

Do You Want to Be Happy — and Successful?

Warning: The book that you're holding now can transform your entire life. Why? *Because this book can change your relationships.* Bestselling author and life coach Bo Sanchez will help you enjoy the deepest, most wonderful, empowering, and beautiful relationships in your life.

There's a direct link between the quality of your relationships and the quality of your happiness. The equation is pretty simple: If you have happy relationships, you'll have a happy life. But if you have unhappy relationships, you'll have an unhappy life.

But why stop at being happy? Bo Sanchez believes that beyond happiness is enduring success and that it is based on enduring relationships, too.

Read this book and transform your relationships. Now.

We thank Bo Sanchez for his simple yet witty, profound yet chewable thoughts and challenges. He leads us into ourselves, to people and relationships, and to God who is at work in ordinary events of life. This book will be more effective if accompanied by prayerful reflection. Thanks, Bo!

— Luis Antonio G. Cardinal Tagle, D.D., Archbishop of Manila

This book is an eye-opener for me — actually it is a heart-opener. While having a comfortable life, most often we tend to love and care less. Bro. Bo taught me, through this book, that life is simple but we make it complicated when we forget the true essence of relationships — with our family members, coworkers and the people in our community. After reading this book, I confess I am guilty of being selfish, but I am ready to transform my entire life and enjoy the deepest, most wonderful, empowering and beautiful relationships the old-fashioned way.

— Arnold Clavio, multi-awarded broadcast journalist

This book is a timely reminder that a wealthy person is only as rich as his relationships are. At the end of our lives, the only real legacy we leave behind is the love we gave to those around us. Thank you, Bro. Bo, for such an inspiring message!

— Socorro Ramos, Founder and Chairman of National Bookstore

THE OLD PATH OF LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

The Old Path of Loving Relationships

6 Keys on How to Have the Greatest, Strongest
and Most Loving Relationships in the World

BO SANCHEZ

Bo Sanchez

#1 National Bestselling Author of *God Is Bigger than Your Biggest Problems*



E-ISBN 978-971-9612-04-9





The Old Path
of Loving
Relationships



Learn to live a fantastic life. Log on to www.bosanchez.ph.



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BO SANCHEZ

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



Introduction	7
Question 1: Are You a Selfless Person?	15
Question 2: Are You Kind?	25
Question 3: Are You Humble?	45
Question 4: Are You Faithful?	59
Question 5: Are You Accepting?	75
Question 6: Are You Loving You?	87
Epilogue: Our Silly Need for People	101
About the Author	105



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INTRODUCTION

Do You Live by the Jesus Principle or the Judas Principle?

You know the Judas Principle.

The Apostle Judas operated his life by this policy: *Money is more important than my relationships.*

In Matthew 26:14, Judas asked the high priests, “What are you willing to give me if I handed over Jesus to you?” And the priests answered, “Thirty silver coins.”

Remember that Jesus and Judas were friends. They lived together for three years, eating together, walking together and working together. For three years, Jesus taught him, trained him, empowered him, and trusted him as a dear friend and treasurer.

Yet Judas exchanged Jesus for a bunch of silver coins.
This is the Judas Principle.

It's more common than you think.

How many times have we thrown away a relationship for money? Or comfort? Or power? Or achievements?

I know of parents who do this. Their work, their achievements, especially the money they earn, have become more important than their kids.

One time, a businessman came up to me, asking for help. "My son is smoking, drinking, and taking drugs. Bo, I don't understand why he's doing these things! I don't smoke, I don't drink, and I don't take drugs!"

But later on, I learned that he was rarely at home. This father was so busy with his business, he didn't spend time with his son. Their relationship was almost nonexistent. Yes, it's true that the father didn't smoke, drink or take drugs. But the friends of his son did. And these friends had time for him.

Sadly, the father operated by the Judas Principle: *Money is more important than people.* "I'll throw away my relationship — just give me my money."

Let me tell you another sad story.

I have a friend who got his neighbor as a business partner. Three years later, that business partner turned against my friend. He saw a legal loophole and brought my friend to court. Today, that business partner owns the entire business. And my friend, the founder of the business? He has nothing left.

My friend said, "I treated my business partner as part

of my family. Almost every weekend, we'd eat at my house and my kids would play with his kids. I don't understand how a man can be so... evil. How could he betray me like this?"

That person operated by the Judas Principle.

The opposite of the Judas Principle is the Jesus Principle.

For Jesus, *relationships come first*.

Always.

Think about it. To Jesus, you're more important than the glory of heaven. He'll sacrifice anything and everything just to have you. To Jesus, nothing is more important than His relationship with you. That's why He died on the Cross for you.

This is the God that you worship.

Friend, life is a choice.

You can live by the Judas Principle.

Or you can live by the Jesus Principle.

Are You Betting on the Right Horse?

One day, Benjie went to a horse race in San Lazaro.

Before the race began, something odd happened. He saw a priest walk up to one of the horses, lay his hand on its head, and bless it.

And sure enough, when the race began, that horse pulled away and won the race.

Benjie was very impressed.

Before the next race, he saw the priest go to one horse again and blessed it. And that horse won the race, too.

Benjie couldn't believe his eyes!

So at the next race, he watched where the priest would go. He walked up to another horse, put his hand on its forehead, and even touched all four hoofs.

Benjie knew what to do. He ran to the nearest ATM, withdrew all his money, borrowed some more from everyone he knew, and emptied his wallet. Then he ran to the betting window and put all that he had on that horse.

But when the race began, that horse was the last to go out.

And in the middle of the race, it stopped in its tracks and dropped dead!

Benjie almost died with it.

He went to the priest and said, "Father, what happened? Why did that horse die? I saw you bless it!"

The priest shook his head. "That's the problem with people like you who don't know their religion. I didn't bless him. I gave him the sacrament of the last rites."

Collections or Connections?

Life is like a horse race.

And like Benjie, people are betting on the wrong horse. Because in life, there's a winning horse and a dying horse.

The dying horse is called *collection*.

Have you noticed? Human beings have a tendency to collect things. We surround ourselves with things, thinking that they will make us happy.

Oh yes, we love things.

But things will never love us back.

Your cars will never love you back.

Your clothes will never love you back.

Your jewels will never love you back.

Like Benjie, we think that God is blessing the horse named Collections. Actually, God is just giving Collections the last rites.

One of these days, Collections will drop dead.

Your clothes will be eaten by moths.

Your house will be eaten by termites.

Your car will be eaten by rust.

Your body will be eaten by worms.

But because people forget about that, they bet all their life, all their time, and all their energy on collections. On things. On stuff. Believe me, things will not make them happy.

Friends, don't be like Benjie.

Don't bet on the horse named Collections.

Instead, bet on the winning horse.

The name of the winning horse is *Connections*.

Give your life to your connection with God, with others, and with yourself. If you do this, you'll fill your heart's deepest hunger...

Do You Want to Be Happy and Successful?

Warning: The book that you're holding now can transform your entire life. Why? Because this book can

help you create and enjoy the deepest, most wonderful, empowering and beautiful relationships in your life.

Face it: There's a direct link between your relationships and your happiness. The quality of your relationships will define the quality of your happiness. If you have happy relationships, you'll have a happy life. But if you have unhappy relationships, you'll have an unhappy life.

This book is about six key questions.

But before I give you those questions, let me ask you three preliminary ones...

1. *Do you want to be happy?*

Then focus on relationships.

Not on things.

Focus on people, not money.

2. *Do you want to be a success?*

To be a worldly success, you don't need to prioritize relationships. There are many earthly successful people now who sacrifice everything on the altar of money.

But obviously, this isn't real success. This fake, fleeting and frivolous success is actually a foretaste of hell.

Now for my third question...

3. *Do you want to be happy **and** successful?*

There can be no other way: Focus on relationships.

I wrote an entrepreneurship book with Dean Pax Lapid entitled *How to Turn Your Passion Into Profit*. Many times in that book, I gave examples showing that you can become a business success by becoming a relationship expert. That golden path is open to you.

I believe that enduring success can only come from enduring relationships.

And in this book, I'll teach you the only way that you can make this happen...

Six Big Questions

What creates these kinds of great relationships?

When you really think about it, I believe having great relationships boils down to one key: *Connections can only be created by character.*

By character, I mean God's old-fashioned values.

In this soul-transforming book, I'll ask you six penetrating questions:

- Question 1: "Are you selfless?"
- Question 2: "Are you kind?"
- Question 3: "Are you humble?"
- Question 4: "Are you faithful?"
- Question 5: "Are you accepting?"
- Question 6: "Are you loving you?"

Are you disappointed?

There's nothing new about my questions.

But they're revolutionary. Because old-fashioned values are the solid rock on which all great relationships are built on.

I thank God for new stuff. Somehow, technology makes it easier to connect with people. Facebook. Twitter. Email. Smartphones. But real connections, whether online or offline, are still based on old-fashioned values.

Selflessness. Kindness. Humility. Faithfulness. Acceptance. Self-worth.

If you want deep, enriching and wonderful relationships, *be old-fashioned in your character*. Let me say it again: I really believe it's the only way to be really happy and really successful in your life.

If you're ready to have the greatest relationships in the world, turn the page, and get ready to transform your life...

May your dreams come true,


Bo Sanchez

P.S. Do you want ongoing spiritual nourishment for your life so you can keep growing? I can send you a special and inspiring DVD entitled *The 8th Word* — plus a continuous river of spiritual online material to inspire you every day. How? Join the *KerygmaTVPartners*. When you do, you also support this powerful ministry that shares God's love to millions of people through TV, radio and the Internet. Join me in this fantastic work that changes lives. Please visit www.KerygmaTVPartners.com now.



QUESTION 1

Are You a Selfless Person?

The Secret of Selflessness:
Give Your Burdens to God
So You Can Help Carry the Burdens of Others

Let me tell you a story.
One day, while a mother was cooking pancakes, her two small boys were fighting over who would eat the first pancake Mommy would cook.

Both of them said, "Me first! Me first!"

Their mother shook her head and said, "Boys, boys, if Jesus were here, He would say, 'Mommy, let my brother eat the pancake first.'"

Paolo, the five-year-old, told his younger brother, "Michael, you be Jesus."

Are You a Go-Getter?

Let me ask you a question:

Are you a go-getter?

The world admires go-getters.

In our materialistic world today, no one wants to be Jesus — because He's not a go-getter. He's a *go-giver*.

In other words, He's *selfless*.

Because if you become Jesus, that means you let others eat the pancakes first.

"Oh, no!" the selfish person says. The disturbing question in his mind is, "What if others eat *all* the pancakes? Then there'll be none left for me? Then I'll be hungry!"

You see, the selfish person trusts only himself.

The selfish person is ruled by the spirit of fear.

But here's a spiritual principle you can take to the bank: *Real abundance can never be based on fear. Never!*

Fear can only produce scarcity.

It is selflessness that will produce abundance in your life.

To be selfless, to be a go-giver, requires a profound, radical, deep trust in God. You believe that as you allow others to eat the pancakes first, God will see to it that there'll be an infinite number of pancakes waiting for you!

The selfless person doesn't seek any reward or even gratitude from the people he serves.

Instead, the selfless person seeks his reward from God.

Let's make this selflessness practical...

Are You a Selfless Person?

The Bible says, “Look out for one another’s interests, not just for your own” (Philippians 2:4).

In other words, God wants you to be selfless.

You want a model?

Look at God.

God is selfless.

Every single moment of our lives, God doesn’t think of Himself.

Instead, He thinks of you. His mind is consumed with thinking of ways how to bless you, anoint you, equip you, encourage you, enlarge your territories, and commission you.

You’re the apple of His eye.

Your name is written in the palm of His hand.

I repeat: God is selfless.

Today, ask God to teach you how to be selfless.

Why God Is Great

God is great.

But why is He great?

Some people say that God is great because He is omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing), and omnipresent (He is everywhere). All that is true.

But if you ask God, I believe He’ll tell you that He’s great because He is a Servant.

How did I get this idea?

Jesus said, "If you want to be great, learn to be the servant of all" (Mark 9:35).

God is a servant.

Every day of your life, God is there, feeding you, protecting you, providing for you, guiding you, teaching you, saving you... The King has become your servant!

That is why God is great.

The Crazy Path to Greatness

Jesus said, "If you want to be great..."

I find that statement amazing.

Hey, it's not wrong to want to be great after all!

It's not only *not* wrong, it's good to have holy ambition in your soul. That means you love yourself. And that's important because you cannot love anyone else if you don't love yourself.

Friend, selflessness doesn't mean you hate yourself.

Selflessness doesn't mean you don't esteem yourself.

Yes, it's good that you want true greatness.

But get ready to be shocked, because Jesus says the way to greatness is through service.

The more people you serve, the greater you will be!

One day, my wife asked me, "Bo, why do you want your business to grow? Aren't you content with what you earn?" I answered, "It's not just about the money. I want to serve more people. I have a fantastic product and I want to share it to the world."

God Is Carrying Your Burdens

Many years ago, I wanted to dispose of a wooden cabinet.

It was huge, tall and heavy.

So I asked my friend, Joe Dean Sola, to help me carry it out of the house. (FYI, Joe Dean is the founder of He Cares streetkids ministry.)

Joe Dean is one of the strongest men I know.

I told him that I'll carry one end and he'll carry the other end.

I said, "One, two, three..." and we lifted it up together.

He was able to lift his side. I, for my part, managed to produce a lot of noise. "Arrrgghhhh..."

It was so heavy, I couldn't lift it up an inch off the floor!

That was when Joe Dean said, "Bo, let's do it another way."

With his back towards the huge cabinet, he bent down, and he said, "Push the cabinet towards me." His idea was to make that humongous thing his backpack.

I pushed it towards him, and the cabinet was now leaning on his back. Using his arms and legs, he lifted the entire cabinet all by himself.

Well actually, I was carrying it with him.

He was carrying 99 percent of the weight.

I was carrying one percent of the weight.

But that was the only way we were able to carry that cabinet out of my house.

Friend, let me give you a message today.

Don't try to carry your burdens by yourself.

God is there beside you.

God will carry 99 percent of your burdens.

Just carry the one percent that you need to carry.

Believe me, it's the only way to carry a burden out of your house and out of your life.

But that's not all.

God wants you to learn from Him.

He too wants you to help others carry their burdens.

The Bible says, "Help to carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will obey the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

Sometimes, in our own burdens, we forget that the person beside us has burdens, too. We're so focused on our own problems, we become insensitive to the problems of others.

So here's the key: Give your burdens to God so that you can help carry the burdens of others!

God wants you to be selfless.

Selflessness means carrying other's burdens.

What Happens When You Don't Care

A dear friend sent this story to me.

It's such a powerful tale that mirrors reality so well.

One day, a mouse looked through the crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife open a package. "What

food might this contain?" The mouse wondered. He was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap.

Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed this warning: "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"

The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said, "Mr. Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it."

The mouse turned to the pig and told him, "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"

The pig sympathized, but said, "I am so very sorry, Mr. Mouse, but there is nothing I can do about it but pray. Be assured you are in my prayers."

The mouse turned to the cow and said, "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"

The cow said, "Wow, Mr. Mouse. I'm sorry for you, but it's no skin off my nose."

So, the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap. Alone...

That very night a sound was heard throughout the house — the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey.

The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see it. It was a venomous snake whose tail was caught in the trap. The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital.

When she returned home she still had a fever. Everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup. So the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient: chicken!

But his wife's sickness continued. Friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered (who else?) the pig.

But, alas, the farmer's wife did not get well.... She died.

So many people came for her funeral that the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide enough meat for all of them for the funeral luncheon.

And the mouse looked upon it all from his crack in the wall with great sadness.

So, the next time you hear someone is facing a problem and you think it doesn't concern you, remember — when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk. We are all involved in this journey called life. We must keep an eye out for one another and make an extra effort to encourage one another.

Each of us is a vital thread in another person's tapestry. Our lives are woven together for a reason.

The Only Thing That No One Can Take Away from You

Five years ago, I talked to a woman who was very wealthy.

At the time, she was running a huge business.

She was working on multibillion peso deals.

Last week, I met her again.

I was shocked.

She told me she had lost everything. Nothing was left.

Even her house was gone. In fact, she was living with a relative.

I couldn't believe it.

Money can disappear from you in a snap.

The horse named Collections is really a dying horse.

Don't bet on it.

There's only one thing that no one in this world can take away from you: the love that you have given away.



Question 1: Are You a Selfless Person?

Our God's mercy is
undeserved kindness.

Learn to live a fantastic life. Log on to www.bosanchez.ph.

QUESTION 2

Are You Kind?

How to Receive and Give the Kindness of God

For over 30 years in the ministry, I've talked to thousands of couples having problems. Looking back on all of them, I've identified the most common cause of marital troubles.

It's not adultery.

It's not alcoholism.

It's not addictions.

It's not the in-laws.

It's not money. (This comes close!)

All of the above are real problems.

But they're not the top cause of marital strife.

What is the most common reason for marriage problems?

Here it is: Husbands and wives aren't *kind* to each other.

I'm not kidding.

Plain, simple, decent, regular kindness will solve a lot of marital problems. The Bible says, "Better to dwell

in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman”(Proverbs 21:9 NKJV).

Contentious means argumentative, but it also means bitter, unforgiving and negative.

In other words, someone who isn't kind.

Here's the truth: Sometimes, we're kinder to our officemates and friends than to our spouse, our kids, our siblings, or even to our parents.

To single women looking for a mate, I have an important advice for you worth a million dollars: Look for a person who is kind to his parents and siblings. Chances are very high that he'll be kind to his wife one day.

Today, I'll talk about that old-fashioned virtue of kindness.

“We Will Be the First One to Go to the Sun”

One day, an American, a Russian and a Filipino were talking.

The Russian said, “We were first in space!”

The American said, “We were first on the moon!”

The Filipino said, “So what? Haven't you been reading the newspaper? Our economy is doing very well. Mark my words, the Philippines will be a First World country. And we will be the first one on the sun!”

The Russian and the American looked at each other and shook their heads. “You idiot, you can't land on the sun!” the Russian said, “You'll burn up!”

The Filipino said, "I'm not stupid. We'll go there at night!"

God's Kindness Is Like the Sun

I told you that story to make you laugh.
But also to tell you that God's kindness is like the sun.
It's always there for you, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Bible says, "His steadfast love is new every morning."

Perhaps you're having problems right now.

And you don't feel the kindness of God.

Your marriage isn't doing well.

You're buried under a mountain of debt.

Your kids are going astray.

Your body is sick.

When we have problems, we don't feel the kindness of God.

But it doesn't mean that God isn't kind.

It just means it's *nighttime*, but God's kindness is still shining.

In another part of your world, it's daytime!

Soon, your night will pass. Your trials will pass. Your burdens will pass. And you'll see the first rays of the morning sun break through the darkness of your problems.

God Is Kind to the Wicked

The Bible says that God is kind to bad people (see Luke 6:35-36). We somehow know this already, but it still jars our sense of “justice.”

One day, some brilliant men were debating about what makes Christianity different from other religions. The discussion was heated and lively, with all sorts of answers being raised.

That was when the great thinker and apologist, C.S. Lewis, entered the room. The men turned their attention to the latecomer and asked him, “So, Lewis, what makes Christianity different from other religions?”

He looked at them and said one word.

“Mercy.”

When he spoke, everyone remained quiet.

The debate was over.

What is mercy?

Mercy is *undeserved kindness*.

We believe God is kind to those who do not deserve His kindness at all. In another part of the Bible, it says, “When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy” (Titus 3:4-6).

Remember this shocking story?

God Is Kind to the Guilty

One day, a woman caught in adultery was brought

before Jesus by religious men who hated Him and wanted to trap Him.

You see, according to the Old Testament Law (Leviticus 20:10), she should be put to death.

These religious leaders thought their plan to trap Jesus was a full-proof plan.

Here's why.

If Jesus said, "Stone her," they would accuse Him of sedition against the Roman Empire — because their Roman rulers took away the power of capital punishment from the Jews.

Now if Jesus said, "Free her," people would say, "Jesus is going against Moses and our religion!"

But Jesus didn't choose any of the two options.

Instead, Jesus said, "He who has no sin throw the first stone."

Some (not all) Biblical scholars translate the original statement in a more radical way. They believe Jesus said, "He who has no equal sin in this same area cast the first stone." Meaning, "He who hasn't committed adultery — or any other sexual sin of the same degree — throw the first stone."

Guess what?

All the guys walked away.

Everyone had fallen into some type of sexual sin!

Beginning with older men first, the accusers dropped their stones and left.

When they were alone, Jesus declared to the woman one of the most powerful statements of the Bible. He said,

“Neither do I condemn you — go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

Note, Jesus didn’t say, “Sin no more, and I will not condemn you.” (In other words, deserve my forgiveness by doing something!)

Yes, other religions will say that.

But not Jesus.

God’s mercy is undeserved kindness.

If you read this story, you will realize that the woman never once asked for forgiveness! Yet Jesus granted her forgiveness.

Here’s the truth: Forgiveness isn’t the result of repentance. Rather, repentance is a result of forgiveness.

He said, “I don’t condemn you — now go and sin no more.”

He loved first.

He forgave first.

He bestowed kindness first.

That’s what the Bible says: “God’s kindness leads you toward repentance” (Romans 2:4).

Dump the Scare Tactics

Repentance comes when God’s kindness invades our soul.

Change of heart is a spontaneous result of being loved!

I admit...

This kind of thinking is still very difficult for some Christians to grasp. Some priests, pastors and preachers still

use “scare tactics” to frighten us to be good boys and girls. They terrify us with the horrors of hell. Even the question some evangelists use can be a scare tactic: “If you were to die right now, where would you go?” It still uses fear as the motive for change.

I can’t blame people for thinking this way.

In fact, let me give you some biblical history.

The most ancient manuscripts of the Gospel of John — the original documents — had this powerful story of the woman caught in adultery in their pages.

But do you know that other ancient copies of John omitted them? Why? Biblical scholars have a hunch. They believe that the copyists were so afraid that this story would become a license to sin for their readers. So they omitted this controversial story altogether.

Perhaps this was their very disturbing question: “If God is this good, why bother being good?”

But that’s precisely why Christianity is different.

Jesus wants you to be good *not because God is frightening but because God is kind.*

Receive God’s Kindness

Do you need the kindness of God today?

Right now, you may feel like that woman brought before Jesus. Perhaps people are condemning you. Perhaps you are condemning yourself.

Even before you ask for forgiveness, God already forgives you. Even before you repent of your sin, God

already embraces you and says, “Allow My embrace to change your life.”

Show the Kindness of God

And do you want to bless your life?

And do you want to bless your spouse? Your kids? Your siblings? Your friends? Do you want to have enriching, solid, strong relationships?

Be kind.

Show the kindness of God.

The kindness of God is so powerful, it changes the life of both the receiver and the giver.

Both the Receiver and the Giver Are Changed

Once upon a time, a handsome young man was riding his horse. He was 20 years old, a soldier, and a son of a rich businessman. Because his father adored him, he gave him lots and lots of money. And the young man spent it on parties and princesses and other pleasures.

But on that fateful day, he saw a leper, begging on the road. The leper had ugly, open sores oozing with pus all over his body. The young man was filled with revulsion.

He turned away his eyes.

But he could not turn away his heart.

Something in him was drawing him to the leper.

It was the kindness of God.

He didn't know why, but he went down from his horse and approached the leper. And he did a crazy thing, something he had never done in his entire life. He gave all his money to the leper.

But he did something even crazier.

He held the leper's hand — or what was left of it. Most of the man's fingers were gone. It was covered with scabs, wounds and pus. The stench was revolting. The young man brought the leper's hand close to his lips — and kissed it.

And that moment was the turning point for Francis of Assisi.

What changed his life?

When he *gave* the kindness of God.

I repeat: The kindness of God doesn't only change the receiver. *It also changes the giver.*

If you want to change your life, give the kindness of God away.

How My Life Changed When I Gave the Kindness of God

I can relate to this story.

When I tell my life story, I always tell people that my life changed when I read the story of St. Francis of Assisi.

But that's not totally accurate.

Here's the truth: My life changed when I *tried* to imitate St. Francis of Assisi.

When I was 13 years old, I remember I was in church, kneeling down, praying after communion.

And then I felt I heard a voice in my heart, saying, “You’ll receive a visitation from God.”

I said, “I just received communion. God visited me.” But I realized God was going to visit me in a totally unique way.

When I stood up and left the church, the visitation came: I saw a very poor family sleeping on the steps of the church. They slept on the marble floor, covered only by rags and old newspapers.

Something in me pulled me towards them.

As I approached, the father woke up. I sat beside them and introduced myself.

That was when my nostrils were attacked by a terrible stench.

I realized these people had not taken a bath for months.

I wanted to leave right away but I couldn’t.

Now I know it was the kindness of God at work within me.

Soon, the wife woke up and I greeted her, too.

Finally, their two small kids woke up.

They looked at me and were happy to see a friendly stranger.

They climbed on my back, jumped over my shoulder, and fell on my lap — and they climbed on my back again...

Did I mention that they were really dirty?

When I went home, my white shirt was no longer white.

And I carried their stench on my body.

But I went home with so much joy in my heart.
And every day, after Mass, I'd visit this family.
It was like I had two Masses.

One was inside the church, receiving Jesus in the Eucharist.

The second was outside the church, receiving Jesus in the poorest of the poor.

I never knew what happened to that family.

Because one day, they were gone. Gossip said someone drove them away.

But this I know: I was changed.

I was no longer the same person.

I would never be the same again.

I changed because I gave the kindness of God!

Be Kind to Your Family Members

Before you go out to the streets and look for a leper and a beggar, I urge you to look within your family first.

Why? Sometimes, it's easier to be kind to strangers than to family members.

There are beggars and lepers in your family. They don't look like beggars and lepers, but deep within, they're hungry for the kindness of God.

Let me tell you a true story.

One day, the wife of a pastor came up to her husband and asked, "Can I ask you for counseling for a personal problem?"

Annoyed, the pastor said in a gruff tone, “What are you talking about? Of course! You’re my wife. What’s your problem?”

She shook her head. “No, I don’t want you to talk to me as your wife. I want you to talk to me as your counselee...”

The man began to calm down. “Why?” he asked.

She said, “Because I noticed that you don’t shout at your counselees. But you shout at me often. You don’t hurry them up when they pour their hearts out to you. You listen to them with full attention, nodding your head, smiling, holding their hands. But when I talk to you, you’re always impatient. Your mind is somewhere else. That is why I ask you, please don’t treat me as your wife. I want you to treat me as a counselee. You’re a much kinder man to your counselees than to your wife.”

That night, her husband was pierced in his heart.

With tears in his eyes, he asked for her forgiveness.

But this isn’t an isolated case.

Everyone has a tendency to be kinder to friends than to their own family. Because it’s so easy to take them for granted.

Friend, be kind to your family.

And you’ll see how the kindness of God will change their lives.

The Story of a Kind King

I love this fascinating story of King David.

In 2 Samuel 7, David goes into prayer — and receives the kindness of God. He's in awe at how good God has been to him.

In 2 Samuel 9, two chapters later, David wants to share the kindness of God to someone else! The Bible says, "Then the king said, 'Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the kindness of God?'" (2 Samuel 9:3)

In that epoch, it was pretty common for a new dynasty to wipe out (meaning: kill) the entire bloodline of the previous king. Remember that King Saul was David's enemy. He tried to kill him many times.

But King Saul was killed in battle and David took over the throne.

But in this scene, he wants to show the kindness of God.

He asks if there's a descendant of Saul left to show kindness to. They pointed to Mephibosheth. (That may be one of the hardest names to pronounce in the Bible. So let's call him Meph.)

David called him. Meph bowed low, terrified at what David would do. But David welcomed him, and told him that he was to join David's table. He even returned the confiscated property of Saul back to him.

What did David do?

Give kindness to an enemy.

That is the kindness of God.

A Murderer Changes His Life

My friend, Fr. Titus Mananzan, was giving a recollection to a group of prisoners on death row.

As he spoke, he was very uncomfortable because he could see the hardness in their faces. He wondered how he could penetrate the hardness of their hearts.

So the whole day, he simply spoke about God's love.

At the end of the day, there was one prisoner at the back who began to sob.

Fr. Titus approached him and sat beside him.

The prisoner said that he couldn't believe that God loved him.

That was when he told his painful story to Fr. Titus.

He said his father was a cruel man.

When he was a small boy, his father would beat him up every day. Even when he was asleep, lying down on the floor, his father would kick him for no reason.

One day, when he went home, his father was with his drinking buddies. And his father grabbed him and tossed him to his friends. And they began to pass him around like he was a toy, laughing and ridiculing him the entire time. Finally, his father grabbed him again and threw him out an open window.

And that was when he ran away from home.

At the age of 16, he became a hired killer.

For P200, he would kill anyone.

As a hired gun, he had killed three mayors, one governor, one congressman, and many, many more.

And every time he killed someone, he would see the face of his father in his victim. He had so much anger in his heart, killing was his way to express the rage within him.

But on that day, before the priest, he sobbed because he couldn't understand why God would still love a murderer like him.

Fr. Titus prayed for him.

And he corresponded with him.

Years later, a miracle happened.

This prisoner received a presidential pardon.

Today, this ex-con is preaching about Jesus!

What changed him?

The kindness of God.

It's the only power that can change our lives.

Give Kindness to Those Who Don't Deserve It!

It's your turn.

Give the kindness of God to people who don't deserve kindness. To people who have offended you, hurt you, maligned you, slandered you, and were selfish towards you.

If you give kindness only to people who deserve kindness, that's not love. If you operate on an "I scratch your back if you scratch mine" policy, that's not love. That's business!

Give kindness to people who aren't kind to you.

People hunger for the kindness of God.

Extreme Cases

Does this mean tolerating abuse?

I preached on this same subject once, and a wife came up to me and said, “My husband continues to cheat on me. He has affairs with other women. Not only that, my husband doesn’t work. He’s a bum. I provide for everything. How can I be kind to him?”

I told her, “Leave him. Even temporarily, until he changes. Not out of hate but out of kindness. This may be the kindest thing you can do for him. To allow the bad consequences of his bad decisions to happen to him. Sometimes, it’s the only way for him to change. I repeat, you let him go not because you hate him but because you’re kind to him.”

This is an extreme case that requires extreme solutions.

But 90 percent of our relationships aren’t extreme cases.

Ninety percent of our relationships are normal relationships that hunger for simple expressions of kindness.

The Power of Kindness

Before I end, I have to tell you this beautiful story.

Carl was an 87-year-old man who was known for his great kindness.

One day, the church needed a volunteer to take care of its small garden — and Carl volunteered.

Faithfully, he went to water the plants in that garden daily.

One day, three teenagers walked in. Carl saw them and greeted them, "Hi, boys. Do you want a drink? It's a hot day..."

But the boys pushed him to the ground, stole his wallet and watch, and ran away, laughing.

The priest, who watched the scene from his window, came running towards Carl. "Carl, are you OK?" he asked frantically.

Carl stood up, brushed himself, and said, "I'm OK. I hope those boys grow up." He got the hose, adjusted the nozzle, and started watering the plants again.

"What are you doing?" the priest asked, shocked.

Carl said, "It's a hot day. The plants need water."

The minister was speechless. He also realized that he never sensed a shred of bitterness or anger in Carl.

Two weeks later, the three young thugs returned.

Carl saw them and greeted them, "Hello, boys. Do you want a drink?" The boys didn't rob him. Instead, they yanked the hose from him and wet him from head to toe. They walked away, laughing and calling him names.

Though drenched, Carl picked up the hose and continued watering the plants.

One month later, one of the boys, the tallest one, came walking into the garden. Carl saw him and smiled, "Hello, son..."

The young man gave Carl a brown bag.

"What is this?" the elderly man asked.

He opened it and saw his wallet and watch.

“I couldn’t sleep last night,” the young man said. “We hurt you. We hated you — but you didn’t hate us back. You were still kind to us... I knew I had to return these to you.”

He then walked away.

Some time later, Carl passed away. The church mourned his loss. And a few days later, the priest posted a sign on their bulletin board: “We need a new volunteer for Carl’s Garden.”

A day later, a young man walked into the office of the priest.

Immediately, the priest recognized him. He was one of the three thugs that had attacked Carl a couple of months earlier.

The young man said, “If you’ll take me, I’d like to volunteer to take care of Carl’s Garden.”

The priest smiled and accepted his offer.

Since that day, the young man visited that garden and watered the plants every day. He did so for many years.

One day, he came into the church with a new baby in his arms. He went to the priest and said, “Can you baptize my baby?”

“What name do you want to give your baby?” the minister asked.

“Carl,” the young man smiled.

Do One Act of Kindness This Week

You cannot understand or explain the kindness of God.

It's absurd. Preposterous. Lunacy!

But it's the only thing that can change our lives.

Friend, someone in your life hungers for the kindness of God. This week, give that person one act of kindness.

Not your kindness — which is frail.

Give the kindness of God.

Infinite. Eternal. Powerful.



Humility is a multi-faceted jewel. But all these facets point to one thing: being empty.

Learn to live a fantastic life. Log on to www.bosanchez.ph.

QUESTION 3

Are You Humble?

How to Become a Seeker, a Student
and a Servant

Today, I'd like to talk about the old-fashioned virtue of humility.

God's big message for you today?

Stay empty.

Let me start with a story.

One day, a bus driver was driving a bunch of seniors — people in their 60s, 70s and 80s. They called themselves Club 20. Because they got 20 percent discounts in restaurants and drugstores.

Soon, the little old lady in the front row tapped his shoulder and gave him a big bag of peanuts. And the driver ate them.

Ten minutes later, she handed him another big bag of peanuts. And he munched all of them again.

Ten minutes later, the old lady gave him another bag of peanuts.

The driver said, “Thank you! They’re delicious. But I’ve had enough. I finished two big bags of peanuts.”

The old lady said, “Oh I didn’t want you to eat them, I just wanted you to throw them away for us.”

“Throw them away?” the driver asked, “Why don’t you eat them?”

“All of us don’t have teeth anymore.”

“So why do you buy them?” he asked.

She said, “Oh we like the chocolate around them, and after sucking them, we throw away the peanuts.”

Removing the Confusion from Humility

Humility confuses a lot of people because it’s just like the chocolate-covered peanut. We’ve mixed humility with other stuff that do not belong to humility.

We need to remove the chocolate.

I remember a classmate of mine who was a very shy person.

We called her Isabel the Invisible.

She was so shy and so quiet, we sometimes forgot she existed. The only reason we knew she was still alive was at the start of the class — when the teacher called her name during roll call. “Isabel,” the teacher would say, and we’d see her raise her hand just slightly so. After that, she’d blend into the grey walls of the classroom and vanish.

And when we did see her, her hair covered half of her face, so we really didn’t know how she looked.

But if you read our yearbook, you'd see a description beneath her photo: "Isabel is a very humble person."

Why? People confuse humility with timidity.

But they're worlds apart.

Timidity is a matter of personality, or insecurity, or cowardice, or selfishness. But it isn't humility.

In fact, you can be humble and confident at the same time.

Yes, you can be humble and aggressive at the same time!

How do I know?

The Bible calls Moses the most humble man on earth (See Numbers 12:3). And yet this "most humble" man challenged Pharaoh and told the guy, "Let my people go!" If that's not aggressiveness, I don't know what is!

So What Is Humility?

Humility is a multi-faceted jewel.

But all these facets point to one thing: being empty.

I believe this emptiness has three distinct expressions...

- A Humble Person is a Seeker
- A Humble Person is a Student
- A Humble Person is a Servant

1. A Humble Person Is a Seeker

I love sharing this story.

One day, a young monk visited an older monk and asked, “Master, what is the secret of humility?”

The older monk said, “Let’s take a walk...”

The two men walked down to the river.

The older monk led the younger monk into the water. When the river reached their chests, without warning, the older monk held the head of the younger monk and dunked him into the water!

The younger monk struggled, his arms splashing wildly, but the older monk held his head under the water. When the younger man was about to black out, an inch away from death, the older monk pulled him up — and the young monk sucked in air like he was an industrial vacuum cleaner.

In between breaths, he asked in a frantic voice, “What the heck did you do that for?”

The older man smiled and said, “The secret of humility is to seek God the way you’re seeking oxygen now.”

I repeat: Humility is being empty.

Humility is being desperate for God to fill you up.

When You Don’t Know the Solution

I know a young guy who doesn’t like Math.

So every time he takes a Math exam, he prays a lot.

During the exam, when he knows the solution to the Math problem, he says, “Lord, this is mine. I’ll take care of this...”

But when he doesn’t know the answer, he says, “Lord, it’s Your turn to solve this problem...”

I believe life is a giant exam. Some problems you face are easy because you know the solutions.

But sometimes, life throws you a problem you don't know how to solve. And that's when you pray, "Lord, it's Your turn to solve this problem..."

When you have a problem you can't solve, you become humble. You're forced to be empty. And empty is good.

Because you have more space for blessings.

And then the second expression of humility is being teachable...

2. A Humble Person Is a Student

Have you ever wondered?

Why is it that the biggest athletes of the world still follow coaches? Golfing wonder Tiger Woods is coached by a "swing" coach named Sean Foley. Pound-for-pound king Manny Pacquiao has a coach named Freddie Roach and a fitness coach named Alex Ariza. Tennis champ Rafael Nadal is coached by his uncle Toni Nadal.

Think about it.

These guys are already the greatest in their sport.

You'd think that after receiving a warehouse of trophies, they already know everything there is to know about their sport.

Right?

Wrong.

And who are those that don't have coaches?

Those who aren't very good.

Why?

The more you know, the more you know that you don't know. *And the more you succeed, the more humble you should be.*

The day a successful person stops being humble is the day he prepares for his downfall.

Success Can Only Come from Humility

Humility is being empty.

The moment you *think* you're full, there'll be no space for anything new.

I'm reading a business book now.

The title is *Seduced by Success*.

It talks about how many giant companies that had tasted phenomenal success became utter failures in the next decade.

The reason? *Complacency*.

They got seduced by their success.

In other words?

They lost their humility.

Get a Mentor

Perhaps you can achieve some success without a mentor. But I believe you can't achieve high-level, enduring, fantastic success without one.

Look in the Bible and you'll see mentoring.

Samuel mentored David.

Naomi mentored Ruth.

Paul mentored Timothy.

Moses mentored Joshua.

And at one point in his life, Moses was mentored by Jethro, his father-in-law.

I found this amazing.

If you're Moses, why listen to anybody?

Especially a non-Israelite, a priest of Midian at that?

Jethro didn't even belong to the same religion as Moses.

But that's why the Bible calls Moses the most humble man on earth.

Moses could have said, "Jethro, how dare you give advice to me? I'm the guy who met God face to face in the burning bush. I'm the guy who carried the tablets of the Ten Commandments in his arms. I'm the guy who led the slaves out of Egypt. I'm the guy who divided the Red Sea and drowned the chariots of Pharaoh. I'm The Guy!"

But Moses said no such thing.

He was humble.

He was a student.

He was willing to learn from anyone God would send to him.

Take Your Shortcut to Success

One day, two women came up to me and asked me, "Bo, why are you so successful in different areas of your life? You've got a great family, your finances are doing well, and you're so handsome and good-looking..."

I told those two women, "Thanks, Mom. Thanks, Wifey."

Just kidding. All my success comes from God's mercy.
No other reason.

And God's mercy walks into our lives in the form of
mentors.

I have a mentor for every area of my life!

I have mentors for my family life. These are people
with beautiful marriages. People who are fantastic parents
to their kids.

I have mentors for my spiritual life. These are people
who are the most loving human beings on the planet.

I have mentors for my businesses and investments.
These are billionaires and multimillionaires who love God
with their wealth.

I have mentors for my health. These are holistic healers
who have the gift of healing.

I have mentors for my ministry work. These are
bishops, priests and pastors who lead their flock with deep
love and great effectiveness.

Believe me, I can't imagine myself going through life
without mentors.

If You Don't Have Mentors, You Miss a Lot!

Don't miss out on a truckload of blessings.

Your marriage could be so much better if you had a
family mentor. Your finances could be so much better if you
had a financial mentor. Your health could be so much better
if you had a health mentor. Your soul could be so much
better if you had a spiritual mentor.

A humble person sees God in every person.

A humble person is slow to judge.

A humble person focuses on the strengths of each person (not on his weaknesses) and learns from those strengths.

Open Your Eyes

I believe God has already sent you mentors.

God has prearranged special people in your life to inspire you, challenge you, teach you, and train you.

Some of these mentors are right beside you. You can call them. You can have lunch with them.

Some of these mentors aren't beside you, but their words are available to you through books, talks and seminars.

But many times, you don't recognize a mentor God has sent into your life. Perhaps because like Jethro, mentors can come wearing a different uniform.

Goodness, some mentors don't even look like a mentor.

If you'll be empty enough and humble enough, you'll be surprised at the mentors God will send to you.

Here's my point: My life is so much richer because I've stayed empty. And I'm willing to learn from anyone whom God sends towards my direction.

In fact, in the Bible, God used a donkey to speak His Word (see Numbers 22). That's why preachers like me should never be proud. God's standards are very low. He can use a mule to preach!

Get a Mentor

Getting a mentor is the shortcut to success!

Come to spiritual gatherings and listen to God's Word.

Read books.

Attend seminars.

Pursue friendships with wise people.

Listen to the stories of ordinary people around you.

Finally, humility has a third expression...

3. A Humble Person Is a Servant

Some people also confuse humility with low self-worth.

Hey, I'm a world-renowned expert in low self-worth.

I was afflicted with it for 20 years.

I hated myself.

I felt I was ugly, ungifted and unlovable.

Believe me when I say this: Low self-worth has nothing to do with humility.

Low self-worth is a virus.

Humility is a virtue.

Low self-worth is thinking of yourself in a small way.

Humility is not thinking of yourself at all, period.

Why? Because you're thinking of others more.

The Bible says, "Be humble towards one another, always considering others better than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3).

In other words, a humble person sees every human being as a child of God and is worthy of his service.

Humility is not only being empty.

Humility is emptying oneself by pouring ourselves to others.

I won't elaborate on this third expression of humility because this is selflessness and kindness — and we talked about this already.

Will You Trust?

One day, a mountaineer was going up a very high mountain.

He was so proud, he climbed all by himself.

It was dangerous to climb up a snowy mountain all alone, but he believed he didn't need anyone.

By nightfall, common sense dictated that he set up camp. But he kept climbing because he wanted to reach the summit quickly.

But in his exhaustion, his foot slipped.

And he found himself free falling through the air. He closed his eyes and saw flashbacks of his life.

All of a sudden, he felt a jolt — and a violent pull around his waist. The rope tied around his belt had saved him!

In total darkness, he was now hanging onto his rope.

He shouted, "God, if you're up there, save me!"

Suddenly, he heard a voice say, "If you believe that I can save you, do what I tell you to do..."

He answered, "What should I do?"

The voice said, "Cut your rope."

“Wha...what?” he said.

“Cut the rope and let go,” the voice said.

After a few moments, he shouted again, “Is there anyone else up there?”

The next day, mountain climbers saw his limp body, hanging by the rope, frozen to death. The curious thing about what they saw? *He was hanging only two feet from the ground.*

He was a proud person, even until his death.

Many people are like that. They trust in their rope more than in their God. They trust in their money, in their abilities, in their connections, in their intelligence more than their God.

Will you trust God today for the problems that you don't know how to solve?

The rope symbolizes your pride.

Cut the rope and let go.

Trust in God.

Stay empty. Stay humble.

And receive all that God has promised for you.

One Last Story: The Last Humiliation

A few days ago, my neighbor died.

He was 80 years old.

Two days ago, I visited his wake.

As I viewed the coffin, I was struck by one thing I never noticed before: The old man had a large mole at the side of his chin.

Exactly like my mole.

In exactly the same place!

And in an eerie sort of way, I felt I was looking at myself in a coffin.

It sent shivers down my spine.

I felt God was telling me, “One day, it’ll be your turn to be in that box.”

I realized that death is the last humiliation.

No matter how much money, or achievements, or successes we gain on earth, we’ll be humbled by death — and we’ll be empty again.

Pride is useless.

I’m choosing to be humble.

Every day.

When I look back at my life, I realize how beautiful my relationships have become because at various times of my life, I’ve really *tried* to be humble.

Every time I acted in humility, my relationships were blessed.

Every time I acted in pride, my relationships were burdened.

It’s that simple.



God is faithful. Even if
we fail to know Him,
He still knows us.

Learn to live a fantastic life. Log on to www.bosanchez.ph.

QUESTION 4

Are You Faithful?

Discover the Incredible Gift
of Growing Old Together

J used to date my mother every week. And she loved telling me stories about her life. So every week, I'd get a lesson in Philippine history.

Remember that my mother was nearing 90 years old before she passed away — so anything about her life is Philippine history.

One time, Mom told me about the lowest point in her life...

The Bombs Were Falling from the Sky

"I got married during the Japanese war," she said. She was only 19 years old.

War was raging all around them. Japanese soldiers were running around the city, looking for guerrillas. One million Filipinos would ultimately die because of that war.

Yet there they were, two lovebirds, getting married!

As if their problems weren't enough, Mom's mother was very sick. "I was an only child," she said, "my father had died years ago. And Mama was totally bedridden, sick with tuberculosis..."

And six days after their wedding, bombs fell from the sky.

They heard the roar of American planes flying above, dropping their bombs all over Manila.

Everywhere they looked, homes and buildings were on fire.

Soon, their house caught fire as well.

"Your father had to carry my mother in a wooden pushcart through the burning streets of Manila," she said. "On the way, Japanese soldiers would block our road. We didn't know where to go. But we kept running..."

All of a sudden, they saw a convent.

The gates were closed but they knocked anyway.

The nuns, seeing an old woman in a wooden *kariton*, welcomed them with open arms. "Those nuns were God's answer to our prayer. God protected us there. If they hadn't accepted us, I don't know where we would have gone."

They Had Nothing to Eat

One month later, my grandmother passed away.

So they brought out the pushcart again and pushed her to the cemetery.

Then my mother told me something I never knew before.

Because it was wartime, they couldn't find jobs. There came a point when they had nothing to eat anymore. Their cupboards were empty. Their wallets were empty.

Mom told me, "Every day, your father and I would walk around the market, begging people to buy our tomatoes. We didn't have a store or stall. We just walked with the tomatoes in our hands. It was the only way to put food on the table."

Mom and Dad also gathered whatever little belongings they had left and sold them all: plates, spoons, forks, anything of value that they owned.

God Is Faithful

After a year, both of them got jobs.

And a few years later, Dad was hired by San Miguel Corporation — one of the biggest companies in the country. And many more years later, he was promoted to assistant vice president.

Needless to say, it was a far cry from walking around the market, selling tomatoes.

God blessed them. Their trials became but a distant memory. God's abundance flowed into their lives.

Of course, their biggest blessing came when they had a handsome son named Bo. (I'm half-kidding.)

My mother recalled all these past events and was astonished.

Did she really go through all that hardship?

Did she really go through all those trials?

Through all her storms, she has realized one thing: *God was faithful!*

Why did I tell you the story of my parents? To tell you that if you look back at your own life, you'll also see the same beautiful thing: *That God has been faithful to you.*

In your worst trials, God has never abandoned you.

When you got sick.

Or when your friends turned against you.

Or when you were heartbroken by someone you trusted.

Or when you were falsely accused.

Or when you were buried in a mountain of debt.

Or when you lost your job.

Or when your house burned down.

Or when you fell into sin.

Or when you lost a loved one...

Through all these storms, God was there, holding your hand, steadying your steps, guiding your way. God was there, hiding you under the shadow of His wings. God was there, covering you with His divine protection.

Why?

God is faithful.

If you're going through storms right now, know that better days are ahead. Because God is faithful. You will overcome. Because God is faithful. You will be victorious.

Because God is faithful. The Bible says, "He will not abandon you..." (Deuteronomy 4:31).

This Woman Was Faithful to Her Mother-in-Law

There was a man named Elimelech who came from Bethlehem. He was married to Naomi and they had two sons, Mahlon and Chileon. (I don't know if Mahlon was Filipino because he has a letter "h" in between his name. Filipinos are the only ones who do that. Like "Jhun" and "Dhel" and "Pinkhie.")

But because of the famine in Israel, they became very poor. So they migrated to Moab to try their luck there. In that place, both of his sons married Moabite women — Ruth and Orpah. (I'm not sure if that second woman had a talk show on Moabite TV.)

But tragedy struck when Elimelech died.

And after him, both Mahlon and Chileon died too.

So there were three widows left.

You didn't want to become a widow during ancient times.

Widows were the poorest of the poor. They could not inherit anything. They could not own property.

Naomi knew this.

So she told both her daughters-in-law to leave her because they would just suffer poverty with her. She said that she'd return to Israel, to her hometown, Bethlehem.

Orpah tearfully did as Naomi told her.

But Ruth, this extraordinary woman, was an extremely faithful woman. And this was when she said these words: “Don’t ask me to leave you! Let me go with you. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and that is where I will be buried. May the Lord’s worst punishment come upon me if I let anything but death or even death separate me from you!” (Ruth 1:16-17)

Can You Be Faithful During Hard Times?

Ruth could have gone back to her own parents and her own family. But she didn’t. She loved her mother-in-law. She knew Naomi would be all alone.

This Moabitess left her home and family, went to Israel, knowing they were both widows and would live in poverty. But that didn’t stop her from being faithful.

It’s easy to be faithful when times are good.

But that’s not faithfulness. That’s convenience.

You know you’re faithful when times are hard.

And that was Ruth.

This story has a very happy ending...

While in Israel, Ruth worked to feed herself and Naomi. She foraged fields for scraps of food left by harvesters.

One day, she was scavenging in a field owned by a certain man named Boaz. And he got to know Ruth. And he married her.

It was God who brought Boaz into Ruth’s life because of her faithfulness to Naomi. If she hadn’t been faithful to

Naomi, she would never have met Boaz.

Right now, you may feel like you're Ruth.

You've experienced a great loss in life.

Perhaps you've lost a loved one.

Perhaps you've lost a marriage.

Perhaps you've lost your health.

Perhaps you've lost your job.

No matter: Remain faithful.

Keep on doing what is right, even when it's difficult.

Keep being selfless even if you don't see any rewards.

Because you know that one day, God will reward you the way He rewarded Ruth.

When I look back at my life, I'm amazed at how God would bring the right people into my life. The right mentors. The right volunteers for ministry. The right business partners. The right connections.

One of God's great rewards is He will make the right people walk into your life.

I always tell singles: Believe that your Boaz will walk into your life. Believe! Even amidst closed doors...

Don't Keep Looking at the Closed Door

Read my next sentence carefully.

When a door of happiness closes, another door of happiness opens. But here's our problem: we keep looking at the closed door so long, we don't see the other door opening.

Examples?

You're so hurt by that past relationship, or you've been so depressed by that failed business, or you've been so discouraged by that problem, you've not been able to move on. Stop looking at that closed door. Look around you. There's a new door of happiness opening for you!

Ruth experienced a door closing on her life.

But she didn't stay looking at that closed door.

She could have!

She could have said, "Lord, why did you take away my husband, my father-in-law, my brother-in-law? Could you have not just left at least one guy in the family to take care of us?"

She could have cursed, moped, grumbled and complained.

Instead, she became faithful. She looked around for the new door that was opening in her life.

Friend, do what she did.

Maybe right now, a door that used to be open has closed.

Yes, mourn.

But after mourning, move on. Don't get stuck.

Because another door is opening.

Will You Be as Old as This?

One day, an old couple who are in their nineties were getting very forgetful.

While watching TV, the man stood up to go to the kitchen.

The wife said, "Where are you going?"

The husband said, "To the kitchen."

"Can you give me a bowl of ice cream?"

"Sure," the man said.

"And can you put some bananas in it? But I think you need to write it down. You might forget."

The husband shook his head, "Of course not. You want a bowl of ice cream with bananas."

"And if it's not too much to ask, can you crush some peanuts and sprinkle it on top?"

"Sure."

"But I think you really need to write it down or you'll forget."

He became irritated. "I'll remember! You want a bowl of ice cream with bananas and nuts!"

He went and disappeared into the kitchen.

When he came back, he handed her a plate of scrambled eggs and sliced bread.

The wife looked at the plate and said, "My gosh. You forgot the ketchup!"

Growing Old Together

I have a dream.

Ask my wife and she'll tell you that I'm crazy about this dream. I tell her my dream all the time.

I want to grow old with my wife.

I believe God designed our friendships to last forever.

When you grow old, you'll realize that life is about relationships.

Your body will weaken.

Your mind will forget.

Your eyesight will dim.

Your hearing will become faint.

Your house will decay.

Your car will rust.

Your bank account will shrink.

But there's one thing that can still keep growing: Your love for one another. Everything else will grow old except your love.

Being Faithful

There's a part in Mom's story that I didn't share with you.

It's about Mom's faithfulness those past 60 years.

During that difficult period in that war, my parents started a tiny *sari-sari* store in their home.

But because they had very little money, they sold very few things. Their store shelves were always empty.

One day, God sent them an angel.

An aunt visited them.

And she saw the empty shelves in their store.

This woman pulled out P100 from her purse — a huge amount at that time — and handed it to my mother, "Go and buy more groceries for your store."

I asked my mother, "Was she rich?"

"No, she wasn't. It was war time. We were all poor."

My mother said, "That P100 saved our lives. We were able to fill our shelves with groceries. And our store earned

more money. After a month, we bought a little gift for our auntie and returned her money.”

All of a sudden, it clicked in my brain.

For many years now, like clockwork, Mom sends money to two of her cousins who are now sick and very old. Without fail, she’d send half of whatever money I give her to her cousins.

Now I know why.

Because those two cousins are the daughters of that auntie who, 60 years ago, during a time of her great need, lent her P100.

Through her life, Mom taught me about faithfulness.

About *utang na loob*.

It’s the kind of faithfulness that I try to practice in my life today.

Because life is all about covenants.

Relationships Are Covenants

Covenant is a beautiful word.

We don’t use the word often.

But the entire Bible is really a story of covenants.

Specifically, a series of covenants between God and man.

If you look at covenant in a dictionary, it says “contract.”

But a covenant is vastly different from a contract.

I compare a contract to the tubes of paint you buy from an art store. But a covenant is Picasso painting with those tubes of paint.

A contract is the musical notes on a piece of paper. A covenant is Andrea Bocelli singing those musical notes.

A contract is a slab of meat in a market. A covenant is Mario Batalli grilling it to become a perfect steak.

What is a contract? A legal agreement.

What is a covenant? A sacred oath of love.

And this is what the entire Bible is all about: a call to covenants. And that is what your life is all about too: a call to live, walk, breathe, love in beautiful covenants with the glorious, wonderful, imperfect people in your life.

What's Unique About Light of Jesus

My spiritual community is called Light of Jesus.

Last week, a young man asked me, "Brother Bo, what do you say is unique about Light of Jesus Family? What makes it different?"

His question triggered something deep within me. Something very emotional.

All of a sudden, I realized our uniqueness.

It isn't the preaching.

It isn't the worship.

It isn't the music.

It isn't the media work we do or our work for the poor.

It isn't how gorgeous I look. (Ha, ha.)

I believe that what makes Light of Jesus Family unique is something more subtle.

We're now 30 plus years together.

And most of the top leaders of Light of Jesus have been serving with me, shoulder to shoulder, for the past 20 to 30 years. And we've chosen to be faithful to one another. (At least, we try!)

Oh, believe me, we've had bloody fights.

So bloody, so painful, so severe, they *almost* tore our friendships apart.

Almost.

But a very long time ago, the leaders of Light of Jesus made a decision to make our relationships more important than our ministries. People are more important than our projects.

And here's something controversial to chew on: We've decided to make our friendships our mission. Why? When unbelievers look at the broken Body of Christ, they ask, "How can we believe in the love you preach when you keep fighting each other?"

Here's another reason: The leaders of Light of Jesus are spiritual parents. The people following us are our kids. So we've decided never to divorce. Because those who suffer the most in any divorce are the children.

So we've made divorce unthinkable.

And why do I treasure friendships so much?

When I grow old, I want to be surrounded by old friendships — not just new ones.

Don't get me wrong. New friendships are fantastic.

But I believe it's the old friendships that give you a deep happiness, a profound peace that new friendships can't give you.

This is just my opinion.

But since I'm the founder of Light of Jesus, my opinion holds a lot of weight around here. (Smile!)

I believe in faithfulness.

Because God is faithful.

Let me end with one last story.

The Tragedy of Alzheimer's

One day, a woman began to forget things.

Where she went.

What she said.

Where she was going.

Her husband brought her to a doctor, and sure enough, their worst fears were confirmed. She had Alzheimer's.

After some time, her sickness progressed until she needed nursing care 24 hours a day.

Her husband didn't want to, but he had no choice. He transferred his wife to a home care facility for patients with Alzheimer's.

But he promised to visit her every day.

Every 3 p.m., he'd visit her and spend the afternoon with her.

There came a point when she no longer recognized him.

It was so painful for him to enter her room, and she would just stare blankly at him.

One day, the husband was in a business meeting.

At 2:30 p.m., he stood to leave, saying he was going to visit his wife. One of his friends took him aside and asked, "Can I ask a question? Why do you still visit your wife every day when she doesn't know you anymore?"

He looked at his friend and smiled, "She may not know me, but I know her. And that's enough for me."

That man was a faithful husband.

Just like God.

Despite Our Spiritual Alzheimer's

Friend, we sometimes have spiritual Alzheimer's.

Sometimes, we forget about God.

Sometimes, we fail to recognize Him.

But God is faithful.

Even if we fail to know Him, He still knows us.

And that's enough for Him.

Every day, He meets with us.

Every day, He visits us.

Rejoice that God is faithful.

Be faithful as God is faithful.



Jesus was perfect,
but on the first
Christmas day,
He took on our
human weaknesses.
He has accepted
you with all your
weaknesses.

QUESTION 5

Are You Accepting?

Accept Your Own Weaknesses
And You'll Be Able to Accept
the Weaknesses of Others

Jlove the story of Jonah.
It's a big message.
Not just because of the whale.
As a kid, I only knew Jonah as the guy
swallowed by a whale.

My imagination went wild.

Imagine, Jonah lived in its belly for three days!

How did he breathe?

How did he eat?

Did he live on pre-digested sardines?

Ah, crazy questions only crazy people like me ask.

Did It Really Happen?

Bible scholars are divided on the story of Jonah. Some believe it's historical while others say it's just a parable.

One day, a Religion teacher was telling her class of grade school kids, "The story of Jonah isn't historically true. Because whales can't swallow people. Though whales are very large, their throats are very small. They can only swallow plankton or tiny, tiny fishes."

A little girl raised her hand and said, "I believe that Jonah was swallowed by a whale."

The teacher, irritated, said, "It's a physical impossibility that Jonah was swallowed by a whale!"

The girl said, "When I go to heaven, I'll ask Jonah."

The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?"

The girl said, "Then you ask him."

It Doesn't Matter

At the end of the day, it doesn't matter.

Indeed, heaven will answer this question (and many other questions we want to ask).

But the more important question is this: "Are you like Jonah?"

One day, God told Jonah, "Go to Nineveh and tell them to change their lives." Immediately, Jonah ran away from God. Why did he not like to go to Nineveh? Because he was a typical Jew.

Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. And once upon a time, Assyria was the archenemy of Israel. Once upon a time, Assyrians attacked Israel, burned its villages, raped its women, killed its sons, plundered its riches. And whoever was left alive was driven out as an exile.

So here was the question in Jonah's typically Jewish mind: Why in the world would God care for these terrible, wicked and evil Ninevites?

So Jonah ran away.

He couldn't understand why the God who was speaking to him was very different from the God he knew!

I repeat: Jonah was the typical Jew of that time. Come to think of it, he was a typical human being. *He believed that only he deserved God's acceptance — not his enemies.*

Not heathens, not pagans, and especially not his enemies!

But when Jonah ran away on a ship, a storm blasted the boat, our hero was thrown into the sea, and the ancestor of Shamu swallowed him alive. After three days in a smelly belly, Jonah realized he had no choice. When the whale spat him out, he walked to Nineveh and preached to them.

What happened? The miracle of miracles. Nineveh repented!

And what was the reaction of Jonah? Did he do somersaults in joy, saying, "Yehey, they're changing their lives"?

Nope. The Bible said he was sickened at the thought that God had mercy on these evil people.

He prayed to the Lord and said, "Please, Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. (Jonah 4:2)

The writer of the book of Jonah is brilliant.

He was attacking the arrogant, parochial, "we're-chosen-and-you're-not" religious people of his day. Those closed-minded guys had a favorite prayer in the Bible: "Do I not hate those who hate you, o Lord? I hate them with a perfect hatred. I count them my enemies" (Psalm 139:21-22).

Side note: If you don't know how to read the Bible, you'll get very confused. There are passages in the Bible that are so judgmental and cruel. And then there's the book of Jonah — where God's love is so big and beautiful. One day, I asked, "Hmm, does the Bible have a multiple personality syndrome?" In a sense, yes. Because it was written by hundreds of people over a span of 1,500 years. But amazingly, God still speaks to us through the zigs and zags of their faith journey.

The entire story of Jonah has one big message: *My love is bigger than you think. My mercy is bigger. My heart is bigger. My plan is bigger. So if I showed you mercy, go and show mercy to others, too.*

We love because he first loved us. Those who say “I love God,” and hate their brothers and sisters, are liars, for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. (1 John 4:19-20)

I've met a lot of religious people who claim to love God but can't seem to love the “Ninevites” around them. By Ninevites, I mean the people who wronged them and the people who are different from them.

Are You Accepting of Others?

Here's my big message to you: *Be more accepting of others.*

A lot of us are like Jonah.

We don't accept the Ninevites around us.

Why? Because we love to judge people.

We judge people so quickly.

We trust our judgment skills so much.

We forget we're human beings with very limited perceptions.

We need to introduce a measure of doubt into our judgment skills when we start judging people.

First of all, because we don't know all the *external* facts.

I'm reminded of this wonderful, crazy story...

The Selfish Jerk in the Airport

One day, a young lady was waiting for her flight in a big airport.

To kill time, she walked to the store and bought a book. She also bought a pack of cookies.

She sat down in a nice comfortable chair to read in peace.

Soon, an older gentleman sat down two seats away from her. He opened his magazine and started reading too.

Between them, on the empty seat, was the pack of cookies.

When she took out the first cookie, the man took one also.

She was stunned. She felt irritated but said nothing. She thought to herself, “*Ang kapal*. The nerve of this... jerk!”

And every time she got a cookie, he would get one too!

She was so mad, but she didn't want to cause a scene.

Finally, there was only one cookie left. She thought to herself, “Ah, I wonder what this old jerk will do.”

The man took the last cookie, divided it into half, and gave the other half to her with a big smile.

That was too much for her. She couldn't contain her anger any longer. She made a face, took her things, stood up and walked out.

A few minutes later, she boarded the plane.

When she sat down, she opened her bag to get her eyeglasses. Lo and behold, she saw her pack of cookies — untouched and unopened!

Suddenly, she felt so ashamed.
She buried her face in her hands.
She was all wrong!
The man wasn't a selfish jerk at all.
That man was so kind, he shared his cookies with her,
without any anger or bitterness. So unlike her!
She was the selfish one.
But there was no way to apologize.
He was not around anymore. And she had left.

The Crazy of Judging

Are you judging someone right now?
Don't judge.
Don't accuse.
Don't condemn.
First, you don't have all the information.
Why? You're a human being with imperfect skills of
observation.

In other words, *you could be wrong!*

In every reality, there are a billion sides, angles, perspectives, viewpoints — and you can only see one of them! One out of a billion? That's worse than your chances of winning the lotto.

Right now, you may be angry at a family member, an officemate, a friend. You're irritated. Annoyed. Enraged.

What if one day, when you go to heaven, you realize that your judgment was false? That the opposite was true? That you were the selfish jerk — not your friend?

Many times, people who make us angry act as a mirror, reflecting back our sins. That's why we're so angry.

First, we shouldn't judge because we don't know the *external* facts.

Second, we shouldn't judge also because we don't know the *internal* facts.

This reminds me of an embarrassing thing that happened to me one day...

I Was Totally Wrong

I was giving a corporate seminar to the top executives of a huge company.

While giving my talk, I noticed a middle-aged man at the back. Instantly, I knew I had a problem in my hands.

He was an angry man.

Through his body language, he was trying hard to tell me that he didn't want to listen to me.

Many times, he'd stand up and walk around — right in the middle of my talk — talking to the guys beside him.

When he was seated, he almost had a scowl on his face.

I felt horrible. I felt like I was back in high school and he was the school bully at the back of the classroom. And I was the poor teacher in front.

I wanted to walk up to him and ask, "What's your problem, man? Go home if you want to go home. No one is stopping you."

The Bully Breaks

Before the end of the seminar, I finally walked up to him — not to tell him to go home — but to befriend him. (The better side of me took over, by the grace of God!)

I took a seat beside him and asked, “How are you?”

He talked with anger about everything. The traffic. The government. The stupid economy.

Then, suddenly, he stopped speaking.

A tear escaped his eye.

I said, “What can I do for you, my friend?”

The man said, “My little boy is seven years old. He has cancer...”

I was shocked.

He sobbed, “Every weekend, I spend every minute I have with him. Because I know his time is short. But I’m so mad today because I have to be here at this seminar...” I learned that the president had required all of them to be there.

“Let’s pray for your son, right now,” I said.

I placed my hand on his shoulder and asked God to heal his son. He kept weeping. We hugged each other after that.

For the last part of the seminar, he was my best participant — listening, singing and praying.

That day, God taught me something very important. In my heart, I asked God to forgive me. I was ashamed of my irritation. Everything I had thought about that man was wrong.

The bully wasn't a bully after all.
He was simply someone who needed love.
Let me say it again: Don't judge.
You don't know everything.
You don't see all the sides.
You don't have all the information.
You don't know what's inside the hearts of people.

We shouldn't judge because we don't know the *external* facts, the *internal* facts, and most of all, because we don't know (or we forget) the spiritual fact that God has accepted us in our weaknesses. How dare we not accept others?

Accept Your Weaknesses and You'll Accept Other's Weaknesses, Too

One day, a man had some puppies to sell.

He even put a large sign in front of his house, "Puppies for Sale — P5,000 only."

One morning, as the man got out to pick up the newspaper, he saw a little boy looking at the sign.

He asked, "What do you want?"

"I want to buy a puppy," he said. He then pulled out his little hand from his pocket and opened his palm.

On it were a few coins.

The man said, "I don't think you have enough money."

The little boy said, "Will this be enough just to take a look at the puppies?"

The man said, "Sure."

He whistled and called out, "Here, Dolly!" And out came Dolly from the doghouse. And following Dolly were the pups, like four balls of fur, running after their mother.

The little boy pressed his face on the fence, his eyes bulging, filled with joy and delight.

And that was when he noticed something still moving in the doghouse.

A little puppy came out, much smaller, much slower. It limped its way to its mother.

"I want that one," said the little boy.

The man knelt down in front of the boy and said, "Son, you don't want that dog. He was born with a short leg. He won't be able to run with you or play with you."

The little boy took one step backward, bent down, and rolled up the leg of his pants.

The man was surprised to see a steel brace on the little boy's leg. It started above his knee all the way down and was attached to a specially made shoe.

"I don't run too well, sir," the boy said, "and the dog needs someone who can understand him."

What's Your Limp?

I've got news for you: All of us are like that little puppy. Because all of us have a limp.

We just have different kinds of limps.

What's your limp?

Accept it.

Unless you do, you won't be able to accept the limp of others.

You'll always be judging, condemning, looking down at, and being irritated by the weaknesses of others.

Jesus was that little boy.

Yes, Jesus was perfect, but on the first Christmas day, He took on our human weaknesses.

He has accepted you with all your weaknesses.



QUESTION 6

Are You Loving You?

Unless You're Happy with Yourself,
You Can't Be Happy with Others

Jwant to shout this from the housetops: A lot of people have failed relationships with others because they have a failed relationship with themselves.

If you want to repair your relationships with others, you need to first of all repair your relationship with yourself.

Many times, the reason why you can't stand others is because you can't stand yourself. Many times, the reason you're not happy with others is because you're not happy with your life.

So here's my big question: Are you happy with your life?

Are You Happy With Life?

One day, a very discouraged man visited Norman Vincent Peale. He told the good Reverend he had nothing to live for.

"Everything is gone, everything is hopeless. I've lost the heart for living."

Norman Vincent Peale got a piece of paper, drew a vertical line in the middle, and said, "This is your life. Let's write down a list of the things you've lost on the left side, and the things that you still have on the right side."

The man shook his head, "You won't need the right side. I have nothing left in my life."

Norman Vincent Peale said, "When did your wife leave you?"

The man was shocked. "My wife didn't leave me! She's right here with me. My wife loves me!"

Norman said, "That's fantastic! Let's write that down as number one on the right side of the paper: 'Wife with me'. Now tell me when did your kids go to prison..."

"Prison?" the man asked indignantly, "My kids are right here at home!"

"Fantastic! Let's write it down here as number two: 'Kids not in jail.'"

Norman continued asking similar questions, and the

man got the point, and began to smile. He said, “I guess my life isn’t so bad after all!”

Perception Is Everything

Your perception of reality *is* your reality.

Your life has always two sides — a left side and a right side — the bad stuff happening and the good stuff happening.

A lot of people spend the whole day looking at the left side — the side where they list everything that’s wrong with their life.

Twenty-four hours a day, they think about it, meditate on it, analyze it, mull over it. That’s why they’re miserable.

Friend, make a decision to spend the whole day looking at the right side of your life.

I know. This is difficult.

Especially when you fail.

There was a man who failed big time in the Bible...

We’re All Like Peter

Peter was the Number 1 Apostle, the top man, the leader of the pack. And he prided himself as the bold one.

While everyone in the boat was terrified by the storm, he walked on water. While everyone couldn’t say who Jesus was, he proclaimed out loud, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!”

Yet at the critical point, he failed.

When his loyalty was most needed, he turned chicken.

He became a coward.

How? He denied His Master three times.

When a maid said, "Hey, I know you. You're with that guy Jesus, right?"

Peter said, "Je.. Je... Who are you talking about? Never heard of Him. Sorry, wrong number."

She said, "No, you're the one. I don't forget faces. I'm sure you're the assistant of that guy Jesus who's being tried right now and will most likely be crucified tomorrow."

Peter cursed, "Heck, you're mistaken, girl. I don't know Him!"

Imagine how terrible he felt after that night.

Imagine the guilt that ate up his soul.

Here's my bet: For days, Peter was too hard on himself.

Like all of us, we are our own most cruel critic.

From my experience, our most toxic relationship is with ourselves. We are our worst enemy.

When we fail, we endlessly beat up ourselves emotionally.

We label ourselves a "big loser."

We curse ourselves to fail forever.

If Jesus Wasn't Jesus...

Days later, Jesus rose from the dead.

And Jesus had this incredible conversation with Peter that showed us how God deals with our failures.

I love this scene!

Because Jesus didn't focus on Peter's failures. He didn't say, "Peter, let's talk about the night when you did that shameful thing of running away from your Master..."

"Oh gosh, Lord, I... I... I..."

"I thought you were brave. Peter, you were a big, fat, 100 percent, unadulterated coward."

"(Gulp) Well, uh, there was a lot of pressure that night, and..."

"And I thought I could count on you, Peter. I thought you were a loyal and faithful friend. Sheesh, was I mistaken."

"I'm so sorry..."

"Shame on you, Peter. You don't really love Me."

"Uh, I guess I don't."

"And my goodness, you denied Me not once, not twice... but three times! What a weakling. What have you got to say for yourself?"

"I'm ashamed, Lord."

"Oh, you'd better be..."

Jesus didn't say those words.

Because Jesus doesn't focus on the times when we fail.

He focuses on the times when we win.

In this conversation, Jesus focused on Peter's love for Him.

Jesus didn't believe that Peter's denials defined him.

Jesus believed Peter was still a loyal friend.

Here's that incredible conversation...

After they had eaten, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others do?" "Yes, Lord," he answered, "you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Take care of my lambs." A second time Jesus said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" "Yes, Lord," he answered, "you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Take care of my sheep." A third time Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was sad because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" so he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you!" Jesus said to him, "Take care of my sheep. (John 21:15-17)

What was Jesus doing?

He wanted to tell Peter, "Peter, I know you really love Me. Don't focus on the times you failed Me."

There's another way of interpreting this passage.

You see, the English language has only one word for love.

The Greek language has four words for love. And two of those Greek words were used in this conversation: *agape* and *filia*.

Agape means God's love, perfect and eternal.

Filia means the best of human love.

Here's how the conversation went along...

Jesus asked Peter, "Do you *agape* me?"

Peter said, "I *filia* you."

Jesus asked him again, "Do you *agape* me?"

Peter said again, "I *filia* you."

Peter was honest. The painful wound of his three denials is still very raw in his conscience. He was telling Jesus, “I’m a mess, Lord. I can’t give You *agape*. But I’ll try to give You *filia*.”

On the third question, Jesus asked, “Peter, do you *filia* Me?”

Jesus accepted what Peter could offer at that moment.

God’s Focus Is Different from Ours

For so long, religion was used to make people feel bad about themselves.

But that doesn’t come from God!

God thinks differently than we do.

We’re so focused on the times we fail.

God is focused on the times we win.

We’re focused on the times we are weak.

God is focused on the times we are strong.

We’re focused on the wrong things we did.

God is focused on the right things we did.

Two Kinds of Guilt

This message is very close to my heart.

Once upon a time, I used to call myself a failure.

Because I would focus on my weaknesses.

I would focus on my sins.

And the more I focused on my sins, the more I did them.

Until I became addicted to my sins.

You see, there are two kinds of guilt...

- Demonizing Guilt
- Detoxifying Guilt

The first guilt *demonizes* you. When you sin, demonizing guilt says, "You're bad. There's nothing good in you."

The second guilt *detoxifies* you. It separates the sin from the sinner. When you sin, detoxifying guilt says, "This isn't you. You're better than this. Stand up. Move on!"

Demonizing guilt depresses you. It pushes you to sin even more. It's the guilt of the addict.

Detoxifying guilt lifts you up. It pushes you to become who you really are.

Tell me now.

What kind of guilt do you have?

The Root of Our Personal Problems

The world taught us to focus on our weaknesses.

And that's why we like to focus on our weaknesses.

We hear this "voice recording" in our minds, saying...

"You're too small."

"You have too many pimples."

"Your nose is too big."

"You're not bright enough."

"You don't have enough talent."

"You're a mess."

"You're too weak."

"You're too poor."

I've met a lot of people who don't have a good opinion about themselves. And believe me, this is the root of most of their personal problems.

This is the root of why they have relationship struggles.

This is the root of why they're trapped in mediocre living.

Your opinion of yourself is the most important opinion you'll ever have.

Why? People will see you the way you see yourself.

If you see yourself as inferior, that's how others will see you.

If you see yourself as a failure, that's how others will see you.

Your Weakness Is God's Redirection

Don't be too hard on yourself because of your weakness.

Your weakness isn't God's rejection but God's redirection.

Being weak in one area means that's not where God wants you to serve. A weakness means you're supposed to serve in another area.

I remember the story of this jobless man who applied to work as a janitor of a huge company.

After the HR manager interviewed him, he said, "You're hired. Just give me your email address so I can email you the application form to fill..."

The man said, "I'm sorry, I don't have an email address. I don't know how to use the computer."

“Then I’m sorry too,” said the HR manager, “if you don’t have an email, that means you don’t exist. And someone who doesn’t exist won’t get a job.”

The jobless man walked out of room totally discouraged.

He only had P300 in his pocket. That was all his money left. He remembered his little daughter at home. He imagined her going hungry and decided to do something.

He went to the market and bought a box of tomatoes. He then went door to door, selling the tomatoes. In three hours, he was able to double his money to P600. He repeated the operation three times that day, returning home with P2,400.

The man realized that he could survive this way!

Shortly after, he bought a cart, then a truck, and after a couple of years, he had his own fleet of delivery vehicles.

Ten years later, he was a big-time food distributor, a very successful and wealthy man.

At that time, a friend sold him life insurance.

When this wealthy man was filling out his insurance application form, it asked for his email address. He told his friend, the insurance agent, “I don’t have an email address.”

The friend said, “Wow, you don’t have an email, and yet you succeeded in building an empire. Can you imagine what you could have been if you had email?”

The man thought for a while and said, “Yes, if I had an email address, I’d be a janitor today.”

How My Weakness Showed Me How to Serve God

Because he had no email address, he was rejected.

But that rejection was a redirection.

Let me tell you my story.

When I was growing up as a kid, I had a weakness.

According to my school teachers, I wasn't very intelligent.

Because I didn't like reading.

I wasn't a fan of books.

I'd rather watch TV and play with my toys.

But at the age of 12, something happened. I had a spiritual conversion. I came to know Jesus in a personal way.

That was when my mother asked me to read a small book entitled *Prison to Praise*.

And for the first time, I actually opened a book that wasn't from school!

Why?

First of all, the book was a tiny, thin book.

Second, Mom said it was filled with exciting "miracle" stories.

That little book was a simple, true-to-life story of a worldly man who lived far away from God, who went to prison, came to know Jesus, and began to live a life of praise.

The book was so simple, so easy to understand, I was hooked. When I finished it, I wanted to read more books about God. I remember reading *Perfect Joy of St. Francis* after that. And I've never stopped reading ever since.

I realized that I wasn't allergic to reading books.

I was just allergic to reading *difficult* books.

Like my textbooks in school.

Difficult books that had long words, long sentences, and long paragraphs. I felt the authors were so intelligent, I couldn't understand what they're trying to say.

And Then I Became an Author

When I hit 20, I wrote my first book.

And I wrote the kind of book that I would like to read.

It was a very thin book.

And I wrote it using short words, short sentences and short paragraphs. I told very simple stories.

Today, 33 books later, I still write in the same way.

And guess what? All my 33 books are bestsellers.

You know why I'm a successful author today?

Because I wasn't too intelligent.

Imagine if I was intelligent.

Imagine if I liked reading difficult, scholarly books.

Then I'd probably write like that too.

Would I be able to reach the audience I reach now?

Would I be able to write 33 bestselling books?

I don't think so.

I thank God I'm not too intelligent.

Because my weakness has become my strength.

Your Weakness Will Bless the World

What is your weakness?

Your handicap?

Your limitation?

Don't be too hard on yourself.

You'll be surprised that your weakness will be the source of strength for others around you.

Once upon a time, there were two friends named Pok and Nat. Pok and Nat worked as water bearers. Each morning, they'd draw water from the well and deliver it to their respective little *barrios*.

But Pok had a little problem. His pail was broken. It had a little crack and was leaking. So by the time he arrived in his *barrio*, his pail was already half-empty. And Pok had no money to buy a new pail, so he kept using it.

Because of his broken pail, Pok had to double the trips Nat took. Nat would take 10 trips but Pok had to make 20.

But through it all, Pok kept smiling as he did his work.

One morning, Nat asked him, "Pok, why are you always smiling? I know that your pail is cracked. And you have no money to replace it."

Pok said, "Take a look at the path I travel every day. What do you see?"

Nat was shocked. All along the path, he saw a beautiful row of flowers!

“Because I knew my pail was cracked,” Pok said, “I planted flower seeds along the way. Every day, as I walked this path, my pail watered these flowers. Tomorrow, I’ll harvest the flowers and sell them in the city.”

Why was Pok happy?

Because he found a way to use his weakness.

Friend, I ask you again.

What is your weakness?

What is your limitation?

What is your handicap?

Plant seeds beneath your weakness.

Soon, you’ll harvest them and prosper.

And the world will be a richer place because of your weakness.

Your weakness is a wonderful opportunity for God to manifest His power. The Bible says, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

When you’re able to love yourself, accept yourself, celebrate yourself and every part of you, including your weaknesses, you’ll also have the ability to love others, accept others, and celebrate others.



EPILOGUE

Our Silly Need for People

My friend Cecile (you know that's not her real name) loves her garden.

Once, she told me, "I enjoy talking to plants more than people."

"How come?" I asked.

"Plants don't steal, lie or cheat anyone," she said. "They don't talk back. They don't fool you. They may not be great conversationalists, but they sure are great listeners."

"Well, you have a point," I said.

"I can stay in my garden for hours. When I'm with my plants, I'm at peace."

"That's nice," I said, "but don't you have an urge to talk to real people?"

"When I'm with other people, I hear gossip, negativity and hypocrisy. It gives me so much stress."

I asked, “Cecile, do you have good friends without leaves and petals? You know, the human kind with two arms and two feet?”

She sighed. “I did. Not anymore. They cheated on me. They betrayed me. They were garbage.”

“So it’s just you and your flowers?”

“Yes,” she said.

“You don’t eat out?”

“There’s home delivery.”

“No urge to go out and watch a movie with girlfriends?”

“There’s cable TV and pirated DVDs.”

“No events? Parties? Reunions? Lunches? Dinners?”

“Overrated. I prefer being quiet at home with my bougainvilleas and marigolds.”

“Uh, no boyfriend?”

“I’m a proud member of the NBSB Club. No Boyfriend Since Birth — and never will have one.”

“But you still have parents, right? I mean, you weren’t born from a sampaguita and an orchid.”

She chuckled. “Once in a while, we call each other up... But not often enough.”

“And your siblings? I’m sure they’re not kampupots.”

That’s when she took a deep breath.

“Brother Bo, I actually miss my family. They’ve been very busy and, well, we haven’t had a chance to be together for quite some time now.”

A tear rolled down her cheek.

So Ms. Plant Lover had this silly need for people, after all.

Just like everyone else.

Because God created us to be connected beings.

Social creatures.

Networked, down to our cellular system.

Let me say it again: Healthy relationships equal happy relationships. Unless your relationships are healthy, you'll never be happy. No matter how many marigolds, bougainvilleas, sampaguitas and kampupots you have.

The Six Ingredients of Healthy Relationships

If Cecile read this book, she would have been pleased to know that caring for relationships is like caring for plants. If plants need to be nurtured by water, rich soil, sunlight, protection, attention and the gardener herself, your relationships need six powerful ingredients too.

- The Water of *Selflessness*
- The Sunlight of *Kindness*
- The Soil of *Humility*
- The Protection of *Faithfulness*
- The Attention of *Acceptance*
- The Gardener of *Loving Yourself*

Friend, don't just read this book.

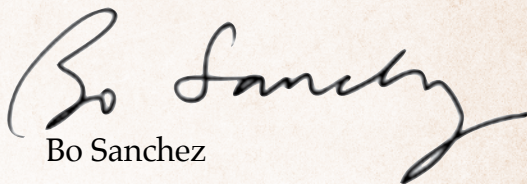
Do this book every day.

If you do, I'm very excited for you.

Go ahead. Open your heart very wide. Because God will pour His rich blessings upon you like a tidal wave.

Your life — and your relationships — will change forever.

May your dreams come true,


Bo Sanchez

P.S. I repeat my invitation to you at the start of the book: Get a truckload of nourishing material for your spiritual life — so you can keep growing. How? Join *KerygmaTVPartners*. By doing so, you also support me in our mission of bringing many people closer to God through TV and radio. For more information, visit www.KerygmaTVPartners.com now.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bo Sanchez is a preacher, leader and entrepreneur. He is the author of over 30 bestselling books and publisher of eight periodicals. Bo also has a weekly TV show, a daily radio program, and a daily Internet TV show. He travels extensively around the world as a powerful speaker. So far, he has addressed audiences in 14 countries, including 36 cities in North America.

He founded many organizations, such as Anawim, a special home for the abandoned elderly, and Shepherd's Voice, a media group that publishes the widest read inspirational literature in the country. He is also the founder of the Light of Jesus Family, a spiritual community.

He was also cited as one of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) in 2006.

Privately, Bo is a successful entrepreneur. He frequently teaches and writes about financial literacy, believing that poverty is hugely a product of people's low financial I.Q. He focuses on subjects such as




debt management, saving, investing and entrepreneurship.

In another endeavor he's very passionate about, Bo started the Catholic Filipino Academy (www.catholicfilipinoacademy.com) to help parents who want to homeschool their children.

But above all these, Bo believes that his first call is to be a loving husband to his wife, Marowe, and a devoted father to his sons, Benedict and Francis. They live in Manila, Philippines.

For more information, log on to his website www.bosanchez.ph or email him at bosanchez@kerygmfamily.com.





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4. You shall have the special privilege of supporting this expansive work of the Lord (totally optional!), which includes Anawim, a ministry for the poorest of the poor, the abandoned elderly; Shepherd's Voice, a media ministry that uses TV, radio, print and the Internet to broadcast God's love to spiritually hungry people worldwide.
5. You and your intentions shall be included in our intercession team's prayers.



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The Old Path
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