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**“UNSHACKLED!” - Pacific Garden Mission**  
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**Daily Devotional**

*“Beyond Our Ability” – Raymond Sanchez*

ANNCR: June 27<sup>th</sup>, “Beyond Our Ability.” It’s fair to say that most of us, at least on the surface, want to be good, right? The number of causes, movements and volunteer opportunities that exist tells us that we want to feel good about ourselves, and this is often achieved by...doing...good. We have a moral compass – and sometimes a moral calculator – that seem to chime in when they feel we haven’t been all that good. But being good is hard...(*Knowingly*) isn’t it. We can have positive desires and intentions, but still manage to foul up...much like Raymond. Raymond had good aspirations, but he always seemed to fall short. Was being good beyond his ability? I’ll let him tell you, as he shares with us his true story on this Unshackled Daily Devotional.

RAY: When I was born, my mother dreamed that I would be a great musician. When I was eight, her dream was nudged along when a violin teacher gave me lessons in exchange for running errands. We moved to New York when I was fifteen, and I organized a small group of musicians that played on the radio and in night clubs. Sadly, I came home drunk many nights.

Mother intervened by trying to get me to go to a small mission nearby, but I had no interest. I was even less interested when she tried to get me to marry a Syrian girl. I wanted to choose my own wife from the Hispanic community. But as soon as I met this girl, I changed my mind. Her four brothers opposed our marriage, but I tried to be a good husband, and they let us alone.

Well, within a year I was a drunken, no-good husband. Still I didn't abandon my music and composing. But drinking ruined my health, and I was hospitalized for surgery. A nurse brought me a portion of scripture to read — the Beatitudes — that I didn't understand until she explained how Christ died for our sins. Trusting Him for salvation would give me eternal life, she said.

That day I began trusting Jesus with my life. I left the hospital and went to a small mission where I surrendered all to Him. How He changed my life! He made me a good father to my children and a good husband to my wife. I'm Raymond Sanchez, and since then I have written songs praising the Lord Who set me free.

ANNCR: The apostle Paul reminds believers in Philippians chapter 2, where we pick it up in verse 12, “...*work out your own salvation with fear and*

*trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*” Friend, Paul commands believers to take ownership of their actions. Yet, he reminds them that it is God who will work out these good things in them. So the answer to Raymond’s conundrum? “Yes,” being good was beyond his own ability – as it is for all of us. But when we surrender everything, even our efforts, to Jesus, we allow His goodness to grow and flourish within us. Will you receive this truth today?

CREDITS: Unshackled Daily Devotionals are produced by Pacific Garden Mission along with our Unshackled Audio Dramas. To find even more true stories of God’s saving, transforming power, visit our website, [unshackled.org](http://unshackled.org).

This episode was written by Jack Odell and Elizabeth Kupferschmid and narrated by Tim Gregory and Russ Reed.

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