

# **The Story Of Renato: How This Man Went From Panhandling to Having Full Time Work**

*by Annie Margarita Yang*

I've been telling Renato's story to countless people ever since the day I met him back in August. I think it's about time I shared this in writing so that anyone can read it and get all the details. □

I'll start with the day before I met Renato. I was at Landmark, assisting in the Advanced Course, and I was listening in on the conversation in the room. Josselyne, the course leader, was calling everyone inauthentic for ignoring the people on the sidewalk asking for change and saying "Sorry I don't have money." That's a lie you're telling. In reality, you DO have money - the correct way of saying it is "I have money, and I don't want to give you any."

Lying this way to strangers is bad because this is your community. You might not know the person asking for change, but this person is still part of your community and you're not doing anything about it. You walk by as if it's not your person, but here's the thing: IT IS. We are all one. We are all connected. We are all from the same source: God. That person you are walking past is actually a part of you, you just don't realize it yet.

The next day, I was on my way to my parent's house for lunch. I walked by a Mexican on 18th Avenue 65th Street, standing outside of the McDonalds, asking me for change. As I walk by, he specifically looked me in the eye and asked me for change. I didn't say anything.

Honestly, I didn't want to help. I was quitting my job in four days and would soon have no income. I had nothing lined up and I didn't know where my next dollar would come from after those four days. And looking back, my wallet hasn't seen a single dollar come in since that last day at work.

I walked a couple more steps and he shouted PLEASE I REALLY WANT CHANGE. PLEASE HELP ME.

I turned around and started seeing tears go down his cheeks. I felt really and said "Listen, I don't have any cash on me, (I really didn't) but I can pray for you and God will provide for you." I started praying alone and he wanted me to slow down because he wanted to be able to understand me and repeat after me. So we prayed together and he was happy.

"What's your name?" I asked. "Renato." He continued, "You are like an angel who has come from heaven to help me. You prayed for me." Apparently, no one had ever stopped to do such a thing for him.

Upon realizing I was speaking to an honest man, I offered to buy him lunch with my credit card. He could pick anything he wanted. Renato chose McDonalds and he seriously only wanted a ONE DOLLAR HAMBURGUESA (hamburger). I told him to order more... and he said a hamburger was enough. So I

went ahead and ordered more food for him due to his reluctance. And so, with my credit card, I charged \$4.35.

I watched him gulf down that hamburger in 30 seconds. I could tell that Renato was starving. So I asked more about him. It turned out that he was a day laborer who waited on the streets for work - some days there are work, some days there aren't. That day was one of those days without work.

He came from Queens and that morning, with only enough money for a one way metrocard ride. If he didn't have work, then he didn't have enough to eat and he didn't have enough money to go home either...

That was an upsetting situation, not knowing whether you would be able to eat that day, but *hoping* you could get work so you that you *could* eat. And if things didn't work out, then you are screwed.

It was Saturday so in my conversation, I told him that it's the weekend and that God just wanted to him to rest that day. Not everyday will be a day of work and you can't force it. God decides. God just wanted him to groom and to relax, so he would be better prepared and well rested for the next day when he did have work.

I got his phone number, and with the swipe from my unlimited metrocard, I told him to go home and sleep.

I went home and told my parents what happened. I thought they would make fun of me, but to my surprise, they were proud that I helped this man. They told their friends about it, but their friends thought otherwise. According to them, I wasted my money, which could have been spent on myself for better things. But oh well.

As I thought about Renato throughout the rest of the day, I realized that I could invite Renato to church the next day. I promised my friend Nathan that I would visit his church, so why not invite Renato with me too? But the problem was, Renato didn't have *any* money for a metrocard ride, so it would be impossible for him to get there.

AH but Landmark taught me that anything is possible if I just stopped giving myself reasons why I couldn't have something. So I asked my friend from Queens to drive Renato all the way to Brooklyn. To my surprise, he said YES. It was shocking because I just met Renato that very day. I was scared my friend would warn me of stranger danger, but he said I've done a *ton* of crazy shit before that always worked out, just from following my intuition, so this was no different.

From Brooklyn, I could pay for Renato's metrocard to go to Manhattan. My parents heard, and then my dad offered me \$10 to pay for his metrocard. My dad never gives, so I was shocked at that too! My mom is a constant giver and she gave me \$20 to buy Renato lunch. I was shocked that everyone who was close to me was willing to change Renato's life.

I met Renato again on Sunday morning and off to church we went. On the subway, I learned more about his life. The rest of his family was in Mexico and he had one sister. His mom was diabetic and couldn't work. He sends money back to help them. He came to New York a couple years ago and started as a dish washer. It had steady hours, but then his friend said that if he worked in construction he could make a whole lot more. So he left that job to work on a renovation project that lasted a couple months. Yes, it was better pay. But after the project ended, he had no more income. So he started working as a day laborer waiting on the streets for work.

At church, we filled out a prayer request that he would have full time work with steady income. "Don't worry, God will provide for you. This situation is a test of your faith and when you prove faithful, God will give you exactly what you need," I reassured.

And what do you know? In the middle of church service, he got a phone call from his buddy saying they just landed a three day job! That was great! I was right and so happy to know that he could eat for the next few days. What would happen to him after that, I had no clue.

After church service, I took him to a public place to talk. I started spouting financial advice on how God wanted him to spend this money now that God was entrusting him with it. In the past, he would spend all of it, but no no no. God wants him to put 10% (or more) to save for the future. God wants him to give part of it away, to spend some of it for himself on basic living expenses, some for his family, and some for recreation. He can't spend all of it in one category, otherwise it would be unbalanced and money won't flow to where it really needs to go.

I showed him my savings book as an example. It had a couple thousand in there and I told him that he could be in the same position I was in if he just followed the same method. You could see the history of my deposits. Every week, I put some money in, sometimes twice a week. And before I knew it, it grew to a couple thousand. And I didn't even make that much money. In the beginning, I started off making \$3 an hour + tips and was able to save \$4,000 in my time there. What mattered most was I was consistent. He looked at it and saw that sometimes, I deposited only \$1 in there. But hey a \$1 here and there adds up. And so I urged him to save even just a dollar from every paycheck in the future.

You see, when God is giving you money to use, it's not really your money - it's still his. He is just trusting that you will manage it right, for the good of humanity. If you manage it right, he will trust you with more and give you more. If you don't manage it right, everything stagnates and in your heart, you don't feel at peace.

That's why so many people don't feel at peace. They have tons of debt: "The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender." (Proverbs 22:7) They don't give, they don't save either. This is not the way money was meant to be used.

So I assured Renato, when he starts using money in God's laws, he will prosper. Just trust and have

faith, and he will get more. I hoped he understood. I had to speak in broken Spanish to get my point across since his English wasn't the best. "Yeah yeah yo comprendo," he responded.

Later, we met up with my friend who is very rich who treated us to lunch. She started injecting her mindset into him to think more like a business owner.

She said he needed to be willing to charge less, so even though he didn't have that much skill, people would be willing to hire him and teach him. Some people have more time than money and it's these kinds of people who were willing to train. As he gained more skills under his belt, he could start charging more because he would be good at what he did. Then he could save up the money to buy some tools, and charge even more because he had his own equipment. Then he could start hiring people to work for him when the job was too much to handle.

She offered Renato a short term job for after his 3 days of work was finished. I was happy to hear that my rich friend was being so non-judgmental, and like my other friend, didn't even *think* to warn me of "stranger danger." She was willing to create a job, to create wealth in his life.

We sent Renato home and wished him well.

On the last day of his three day job, Renato called me, super excited to tell me the good news. He did such a good job in that project, the boss wanted to hire him for full time work! It had a steady Monday-Friday 9-5 schedule and steady pay. He rejected my friend's job offer in the end. You couldn't believe my joy. God really does work miracles in our lives.

Haha, and so with that, I bought and mailed him a tin coin bank that looked like this:



I told him to just keep putting away money everyday into that coin bank. \$10 here, \$5 there, maybe a \$20 sometimes. As long as he put a bill inside everyday, his savings will grow. When it's full and he can't put anything more inside, he can take a can opener to open it up and then be amazed by how much he really saved up. "Keep saving for your future and I promise you, when you are unfortunate and out of work, you will never have to worry about being on the streets begging for money again."

And of course, I told him to keep giving to others.

Soon after that, he landed part time work for the weekend as a dish washer, not every weekend - just some. God is trusting him with more money.

It's been a couple of months now and he really did follow my advice. He doesn't know how much he's socked away so far, but he's been socking away money. And when it is full, we will open it together and see how far he's come. He really will never have to panhandle again. I am happy to have made a difference in his life, and this is all it took to get him back on his feet: \$38.35.

Let me break it down for you: \$4.35 for McDonalds, \$10 from my dad for metrocard, \$20 from my mom for lunch, \$1 for that coin bank, and \$3 to mail it to him. His life is changed forever. It's not the money, it's the fact that I sat down with him and spoke to him like a human being that mattered.

And if you just show more compassion for the poor around you, you will find that you can be the one who changes their life forever. You shouldn't wait for someone else to start. The change starts with you.

Renato has been coming to Pastor Tony's Monday Bible Study and he is coming to faith. He will travel two hours all the way from the Bronx to come to this Bible Study. He is part of our community now. I invite you to come on Mondays 7:30pm - 8:30 to Christ the King Church 9020 3rd Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11209.

This is the story of Renato, how he went from panhandling to making money.

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