because she had lots of money to spare but because of the discipline of setting aside a certain amount each month for her stock investment. And with a mentor like Bo, she knows that her investment is in good hands.

Gina never forgets to offer her first fruits to the Lord who has blessed her in so many ways. She started tithing a small amount and then increases it as she receives more financial blessings.

Being the only one in her family who finished college, she wanted her nieces and nephews to have that same privilege by sponsoring their schooling – but one at a time. One of her nieces graduated last year. Part of the tuition was sponsored by Pag-asa ng Pamilya Scholarship Foundation, Inc., a mercy ministry of the Light of Jesus Family. Gina shouldered the balance. Another niece is now a college freshman. Every payday, Gina sets aside money for her niece's tuition, which she now solely shoulders.

The proverb "from small beginnings come great things" rings loud and true in Gina's life. What seemed like a setback served as a springboard for her great comeback. Her unending patience and determination, sacrifices and unceasing prayers, her obedience to her mentor-angels, and her humble and teachable spirit brought her to where she is now.

Gina will be forever grateful to the Sanchezes for all the help they extended to her and for the trust they have given her.

Her journey is still far from over. Her next project after the house is to save up for business capital. As she continues to hang on to the saying, *"Habang may buhay, may pag-asa"* (While there's life, there is hope), she believes that all her dreams will see the light of day – one at a time. 

The Power of One: GOD'S EXPONENTIAL



By John Guevarra Cruz

*"I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase."
- 1 Corinthians 3:6*

Halo-halo is one of my favorite desserts, especially if it's topped with an extra scoop of ice cream. It might just be spoonful, but it makes the dessert more special and delectable than a regular *halo-halo*. You see, the difference between ordinary and extraordinary is the word "extra."

That's how I see God's power. Anything, like talent, skill or giftedness, that is anointed by God is capable of producing amazing results.

Want proof? Let's take a look at the following instances when God transformed usual things into exceptional instruments.

Moses parted the red sea with an ordinary staff (Exodus 14:21).

David killed Goliath with a little stone (1 Samuel 17:49).

Jesus healed a blind man with a mud (John 9:6).

Jesus fed five thousand people with just five loaves and two fishes (Mark 6:41).

Water Pump Principle

I love one of the stories from the Book of Kings.

The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves."

Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

"Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a small jar of olive oil."

Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side."

She left him and shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one."

But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing.

She went and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left." (2 Kings 4:1-7)

Here's what I learned from this story: Do what is possible, and let God do the impossible. The widow had only a small container of oil, but God, in His power, filled up many jars with that amount. The oil kept flowing until there was no more jar left to be filled. The widow obeyed up to the extent of her capacity, and God completed the miracle with His full capability.

The first time I saw a water pump, I didn't know how to use it. I pumped hard, but not a single drop flowed. Then my cousin came up to me and said, "Even if you break the handle with your strength, you won't be able to draw water from that pump. Here's the technique: Pour a small amount of water into it first, then pump. You'll see, water will come out."

I did as he said, and true enough, water flowed.

God's blessings pour down to us that way. Once we open ourselves and offer what we have, blessings come rushing in.

What Do You Have?

"Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a small jar of olive oil." - 2 Kings 4:2

God creates miracle out of our gifts. If you give Him your talents, He will maximize you until you become your best. If you give Him your treasure, He blesses you a hundredfold. The key that unlocks God's blessings is our generosity to give back to Him.

God's Generosity Can Never be Outdone

But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing. (2 Kings 4:6)

Sometimes the problem is not the capacity to give, but the capacity to receive. God's blessings overflow. In fact, that's our tagline at The Feast Malolos where I serve as a Feast builder. But the amount of the blessings you'll receive depends on how you open yourself and receive His graces.

God's blessings cease to flow when there's no longer space in our hearts for them. Especially when our hearts are too occupied with other things that we think we need more.

A Bigger God

When you feel that you're not good and adequate enough, remember these three qualities of God:

1. God cares.

"How can I help you?" (2 Kings 4:2)

God loves us, and He is ready to extend His hands to help us carry through. He assures us in Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

2. God provides.

"Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled..." (2 Kings 4:3)

God supplies more than what we need. As St. Paul declared, "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

3. God is a generous God.

"Don't ask for just a few..." (2 Kings 4:3)

God understands our doubts when we are hard-pressed by circumstances.

That's why He is quick to remind us that He came so we may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10).

Do What You Think Is Possible and Let God Do the Impossible

If you think about it, God could've just produced jars for the widowed woman through the prophet Elisha. It's one less task for the woman, right? But why did Elisha ask the woman to move and do something?

Simple. Because God wants us to be His co-miracle worker.

Let me close with another story.

Before I got married, I served for 15 years as a missionary. Together with a co-missionary, I rented a shanty built with plywood. A few steps away from our house was an empty lot.

One day, as I was praying, I heard a knock on the door. I opened it and saw a masculine but grubby man – bigger than me – begging for food.

I searched for my wallet and pulled out a P50 bill. But before I handed it over to the man, I asked him to remove the weeds that were growing at the empty lot. He hesitated but after a few minutes, started plucking out the unwanted grass. Halfway through his work, I stopped him, gave him the money, and said to him, "This money is not an almsgiving. This is compensation for what you have done."

God, in His majesty, can perform all things without our help. But He granted us the honor and potential to be His co-miracle worker here on Earth. Our sinfulness conceals the inner kindness that's within us. That's why we feel small. That's why we feel unworthy.

But God sees through our dirt. He sees our "bigness" – the muscles of kindness, compassion and greatness that He planted in us. He wants us to realize the power that lies within us.

God wants us to recognize that there's a bounteous power at work in us.

And that's Him – great as He is, no one is ever too small for our big, loving God. 



Like a Mustard Seed

Growing in Grace

By Erilou Marisse P. Tabanda
As told to Maymay R. Salvosa

In notebooks, check. Pointers to review, check. Highlighters, check. Books – oops! Mom put them back on the shelf.

Taking a deep breath, I sat down, straightened my body, and reached out for my books – all 4’9” of me. I couldn’t get them. I tried some more but I lost my balance. The books fell on me and I cried in desperation.

It was a big deal for me. I felt so incapable of doing many things because of my height. Fortunately, God sees me in a different way. But it took me a long time to see how big I am in His eyes.

The Smallest Seed

“I’ll get back to you! Once I grow taller, you cannot make fun of me anymore!”

This was my battlecry since I started studying. I used to think that I was a star of some sort because I was always the first in the line. Eventually, I noticed that something was wrong. While my closest friends were together at the back, I was on my own. Many times, they would laugh while looking at me. I felt so offended.

One day, a classmate who was a lot bigger than me forced me to give him my favorite biscuit. I fought with him and he threw his water jug at me. I was taken aback. I was too furious, hurt and humiliated to say a word. I vowed that no one would look down on me again.

In my quest for revenge, I joined the drum and lyre group, the dance troupe and drama guild because of two things: 1) I am an only child and I sought for attention; and 2) to prove that I was more than my height. I kept on waiting for the day that I would grow to show the world what I could become. Since my friends were all achievers – one a beauty contest representative, another an academic whiz, and still another one a school leader – I worked hard to shine my light. I defined my worth with what I did, but nothing happened. Instead, my insecurity heightened as days and years passed and I concealed it with pride.

My pride pushed me to pursue Accountancy even though I really wanted to be a preschool teacher or a broadcast journalist. I wanted to avoid sarcastic comments like “the students won’t be able to see you” or “you can’t be seen on the camera.” I strove to finish and excel in a course that I least liked so that top companies would chase after me – regardless of my stature and my amplifying conviction that I would never be good enough.

Stemming Out

Since I studied in a Catholic school for elementary and high school, engaging in religious activities was a requirement. My parents, who met each other in the college campus ministry, influenced me with their faith. But even if I was active in church, I still felt small. Because though I was a regular Mass goer, I wasn’t doing anything for God.

When I reached college, I joined the Student Catholic Action-Christian Communities Program in our university and became a lector

at Mass. My pride swelled for finally accomplishing something for God. But as I read God’s Word and encountered Him more, I felt His love melt away my pride. I began to see that who I am matters more to Him than what I do. My need to prove myself was gently being replaced by an assurance that who I am is enough for God. I didn’t have to prove anything because even in my nothingness, He loves me.

I also became a member of the Light of Jesus Family through The Feast Manila. I joined the dance and the youth ministries and built life-giving friendships along the way. It inspired me to step out of my comfort zone – not to gain attention, but to express the overwhelming gratitude in my heart.

But it wasn’t easy.

In one dance practice, I was asked to lead the opening prayer. I froze in disbelief. “What? Why me?” I blurted out. “Some of you are better at praying than I am.”

There it was again: Insecurity. Mediocrity. Unworthiness.

But I remembered how God saw me and my worth in His eyes. Gratitude took over. It amazed me how our mighty God noticed me even if I was

just a tiny part of His great creation.

In awe, I retracted my answer. I smiled to my co-servants and replied, “OK, sure. I’ll do it.”

And God brought me to places I never thought I would reach with that one simple yes.


Branching Forth

In God’s grace, I’ve “grown” today beyond what I imagined I could be. Professionally, I work for the leading airline in the Philippines. In service, I’ve been entrusted with leadership roles that I couldn’t still believe up to this day – dance ministry head, from assistant youth head to being one of the current youth heads, and being part of our Feast’s worship team. But all these are just bonuses. My biggest win? Relationships.

From being an insecure person who spent all her efforts to prove her worth, I now use my energy to thank God for creating me the way I am. For calling and loving me as I am.

My experience of God compels me to love other people in the same way. It’s challenging, but whenever I recall how God loved and continues to love me in spite of my personal issues, I am empowered to keep loving.

Physically, I am still small, yes. Once in a while, I still feel small. But now I am assured that regardless of how I see myself, His grace is big enough to cover my insufficiency. God’s grace can do wonders in and through us – not because of what we do, but because of who He is and of how much He loves us. Who I was back then makes me understand what grace means now. Perhaps if I had the qualities that I demanded, I’d be proud all my life.

Today, I’m just grateful to be like the mustard seed in the Bible – stretched, maximized and someone whom people can turn to “and perched on its branches” (Matthew 13:32). 



On Mothering Young Kids

Once heard that “motherhood really starts when you become a mom of two.” It’s like the little human beings at home are trapped in 10 adult bodies. Their energies multiply. The joys are exponential, and so are the assertions and bargaining, the laughing, then whining, the upbeat energy and meltdowns.

What’s unique about this stage?

This stage is about innocence and learning. As a mother to a six-year-old and a nine-year-old, I am amazed at how my children are at this point. I find joy in being with them, yet admittedly it is tiring, too. Their young minds are always trying to connect the pieces of information they gather. They have lots of “Oh, that’s why!” and “I didn’t know that!” and “How come that happened?”

A child’s character unfolds at this stage. As mothers, we are to teach them the basics of life and the values that are important to our family as well as build their confidence.

They are learning to assert themselves, their preferences and their own viewpoint. But after their attempt at being competent, they still look to us for counsel. While these exchanges can be exhausting (particularly, if two or more little humans are doing this at the same time), it’s a magical time to understand how they think and watch as their level of confidence

unfold. If we do not build this skill now, they might lag in this life skill when they get older.

When kids start showing signs of independence, when their baby fat disappears and they want to be on their own often, the normal tendency of parents is to let them be. Yes, kids need space, but we also have to secure our emotional bond with them. We have to assure them of their worth, their uniqueness, and their importance to us.


The mothering challenge

We need to be aware of their changing needs and interests. While we want to develop them well and instill the proper discipline skills they need, we also have to be mindful that they are developing their individuality, which is still fluid at the moment.

We need to align our priorities and realities. Matters unfold differently each day. Despite set routines, we should be able to tell when stricter rules should apply or when our kids are just looking for extra attention from us.

We need to take care of our inner person as mothers. It’s sad that many women – with the intention of giving their best as a mom – forget to take care of themselves and have a life of their own apart from their kids. To be better moms, it is not selfish to give ourselves a regular dose of self-care so that we can be better parents and caregivers of our kids and family.

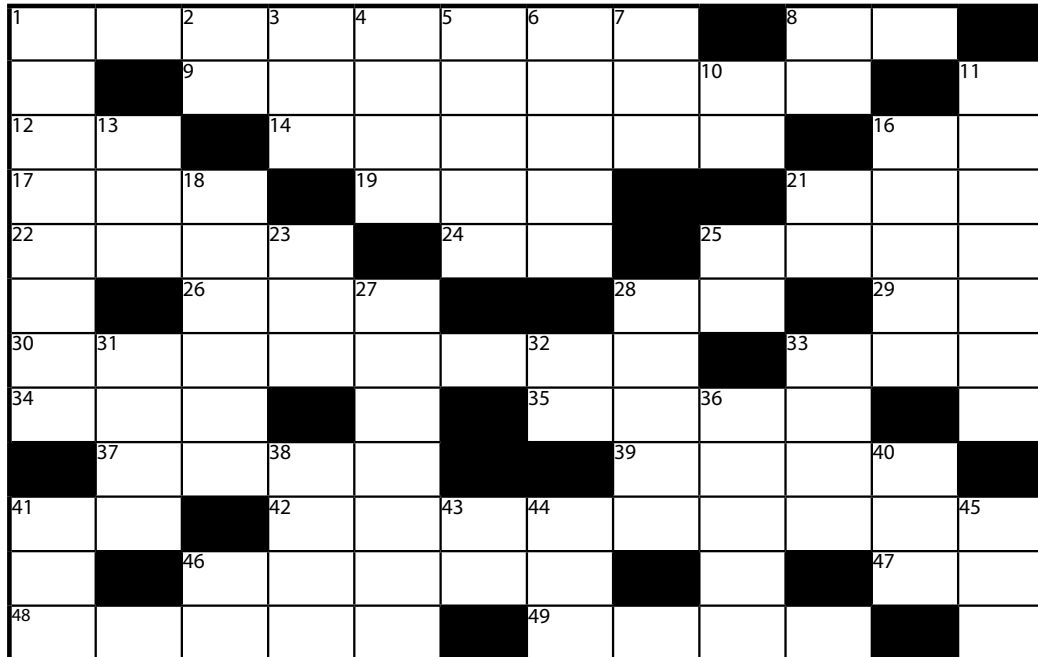
When you are at your wits’ end, choose your battles well. Before you become the referee of your children’s squabbles, pause and reflect if it will be good if you keep doing it for them and if it is helpful for you all. You might be surprised to know that they can manage their battles by themselves, and you can keep your sanity intact.

Mothering young kids can take us by storm. Before we know it, our kids will be bigger than us and would not need us as much attention from us as they do presently. So for now, enjoy the moment. Train your kids now so they will not be needy later, and take care of your well-being. It is, after all, our primary responsibility to ourselves so our love can flow out to others. 

Ichel is trying her best to juggle mothering two kids – Migo, 9, and Maia, 6 – and her other aspirations. She is a candidate of Ph.D. in Family Studies. As a Registered Psychologist (RP) and Counselor (RGC), she gets invited as a resource speaker, does one-on-one sessions, and advocates parenting, family life, well-being of mothers and families. You may reach her at ichel.alignay@gmail.com or through her website www.michelealignay.com.



Michele S. Alignay, MA, RP, RGC



ACROSS:

1. What the Israelites in the desert did to Moses
8. King of Bashan defeated by Moses (Deuteronomy 1:4)
9. The stories of Jesus
12. Jesus' response to the devil's temptation (Matthew 4)
14. Queen Jezebel killed him so his vineyard would be grabbed by King Ahab (1 Kings 21)
16. Short for Dutch
17. Valley of Sidim was full of this (Genesis 14:10)
19. A tribe of Israel; 7th son of Jacob (Genesis 30:6)
21. "Everyone who believes in ___ may not die but have eternal life" (John 3:16)
22. Metal commonly used in the bible
24. New York postal code
25. A false prophet (Jeremiah 29:21)
26. Most probably this is also used in the Bible
28. Interjection
29. Neon symbol
30. Missionary to the Christians in Colossae (Colossians 1:7)
33. What kingdoms in the bible wage to gain land
34. Breaking of God's laws
35. Visitors of the baby Jesus
37. Beneficiary of a service
39. The streams, rivers, and ___ of Egypt was filled with blood (Exodus 7:19)
41. Lesotho internet country domain
42. He climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus (Luke 19)
46. The ___ of the sacrifice pleased God (Genesis 8:21)
47. "___ to all people and make them my disciples" (Matthew 28)
48. Father of Abraham (Genesis 11:27)
49. "Don't put the Lord your God to the ___" (Luke 4:12)

DOWN:

1. Non-Jewish
2. "Get __, pick __ your mat, and go home" (Mark 2:11)
3. The Son of __, is Lord of the Sabbath" (Luke 6:5)
4. ___ Pitt (US actor)
5. Jacob served him 20 years to wed his two daughters (Genesis 31)
6. A black, hardwood in the bible (Ezekiel 27:15)
7. Standard lead time (abbrev)
8. Osmium symbol
10. Interjection commonly used by Japanese
11. Book in the Bible
13. The apostles used this to row their boat
16. Goddess called Artemis by the Greeks (Acts 19:27)
18. Book in the Bible
21. Household for short
23. What King David usually do in the afternoon (2 Samuel 11)
25. Exclamation
27. King of Egypt
28. Author of Psalms 50 and 73 to 83
31. 12 Popes are called by this name
32. "I __ who I __" (Exodus 3:14)
33. Symbol of the blood of Jesus
36. Raised by Jacob together w/ the sheep (Genesis 30)
38. Book in the bible
40. "...planted a vineyard, put a fence, ___ a hole, built a watchtower. Then rented it" (Mark 12)
41. His wife turned into a pillar of salt
43. Measurement of length
44. This popular pet is not mentioned in the bible
45. ___ of man (Jesus)
46. City in ancient Moab (Numbers 22:36)

Contributed by Vic Lagdamen of Cagayan de Oro City

Check your answers in the next issue.

ABCs of TRAINING

“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but he who hates reproof is stupid.”
- Proverbs 12:1

In doing something new, I found that I’m perennially bad before I’m good.

My younger brother learned how to ride a bike and drive a car faster than I did.

In college, I’d spend literally the whole night studying just to understand Algebra problems.

When I started my career, I’d work overtime (without pay) just to keep up.

In our first business venture, my wife and I lost significant amounts of money. In our second venture, there was no progress for the first two years.

I was slow. I guess I still am when it comes to new stuff.

Over the years, I learned a lot of lessons.

But looking back, there’s one philosophy that I have embraced that helped me overcome my “slowness” – that everything can be learned with patience.

If it requires pure skill (not talent) – and I need it – I can *train* for it.

One of the simplest yet effective guidelines which helped me in training and coaching is a framework I first heard from champion coach Chot Reyes, a multi-titled Filipino basketball coach.

Awareness

Before one begins to learn a business or endeavor, one must discern if it is right for them. It must be in the area of one’s giftedness.

A classic example is singing. Have you watched *American Idol* auditions in the past years? Weren’t there a few wannabes who

were literally tone deaf?

But there are certain pursuits where proficiency can be acquired through training. In such cases, the first step is to be aware of one’s areas for improvement. Where are the gaps – your areas of *conscious incompetence*?

Areas of *conscious incompetence* are attributes of weakness that need improvement and that you are aware of. Honesty about one’s weakness is the first powerful step to mastery.

Feedback from others would help expose gaps that you don’t know. Growth requires patience and a lot of humility.

Build Skills

You must develop a plan to build skills to address one’s areas for improvement. You can:

- **build your knowledge on the subject;**
- **build a working relationship with a coach; and**
- **just do it.**


Dr. Carol Dweck in her bestselling book, *Mindset*, pointed out that successful individuals start doing a new thing not to prove that they are good but to “get good.” This is called the growth mindset. Winners act to get motivated. Losers wait to get motivated before they act.

Create Habits

The key is *repetition*. Success gurus say that it takes 21 days to start a habit. For Malcolm Gladwell, it takes 10,000 hours for one to be great at doing something.

Take 30 minutes every day to review your goals. Plan out each hour of your day so you make sure you plan on paper what you intend to do in practice.

Welcome and create opportunities to practice your habit. Once you’ve done it enough, it will be second nature for you.

After you’ve developed the right habits, you become unconsciously competent. In other words, an expert. 

“Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings.”
(Proverbs 22:29)

Email Ariel at adriz77@yahoo.com.



By Ariel B. Driz



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Walking Where Jesus Walked

A few months ago, I was given the chance to go to the Holy Land along with Bo Sanchez and 120-plus pilgrims. It was my first time there. The whole 10-day experience was amazing. In fact, amazing is an understatement. I could not exactly put into words the joy and gratitude that I felt.

In every site that we went to, I paused and imagined the biblical scenes – what Jesus saw, heard, touched, thought and felt – as well as what the people experienced as they encountered Him. So during the whole pilgrimage, I kept repeating this line in my head, “This is where Jesus walked!”

I have read the Bible so many times. I even studied Theology for my graduate studies, but honestly, my little mind cannot still fully fathom the truth that our God lived among us. That He became just like us. It’s unbelievable – too good to be true. I mean, what kind of God would do that? What kind of God would be willing to strip Himself of power and glory to be one like us?

God became man. God walked on the same Earth we’re walking on. This is the beauty of our faith. But what is its significance? Let me give you three points of reflection.

1. God seeks us.

That’s what sets Christianity apart from other religions. In other religions, they seek their God. But our faith is the only faith where God seeks His people. He longs to be with us.

Since the Old Testament times, God has been longing for us to be with Him. But the

Israelites were stubborn. They kept turning their backs on God. God sent prophets, priests and kings, but the Israelites did not listen. God did everything to bring us back to Him. And when all His attempts failed, He did the unthinkable. He said, “If you won’t go back to Me, I will be the one to go to you.” That’s why He sent Jesus. His story became part of our history.

God becoming man is telling us that He is accessible. Coming to Him need not be difficult, because He is the One who always makes the first move. Just like the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, who did not wait for his son to approach him and ask forgiveness; instead, the father ran to his wayward son, accepting him back without any condition.

One of the more memorable sites I visited in the Holy Land is in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. It is where divinity met humanity. Through Jesus, God is telling us that wherever we are, God will meet us there.

Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to have a seeking God! He is easy to be found. If you can’t find Him, it’s either you’re not looking, or you’re the one hiding. Come out of your hiding. Let Jesus meet you where you are.

2. God is with us.

As I imagine the different scenes in every site that we went to, I noticed one consistent thing: Jesus loves to be with people. He preached to the people. He performed miracles for the people. And He dined and partied with people. He went to a wedding in Cana. He dined with a sinner named Zacchaeus. And He had his *despedida* with His Twelve Apostles in the Last Supper. However, just as God is with us in the good times, what’s even more beautiful is the fact that Jesus is also with us in the bad times.

I had a wonderful time walking and reflecting the Way of the Cross where it exactly happened. While walking, I imagined the pain, the betrayal, the mocking that Jesus experienced from the people. It must have been



By Velden Lim

difficult for Him. Yet He willingly embraced all of them to tell us that no human experience is alien to God. Because He Himself experienced how to bleed and weep and despair in times of suffering – until His death on the cross.

That's why in our deepest trials, when we feel like giving up, when we feel we are alone, we can look at Jesus and hear Him say, "I feel you. You are not alone."

3. God challenges us.

One place we went to is the Mount of Temptation. It was in the middle of a desert. In this site, I realized that Jesus indeed shared our humanity including the reality of temptation. Jesus was tempted thrice by the devil, yet He overcame them. Therefore, that same power is in us.

Sadly, after falling into sin, many of us apologize and say, "Sorry, *tao lang*" (I'm sorry, I'm only human, born to make mistakes), as if saying that it is in our human nature to sin. But Jesus' humanity reminds us that our nature is not to sin. Because He was fully human, yet without sin. Our nature is grace and love. That's what makes us human.

If you look at the fall of Adam and Eve, sin was not their original state. Before the fall, everything was good and peaceful in the Garden of Eve with God. Hence, humanity's nature is not that of original sin; it is original grace. And that's what Jesus is calling us to do.

He is challenging us to stop associating ourselves with our sins, mistakes and failures. Instead, Jesus wants us to start embracing our original nature: *to love*. Through His life, He showed us that to be more human is to be more like Him.

That is why I love our faith.

Jesus said, "I am the way the truth and the life; no one goes through the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

You want to go to the Father?

God showed us how. It is through His Son, Jesus, who became man. A man who walked where we walk. And that is the challenge of Christianity. Now it's our turn to walk where Jesus walked, to forgive like He forgave, to love like He loved, and to live like He lived.

Because when we share in Jesus' humanity, we also share in the Father's divinity.

Let me go back to my original question: What kind of God would be willing to strip Himself of power and glory to be one like us?

There is only one answer: a God who loves. 

Velden Lim is the builder of Feast Bicutan which happens every Saturday, 4:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., at the Cinema 1 of SM City Bicutan in Parañaque. Email him at veldenlim@gmail.com or follow him on Facebook or Twitter (@VeldenLim).



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In a hurry, I bade farewell to my parents as I was leaving home. San Pablo, Laguna, was only a couple of hours away from Alabang, but it was getting late and I knew the dangers of commuting at night. Weekends are always something to look forward to as I get to spend time with my family before I face another week at work away from them. I just didn't know that the start of this particular week would be a little more eventful than usual.

My Weapon of Choice

I was about nine years old when my aunt invited me to join the Legion of Mary, a church-based organization for kids my age. As members, we would pray the rosary every Sunday at our parish in San Pablo, and the ritual instilled in me a devotion to Mama Mary. I instantly fell in love with her.

As I grew older, my love for the rosary and for Mama Mary intensified. The rosary became my weapon of choice when I battle difficulties and my shield when I face storms in my life. In prayer, I was covered in her embrace and motherly love, and I felt safe. This same feeling I shared with kids in the parish when, later on, I was given the opportunity to teach them how to pray the rosary.

A few more years passed, and I left San Pablo to work in Metro Manila. Even if I was far away from where it all began, my devotion never left me. And one day, it would prove integral to my life.

My Shield

I work with one of the biggest business process outsourcing companies in Alabang. I work the night shift, and this gave me more time with family during the weekend because I get to leave home on a Monday night before my shift starts.

One Monday, I left home a little late than usual. I took my only means of commute — the bus — and I dozed off. It must have been only a few minutes after when I was awakened by sudden movement. A woman, maybe in her mid-30s, sat beside me. She was carrying a big bag and had placed it on her lap. I would not have been bothered, but through my peripheral vision, I saw the knife she was holding behind the bag, pointed at me.

My knees trembled. I was breaking into a cold sweat. I can feel the sharp tip of the knife waiting to plunge into my sides if I made a wrong move. She hadn't said a word

— yet. But in my mind, I was ready to give all of my belongings, as my mom had told me in case I was held up. In fear, I took my rosary, closed my eyes and called Mama Mary for help. For every mystery I uttered, I feared for my life.


The minutes that passed felt like a lifetime, until suddenly the bus went to a halt. I opened my eyes and saw the woman standing up. She looked at me, tears flowing down her cheeks, and said, "*Pasensya ka na, miss*" (I'm sorry, miss). She walked away and got off the bus.

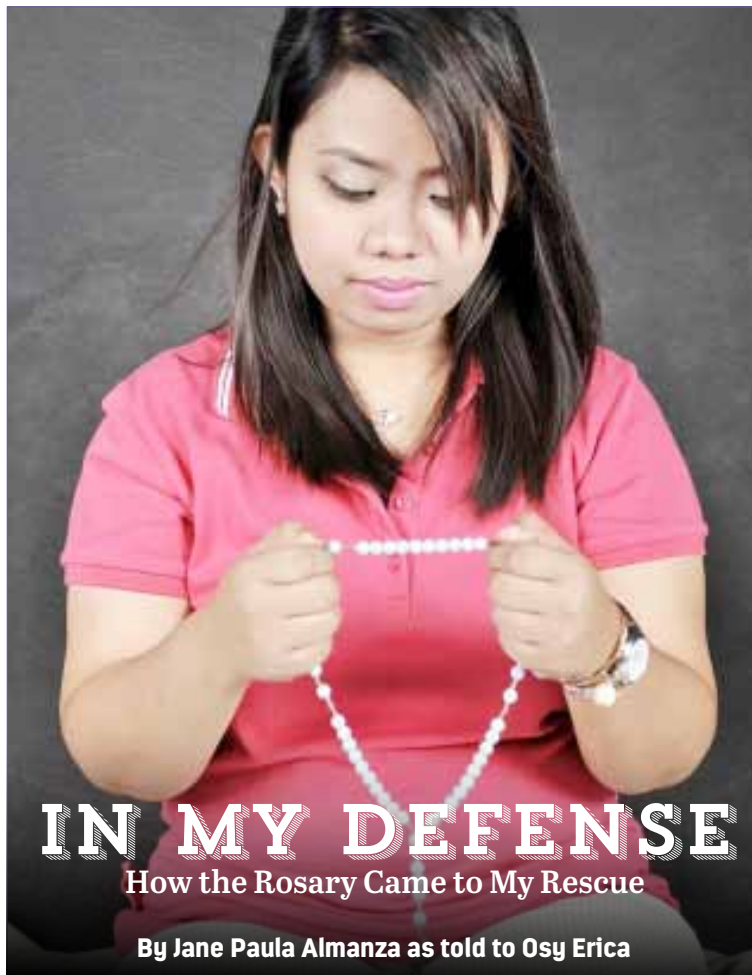
My Mother

I cried tears of thanksgiving for being saved. I could not have been more grateful to God and Mama Mary. Even if I had lapses and I'd fall asleep in between Hail Mary's, she still protected me and came to my rescue when I needed her. She had proven that, as she had promised, whoever

faithfully recites the rosary would receive her special protection and the greatest graces. Her motherly love protected me.

Now, I continue to nourish my intimate relationship with Mama Mary as I serve in the intercessory ministry of the Feast Festival Mall Alabang. I believe she is my number one intercessor, connecting me closer to God.

Thank You, Sweet Mother, for your divine intercession. 



I PRAY THAT YOU RECEIVE YOUR MIRACLES, IN JESUS' NAME!

I PRAY THAT GOD LIFTS YOUR TRIALS, heals your diseases, blesses your problems and directs you to the path He wants you to take. I pray that God removes your fears and gives you the courage to surrender your burdens to Him.

So place your hand over my hand, and let us pray with trust, together with our prayer team of intercessors praying for you right now...

This page is our Point of Contact, our spiritual connection.
Say after me...

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord, I surrender to You my worries and anxieties. I surrender to You my needs, my problems, my trials. I place them all in Your big hands. And I open myself to all that You want to give to me. On this day, I say yes to Your love, to Your blessings, to Your healing, to Your miracles. And Lord, specifically, I ask for the following miracles for my life...


I believe that You answer my prayer in the best way possible! And I thank You in advance for the perfect answers to my prayers. I also ask for the special intercession of Mama Mary. I pray all this in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



SPECIAL INTENTION FOR THIS MONTH:

Father Almighty, we thank You for creating us, Your children. Thank You for being our dearest God. We praise You for all the talents, graces and miracles that You give us – big or small. May we be consistent in all the good things that glorify You and steadfast against temptations that come our way. Help us to see Your greatness manifested even in the littlest of things.

We offer a special prayer for our newly elected government leaders. May Your teachings and love be their guide in serving Your people. Unite us as one nation, O Father – one that is holy and pleasing in Your eyes. In Jesus' mighty name we pray. Amen.

Praying for you,


Email your prayer requests to me at bosanchez@kerygmfamily.com or write to me at Shepherd's Voice Publications, #60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines 1109.