

Pocket change

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I am leading four amazing Christian guys, and we are learning how to live and grow in community daily. We are together sending updates and messages to family and friends of our safe arrival.

As I look around the Filipino Internet cafe, my faith in cyber security quickly begins to plummet. You see, the name "Internet café" implies a ground-floor store with windows, light and coffee. I've never been so wrong in my life. The OS is windows 2000, and the CPU is older than my childhood bicycle, and I have to abusively pound the space bar to separate every word I type. How often my expectations and preconceived notions are erroneous. How often I delude myself.

Coming to the Philippines, I thought I knew what poverty was. I thought I had an idea of how other people live in these places in the world, of their struggles and lack of things. In this I was wrong. After having an amazing lunch for mere dollars, we were taken by car to the Habitat House we would live in during our stay. When we got off the "highway", we drove down a dirt road in the rain. One of our supervisors called it "chocolate milk" because of the abundance of potholes filled with mud. Rundown shacks had been turned into small shops, people watched us as we drove in the rain. We were told it cost 7 pesos to travel from our house to the highway, which we gladly agreed to pay in order to bypass the wasteland of dirt and mud. "Why not? It's pocket change," one teammate said.

I looked to my right, seeing a man trying to walk where the water had not yet washed the road. To my left, a woman walked off the road holding the hand of her small daughter, fighting the rain with nothing more than an umbrella. Then it hit me. Our pocket change is their privilege. When you make less than \$2 a day, you learn to go without. And many times, it's more

than a car ride they go without. Whether food or clean water, people live without the very things we find common. My heart still feels heavy.

How can I live then? I have been blessed beyond reason, because of what, my birth? How do I live responsibly as a rich man? For we all are, you see. Do not fool yourself as I had. We have the ability to make change, the ability to show people who Jesus is. But how? If I gave away everything I owned, I would not even be a drop in a bucket. I know I am not the first Christian to ever have these questions, nor am I the last. I know there is no simple answer, and I know each person may have a different answer.

But what I do know is this: God has opened my eyes to show me my previous blindness. This summer, through prayer, the word, and seeking God, I hope to find my role in living faithfully for God in this world, being a rich man. May my eyes not be blind with privilege. May I delude myself no longer.

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