

May 2024

Dear Praying Friends,

At the end of Romans 12:2, Paul makes a powerful statement, "...that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." God's will is good, acceptable, and perfect, meaning "complete," and God gives us the chance to prove that through our personal lives. I'm going to start this letter by telling two seemingly unrelated stories, but in the end, they will converge into a single beautiful picture of the overarching completeness of God's will for our lives.

The first story began about 13½ years ago on November 13, 2010, when I had the privilege of sharing the Gospel with a young security guard by the name of Emerson Ubas. At that time, Ruth and I were part of a team of missionaries preparing to start a brand-new work in the city of Dumaguete under the leadership of Pastor Randy DeMerville. Emerson was the first of many souls that God would allow me to lead to Christ during the 4½ years we spent in Dumaguete. Unfortunately, Emerson was a member of a strong Pentecostal family, so the first couple of years after his salvation were difficult. However, he ultimately surrendered to God's will and became a student at Hyles-Anderson College of the Philippines. In 2015, when God called me and Ruth to leave Dumaguete to start a new ministry on the island of Mindanao, it was Emerson who replaced me as the children's pastor at International Baptist Church of Dumaguete, where he is still serving today. Since that time, God has given him a lovely wife named Clarice and blessed their home with two sweet children.

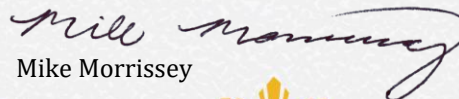
My second story began last year when God chose to give us the piece of property directly across the street from our church. The property was officially put up for sale in late May, and by December 15, it was ours! God moved so fast that I was left with my head spinning and a strange question echoing in my heart, "Now what?" The first step was obvious; we needed to remodel the house so we could start using it, but beyond that, I felt kind of lost. At the time, only about a third of our new property was usable, due to a stagnant fishpond taking up about third of the lot, and another third in the clutches of jungle-like overgrowth. Obviously, I knew that we would need to fill the fishpond at some point, but I had no idea when that would be financially feasible. According to the law of supply and demand, dirt SHOULD BE the cheapest commodity on earth. Unfortunately, I have found that not to be the case! I knew that God would have to give us a SIGNIFICANT amount of money if He wanted us to fill the pond. Well, this past March, God provided the needed funds as a lump sum, and I am happy to announce that last week we officially finished filling the pond! Over the course of 35 days, 271 truckloads of dirt were dumped on our property, while we worked in 90+ degree weather to cut down the "jungle" and throw it in the fishpond ahead of the advancing dirt. Consequently, we are now able to use about 85% of our new property, opening up an array of possibilities that I never would have dreamed of just a year ago!

Last week after the pond filling was all done, God made it very clear to me that He wants us to use our new property to host a summer camp for our young people. Obviously, when we bought the property, the thought crossed my mind that it would allow us to host our own camps and conferences at some point in the future, but I wasn't expecting it to be so soon! Nevertheless, we are going forward with it. The dates are set for June 25-28, and we've chosen the theme, "Usa Ka Kinabuhi Ra" (Only One Life). Please pray that God would use this special week to work in the hearts and lives of our young people. Oh, and one more thing: would you like to guess whom God has allowed us to invite to be our guest preacher for the week? If you guessed Emerson Ubas, you are correct! My first convert in Dumaguete City will be the guest preacher at my first youth camp in Dapitan! Isn't that just like our God? Thank you for your prayers, support, and friendship.

Dividends on Your Investment

This past Thursday night (May 9), I was riding my motorcycle out to follow up on a man whom I had led to Christ the previous Saturday. As I drove towards his area, I saw a group of young ladies sitting on the side of the road. As I passed by, all of a sudden, I recognized one of them, and then, before I could even hit the brakes, I heard her voice, "Pastor Mike!" I turned my bike around and headed back. It was Christine, a young lady who had attended our church for a few months at the very beginning of our time in Dapitan. At the time, she and two of her siblings were staying with their grandparents not too far from the church, but eventually they had moved away, and we lost track of them. I had not seen her in years, but there she was! Sitting next to her was another young lady who looked vaguely familiar. I asked her for her name, and then the memories started rolling back. She was Christine's little sister. I used to see her almost every time I visited their house, but she was always so shy that I couldn't talk to her. When I arrived at the house, she always ran away and hid. However, that was 6 years ago. Now she's 17 years old. She's still shy, but she didn't run away and hide. 😊 There on the side of the road I had the privilege of sharing the Gospel with her and two neighbor girls, and all three put their faith in Jesus Christ!

Yours for souls,


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Missionaries to the Philippines

"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." 1 Corinthians 16:9