

BEECOMING
A
SUPER
HERO



ALIVE MINISTRIES
STUDENT CONFERENCE
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WHAT'S ALL THE BUZZ ABOUT?

Dominic climbs into the school minivan that is already near capacity with a teacher, a chaperone, and three other students – Kiersten, Demond and someone he's never met.

Dominic (*as he steps past the front bench seat*): Hey guys.

Demond and Kiersten: Hey Dom.

Dominic (*sitting down next to the new guy*): Hi, I am Dominic – Dominic Drone. But my friends just call me Dom.

Hachi: Hello. My name is Hachi Chu, but I usually just go by Hach. My family just moved here from Korea.

Dom: So of all the places to go on a career day field trip, I would end up going to some crazy old allergy doctor's lab. Talk about lame. Guess that's what happens when you're sick and miss class – you don't get to pick where you want to go, and have to take the lame leftovers. So how did you get forced into this trip?

Hach: No, this is my first choice. Dr. Gesundheit may be a bit eccentric, but he's not crazy. He is doing some amazing experiments with pollen allergies – something that my grandmother suffers terribly from. Just a little pollen in the air and she sneezes like crazy.

Kiersten: Well, as far as I'm concerned even a day in a dusty old lab is better than going to Algebra class.

Demond: I hear that Dr. G keeps a hive of live bees right there in his laboratory.

Kiersten: Eww!

Dom: Well, maybe I can at least get some honey out of this otherwise useless trip. I *love* honey!

The group arrives at the lab. Even though Dr. Gesundheit looks like a mad scientist in white lab coat, thick horn-rim glasses, and spazzed-out hairdo, he is very friendly and begins showing the group around.

Dr. G: Did you know that pollen is one of the biggest allergy problems in the world? In this room we are experimenting with ways to help pollen allergies. As you can see we have a hive of bees that collect local pollen so that we can study why the bees don't have any allergies to it.

Demond: How are your experiments going?

Dr. G: Well, sometimes we learn the most from our biggest mistakes. Those barrels outside by the dumpster are full of a Super Pollen – a project that we had to throw out last week. It made even people who aren't allergic to pollen sneeze uncontrollably. But we discovered what we did wrong, and here in this beaker is the new batch that is showing signs of real success.

Hach: Do you think you could send an extract from your new formula to my grandmother's doctor in Korea? This would be so helpful to her.

Dr. G: I have some partners in Korea, and I'm sure we can work something out.

Kiersten: Why are those bees over there isolated from the others?

Dr. G: Because they and their honey were contaminated with the Super Pollen. It's just a precaution since we don't know what would happen if someone was exposed to them.

Honey?! Dominic doesn't hear anything after the word "honey," and all he can think about is getting some of it. As the others leave the room, he quietly opens the glass door to the isolated hive, reaches in and grabs a bite of the honey and eats it. Within seconds he starts having a reaction and is having difficulty breathing.

Dom (*sensing that he's in trouble, hoarsely calls to his friend for help*): Hach..., Hach..., Hach Chu!

Kiersten (*outside the door*): *Gesundheit!*

Dr. G (*further down the hall*): Yes?

Hachi looks back into the room and sees Dominic on the floor gasping for air.

Hach: Doctor, come quick! Dominic is having a bad allergic reaction to something!

Dr. G: Here, I have some medication that will help. Good thing I'm an allergist – not just every doctor has this. And it's a good thing that you noticed the reaction and called me, Hachi.

Dominic, are you feeling better now?

Dom: Yes. Thank you Dr. Gesundheit. And Hach Chu, bless you.

What are some of the things the people in the story can be glad about? Kiersten is delighted that she doesn't have to go to Algebra class. Hachi is pleased to visit Dr. G's lab and to possibly find a cure for his grandmother's pollen allergy. And Dominic is just glad to still be alive.

Of course Dr. G is happy that he is now on track with his new formula. But what about a week ago? Do you think that he was glad then that the Super Pollen was a failure? Probably not..., but in time the failure proved to be good because it showed him the right direction to go.

And do you think Dominic is glad he had such a severe reaction that he could have died? It is probably hard to be happy about that. But if the problems of last week turned out to be something good for Dr. G, then maybe Dominic's trouble can prove to be something to be happy about after all.

In Philippians 4:4 God tells us, "Rejoice in the Lord always." This is so important to God that He repeats it, "...again I will say, rejoice."

Take a moment now to think about the things going on in your life. What is happening now that you are glad about? What things happened in the past that didn't seem so good then, but turned out to be something you were happy for?

And is there something going on right now that doesn't seem like such a good thing? Of course God doesn't cause everything that happens to us – sometimes they are caused by others,

ourselves, or even Satan. But even though God doesn't cause them, He can and will make something good come from even the bad things we experience. And that includes even the tough things that you might be dealing with right now. Can you be glad, maybe not for the problems themselves, but for the good that God will make even out of the bad?

I'M POLLENED AND I CAN'T GET UP!

The next day Dom goes over to see Hachi at the Korean restaurant the Chu family owns. He meets Hachi's father as he comes inside.

Dom: Hello, Mr. Chu. I am Dominic. I'm here to see Hachi.

Mr. Chu: I sent Hach to the alley to throw away some trash. He should be coming back into the kitchen in a minute. You may wait for him there.

While waiting, Dominic samples some of the food in the kitchen. At the spice counter he tastes some of the various seasonings. He finds a jar tucked away in the back corner of the top shelf that looks different than the rest. He opens it, smells it, and takes a taste just as Hachi walks in.

Dom: Wow, you Koreans have some really weird food.

Hach: I beg your pardon?

Dom: Oh, wait, I didn't mean to be harsh. It's just that the food and the spices taste so different than what I'm used to eating. Especially this – what kind of spice is this?

Hach (*surprised*): You smelled that – and you tasted it?! And you're not sneezing your head off?

Dom: Sneezing? No, not even a sniffle. Why, what is it?

Hach: This isn't a Korean spice, it's some of the Super Pollen that Dr Gesundheit got rid of! I went back last night and got some out of the barrels he threw away. He was right, I took one sniff of it and sneezed non-stop for over an hour. But you're not sneezing at all.

Dom: You think this may have something to do with that honey I ate yesterday...?

Before he could finish they hear a thud as the front door of the restaurant is slammed open. Hachi looks through the window in the dining room door and sees three thugs walk in.

Hach (*whispering*): Ah-oh! I think these are the guys that people have been warning us about. They cause a lot of trouble around here. The police have tried but haven't been able to catch them.

Thug1: Hey, who's in charge here?

Mr. Chu: I am the owner.

Thug2: No that's where you're wrong, old man. *We* own this place, just like we own all the other businesses along this street. And you are going to pay us \$500 every week for us to let you run our restaurant, see?

Thug3: And if you don't, here's a little taste of what you can expect....

...and the thug punches Mr. Chu so hard that it knocks him out.

Hachi (*stepping through the kitchen door and shouting at the thugs*): No! Stop!

The thugs turn and start toward Hachi. Dominic reaches into the jar and grabs a handful of the Super Pollen. Before he even realizes what he is doing he buzzes past Hachi in a blur, blows the Pollen right in the thugs' faces, and buzzes back to the kitchen – all in less than a second. The bad guys all fall to the floor, sneezing uncontrollably. Hachi slips back into the kitchen with Dominic.

Hachi (*whispering*): Wow! What was that!?

Dom: Beats me. I just grabbed some of the pollen and blew it at those guys in order to keep them from hurting you.

Hachi: Man, you buzzed past me so fast that I couldn't even tell who you were – and barely even saw you at all. Hey, with moves like that you could be the next superhero!

Dom: Superhero? I don't know about that. But I do know we better call the police to come get those guys.

Hach: Yeah. But what are we going to tell the police when they get here?

Dom: Good question. I'm not sure they are going to believe the pollen story. Hey, the thugs didn't see me, so I'll just take the jar of Super Pollen and slip out the back door.

Hach: Okay. That sounds like a good idea. Get out of here and I'll come over to your house later.

Bullying is a big issue today. It has always been around, but we hear a lot more about it today – partly because people aren't content to ignore it any more, and partly because some people are labeling so many things as bullying that really aren't.

So, what is bullying? Actual bullying involves two things: (1) One person who is stronger or has some other advantage than a second person, and that second person has no way to defend himself or protect what is his; and (2) the first person using his strength in some way to intimidate or take advantage of the weaker person. In other words, it's when a person is treated unfairly in a way that he has no way to defend or protect against.

Now that we understand that, let's look at some situations in the story to see which ones were really bullying.

- Were the thugs bullying the Chu's?
 - Yes. They were intimidating the Chu's with violence that they were not able to defend against on their own.
- Was Dominic bullying the thugs?
 - No. Although he did have an advantage over them, he was not taking advantage of their weaker position to get something that was unfair.

- Was Mr. Chu bullying Hachi when he made him take out the trash?
 - Of course not. As the father, Mr. Chu did have a higher position, but making his son help was not unfair or taking advantage of him.
- Was Dominic bullying Hachi when he talked bad about his Korean food?
 - No. What Dominic said may have been insensitive or sounded unkind, but it was not bullying because Hachi was not at a disadvantage, and he could “defend” himself by explaining or even ignoring the comments.

The main word in Philippians 4:5 deals with the two elements in bullying. That verse says,

Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.

So what does “reasonableness” mean? It means to be fair, even when we’re in a position to take advantage of someone. In other words, it’s the opposite of bullying. And it means more than just not doing something that is bad, but it also means that we go the extra mile to be sure that we treat others fairly.

Bullying is pretty easy to understand when it’s about taking advantage of someone because we are stronger than they are. But do we maybe sometimes take advantage of someone because we’re smarter than they are, or because we have more friends or more money or have some other means of being unfair? God says that our fairness even to the disadvantaged should be something that everyone around us knows about. And remember this: In order for others to know about our fairness we must make a stand to treat people right, and not go along when others are treating them unfairly.

So, are you ready to make the commitment to being fair to everyone – even when you could get by with being unfair?

TO BEE, OR NOT TO BEE

Later that afternoon Hachi arrives at Dominic's house.

Dom: How did things go after I left the restaurant this afternoon?

Hach: Well, my father is okay, just a little sore. The police got there and arrested those three guys. When the other business owners found out that they had been caught, they all agreed to testify against them. Looks like they are going to be in jail for a long time.

Dom: So what did the thugs tell the cops?

Hach: Nada – not a single thing! Those guys not only have no clue what happened, they were sneezing for so long that they couldn't tell the police anything if they wanted to.

Dom: Great!

Hach: And hey, what's with buzzing by me at light speed when you went after those guys?

Dom: I was as surprised about that as you were. I've never done anything like that before – it just happened. Do you think it had anything to do with my reaction to the honey I ate at Dr. Gesundheit's?

Hach: I guess it could. But whatever caused it, I now have a superhero friend!

Dom: I've been thinking about that since you first mentioned it back in the kitchen. And you know what? This has got to be the *craziest* idea I have ever heard! I've got like a hundred questions that all show how impossible this is

Hach: Well, just toss those questions out one at a time, and then we'll see how crazy it is.

Dom: Okay..., here's one: Who in the world ever heard of a guy whose super power is making people sneeze?

Hach: Exactly! The bad guys will never expect it!

Dom: Are you serious? Okay then, what would be my superhero name?

Hach: Good question. Let's see...., you do the speed buzz-by like a bee, and you make the bad guys sneeze. I got it! You are the superhero, BeeZneez!!

Dom: Oh, you've *got* to be kidding me! Alright, here's one you can't answer: What is my superhero costume going to be?

Hach: "Going to 'bee'?!" Ha, ha – now that's funny!

Dom: Hardy..., har..., har.

Hach: I've already got that one figured out. On eBay there's a high school that's selling its yellow jacket mascot, "Stinger." And with this tap (*clicking the Buy Now button on his smart phone screen*), that costume is now ours. Next question....

Dom: Well, I guess that only leaves one more question – and I already know the answer to it: Who is going to be my sidekick?

Hach: Sidekick?

Dom: Sure. Batman has his Robin, doesn't he? And BeeZneez has his sidekick, too – *you*.

Hach: *Me*? No way!

Dom: Yep, you. Now we just need to choose a name for you. How about BeeZneez and HoneyPot? Cool, huh?

Hach: Huh-uh!! If I'm going to be your sidekick, you're just going to have to settle for my real name.

Dom: Oh, okay. BeeZneez and Hach-Chu – I think I can live with that.

Life is full of questions and concerns. And Proverbs 22:3 teaches that the wise person will watch out for problems and be prepared to handle them when they come up.

But is there a point when we are too concerned about things – when the questions aren't just to help us do what we can to be prepared, but instead overpower us with fear and anxiety and worry? – when too much questioning turns us into worriers or makes us anxious?

Dominic had a lot of questions. Do you think they were legitimate questions? Do you think he handled them well by being willing to be honest with the questions, but also to be fair with the answers? That's the proper way to handle questions without being a worrier or being anxious.

He also did something else that helps to keep worry in check – he talked it over with someone who knew the situation and could help him see things more clearly.

It's the same way when it comes to questions that we have, and the temptation to worry over them. But God tells us to do the same thing that Dominic did:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

God wants to hear our questions, and if we're willing to listen He will give us good advice on dealing with them. When we do, He is able to reach down into our hearts and calm the anxiousness that we feel – giving us peace in its place.

What are some of the things that you have questions about? Do you keep them to yourself so much that you begin to worry and get anxious about them? Do you need to pray to God and just dump all your questions on Him, and ask Him to give you His peace in exchange for your worry and anxiousness?

NOBODY NOSES THE TROUBLE HIVE SEEN...

It's now been a week since Dom and Hachi began their work as the town's newest superheroes. They are just returning to Dominic's basement after a long afternoon of superheroing.

Dom: Wow..., what a week.

Hach: You said it. I am so tired.

Dom: You know, it's more than just tired. This is getting kind of depressing.

Hach: Depressing? Why's that?

Dom: For one thing, I was thinking that this would be more like the old superhero TV shows. But we don't get to do the neat "Zap" and "Zowie" fights like I used to see on TV.

Hach: O-kay....

Dom: And what about a utility belt – why can't I have a utility belt? Or a Beemobile? And why can't we have a cool cave for our BeeHive instead being stuck in of a corner of Dad's basement?

Hach: You're kidding, right?

Dom: Or even just a cool light in the sky that police commissioner Boredman could use to call when he needs my help?

Hach: For real? These things are depressing you?

Dom: Well, not so much those thing. What really bothers me is that we aren't even making a dent in all the bad stuff going on. All this work, and so little impact. That's what is so depressing.

Hach: So little impact? Are you serious? What does Mrs. Graber think – you remember, the lady in the park that had her purse snatched and you stopped the guy as he was running way with it? Or what about the little girl that was being kidnapped, or the couple that was being mugged? Do you think little Timmy that was being robbed thought your effort had "little impact"?

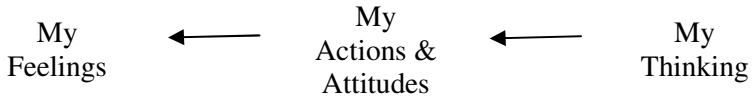
Dom: Yeah, you're probably right.

Hach: Not "probably right," but "of course, I'm right."

Dom: Okay, okay – you're right.

Hach: Getting your thinking and perspective out of whack has affected how you feel. If you want to feel right, then you have to think right.

What do you think is the message of this little graphic? Do you agree?



So if you are having trouble keeping your feelings under control, what does this suggest might be a good way to correct that?

What we think affects a lot of things. It affects our perspective; it affects our attitudes; and it even affects how we feel. And what we spend our time thinking can even affect our spiritual growth.

If we feed our body junk food all the time, then we won't grow as we should. One guy used to say, "If you mainly eat fat, greasy food then you'll become a fat, greasy dude."

What we spend our time looking at and thinking about is what we feed our mind. And like our body, if we feed our mind junk food, it will affect our mental and spiritual growth.

God points out the importance of what we allow our minds to dwell upon:

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Philippians 4:8)

Think of the things that you let your mind feed on – your music, TV programs, movies, what you talk about with your friends, what you view online. Does each one of these pass the test of what God says is good for you? Are they:

- True: Things that don't make wrong appear to be right.
- Honorable: Something that is worthy of being looked up to, or held in esteem.
- Just: What conforms to God's ways and instructions.

- Pure: Something that is uncontaminated by sin, or genuinely tries to avoid sin.
- Lovely: Acceptable and pleasing in God’s eyes.
- Commendable: Has a good reputation.
- Excellent: Pleasing to God.
- Worthy of Praise: Worth God’s approval.

Is there anything on your daily “thinking diet” that you need to remove and replace with something that is more spiritually healthy? Will you right now commit to God to have a good “thinking menu?”

BEEING A SUPERHERO

Hi. My name is Don Burke, and I am the one who wrote the devotionals in this booklet. The character “BeeZneez” was originally created by a superhero and super friend of mine, Dominic Lemons. I appreciate him letting me build these devotionals upon his creative work.

I must admit that developing a superhero in a few short stories has been no small challenge. But then, who expects the making of a superhero to be an easy task? If you’re a Christian, you can probably relate to that because you yourself are a superhero in the making.

Oh, you’re not so sure about being a superhero? Well, if you check out Romans 8:37 you’ll see that we Christians are “more than conquerors” when it comes to those things that would try to pull us away from God and His love. Those three English words come from a single compound Greek word that could be translated “uber-conquerors” – or “Super Conquerors.” So put on your red tights, draw a big SC across your t-shirt, and add a superhero cape if you like, if that is what it takes to see yourself as the superhero God meant you to be.

But let me guess..., you’re not feeling all super-hero-y at the moment. That’s okay – most of us don’t. It’s really something

that we have to “grow into.” So how do we go about getting to there from here? Paul, the great preacher and pastor, wrote:

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things. (Philippians 4:9)

So, it comes down to the things that we put into practice. Are you making a habit of learning and doing what you see in God’s Word, or are you just following what everyone else is doing?

But sometimes even when we want to do what’s right it can be hard to know what’s right. Paul gives the answer to that as well. He told the Philippians that they were to do what they had learned and seen in Paul’s life. Maybe you need to find a good Christian leader who studies God’s Word and is committed to putting what he or she learns into practice. Ask this person if they can help you to know how to understand the Bible and live by it.

But maybe you can’t live by God’s direction because you have never taken the very first step – salvation. No one can begin a Christian life without being saved. And that can only happen as God draws a person to Himself.

If you feel God nudging you to become a Christian, here’s what you need to do:

A – Admit (to yourself and to God) that you have done things that the Bible says are wrong (Romans 3:23, 6:23).

B – Believe what the Bible tells us about Jesus. That means that you genuinely believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died on the cross so that you can be forgiven of the things you’ve done wrong.

C – Commit. Pray to God, and if you really mean it ask Him to forgive your sins, commit your heart and life to Him, and ask Jesus to save you.

If God has stirred your heart to be saved and if you have truly believed these things and prayed to God committing your life to Him, then here is God’s promise to you: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).

If you made this commitment, then as a new Christian you need to talk regularly with God in prayer, and you need to read your Bible to hear what God has to say to you. You need to go regularly to a good, Bible-teaching church. You also need to talk to your pastor about being baptized.

If you have made the decision to accept Jesus as your Savior while reading these devotionals or during the ALIVE conference this year, I would love to hear from you. You can share your good news with me at PotosiPastor@gmail.com.

Credits

BeeZneez (original concept).....Dominic Lemons
BeeZneez cover art..... Von Thurman
All other materials.....Don Burke