



God at the Center: Habits for Spiritual Growth – #3

Cultivating Dependence on God – Claiming God's Promises for Yourself

I would like to engage you in a Lenten Series – one inspired by the author Luis Palau as part of the *Discovery Series of Our Daily Bread*. In this Lenten Series, we will be challenged but mostly encouraged to establish or strengthen some spiritual habits that will materialize into a closer relationship with God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Journey with me and find yourself in a time of renewal leading to a lifetime of healthy habits.

While there's no formula that delivers the ultimate faith-filled life, God has given us ways to daily strengthen our faith. *God at the Center: Habits for Spiritual Growth* outlines clear steps we can take to build the fundamentals of faith to spiritual maturity: Talking with God in Prayer, Reading God's Book, Cultivating Dependence on God, Practicing Obedience to God, Serving God and Others, Becoming God's Ambassador.

As a child, I had some older friends and relatives who used to joke and tell stories. Some of these stories were not always convincing but at that age, I believed most of them to be true. The same can be said of some of the stories in Scripture – they raise all sorts of questions.

So, what sections or stories of the Bible have seemed the most difficult to believe? Prophecy? Narrative portions? Doctrinal passages? God promises? Many of us have trouble believing the promises of God. And I say that because they sound nice, and for the most part they give us hope and cheer us up. But from time to time we wonder: Are they really true?

Subconsciously, at least, we question whether or not God's promises are kept.

In Joshua 21:45 we read, "Not one of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass." Solomon later declared, "Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses." (1 Kings 8:56)

Some of God's promises were made specifically to individuals as in the case with Joshua (Joshua 14:9), to groups (Deuteronomy 15:18) or to nation (Haggai 1:13). So, one ought to be cautious – careful not to arbitrarily claim the promises of God intended for someone else.

Now, given life experiences, not all is well along our journeys, as such we question these promises more in times of crisis. It is in these times that we dig deeper into scripture to be comforted for example in the words of the apostle Paul: "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) That promise is a fortress when the storms of life beat against us.

Contrary to the popular notion of being self-reliant and independent, we cannot go through life without depending on others and most obviously, God almighty – our creator, redeemer and sustainer.

So, as you seek to put God at the Center and nurture some habits for Spiritual Growth, I encourage you: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes." (Proverbs 3:5-7a)

God has gone on record many times throughout Scripture and has given us – pilgrims on the journey "very great and precious promise" (2 Peter 1:4) and if there is one thing we can do to God is hold God to those promises.

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