



God at the Center: Habits for Spiritual Growth – #5

Serving God and Other – Recognizing How Any Old Bush Will Do

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.

I was at our Church's National Youth Gathering in Atlanta, GA when a speaker Tony Campolo captured my interest with the words, "After what he (Jesus) did for me, there isn't anything I wouldn't do for him!" I still remember every moment of that night in the Georgia Dome, July 22, 1994.

Dr. Campolo shared a story about two soldiers engaged in combat when one was badly injured... his buddy then lifted him and carried him to safety and for treatment. Miraculously, he survived and they stayed close together.

Years after, now retired from service, the one who carried his buddy to safety was now ill and in need of daily

medical treatment – and as you guessed, the one who was carried to safety during the war now cares for the one who rescued him. His response when asked why he cares for this individual so much was, "After what he did for me, there isn't anything I wouldn't do for him."

I know as you read this message, you are wondering: "What has God in Jesus done for me?" The simple answer would be: "He died for you – freeing you from sin and death." But the deeper question is why would God make such a sacrifice for you? And to that question, I would say, because God loves you!

Hearing Dr. Campolo's message that night was my *burning bush* moment recalling Moses' call to service by God as he was living a life as fugitive following the slaying of an Egyptian slave master. Moses did not feel worthy of being called by God to be the liberator of the Israelites from their Egyptian captors but God knew better.

Now, even more important to me is what God used to get the attention of Moses – a bush; scripture doesn't tell us that it's a pretty rose bush or a nicely trimmed hedge. No, in the desert wilderness, it was probably a bunch of dry sticks with hardly any foliage, yet Moses had to take off his shoes because God was present in the bush.

For Luis Palau, he felt like that ordinary bush at one point of his life. He wrote, "All my reading, studying, asking questions, and trying to model myself after other people was worthless. Everything in my ministry was worthless unless God was in me."

Is God dwelling inside of you? I pray so because God has a track record of using ordinary people to do extraordinary things – "Any Old Bush will do, as long as God IS in the Bush." Be the best bush you can be – engage the work of God anywhere you find yourself, be it at home, work, school or church. Be of service!

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