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Walking Dusty...

teacher: Dan Crist

In *Radical Together*, Platt asks the question: “Who else would we have [God] exalt?” (p. 104) Without meaning to, I often elevate myself. I pride myself on being a good mom and teacher. I want others to notice my good deeds or something I’m working on. I frequently value what others think more than what God says. Perhaps it’s human nature, but look what happens when we exalt ourselves: abuse, divorce, deteriorating neighborhoods, failing schools, poverty, corrupt governments... In our selfishness, we make a mess of things!

Dan said God set the bar low for us. All He asks is that we share our God-story with others. We should be talking about what He has done in our lives with our children, co-workers, and neighbors. Even with all of our failures, God has called us into relationship with Him – not so that we would be lifted up – but so that He would be exalted. All I have to do is share my story...and I often don’t get that right either.

“Therefore, tell Israel, ‘Message of God, the Master: I’m not doing this for you, Israel. I’m doing it for me, to save my character, my holy name, which you’ve blackened in every country where you’ve gone. I’m going to put my great and holy name on display, the name that has been ruined in so many countries, the name that you blackened wherever you went. Then the nations will realize who I really am, that I am God, when I show my holiness through you so that they can see it with their own eyes. For here’s what I’m going to do: I’m going to take you out of these countries, gather you from all over, and bring you back to your own land. I’ll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I’ll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I’ll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that’s God-willed, not self-willed. I’ll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands. You’ll once again live in the land I gave your ancestors. You’ll be my people! I’ll be your God! I’ll pull you out of that stinking pollution. I’ll give personal orders to the wheat fields, telling them to grow bumper crops. I’ll send no more famines. I’ll make sure your fruit trees and field crops flourish. Other nations won’t be able to hold you in contempt again because of famine. And then you’ll think back over your terrible lives—the evil, the shame—and be thoroughly disgusted with yourselves, realizing how badly you’ve lived—all those obscenities you’ve carried out. I’m not doing this for you. Get this through your thick heads! Shame on you. What a mess you made of things, Israel! Message of God, the Master: On the day I scrub you clean from all your filthy living, I’ll also make your cities livable. The ruins will be rebuilt. The neglected land will be worked again, no longer overgrown with weeds and thistles, worthless in the eyes of passersby. People will exclaim, “Why, this weed patch has been turned into a Garden of Eden! And the ruined cities, smashed into oblivion, are now thriving!” The nations around you that are still in existence will realize that I, God, rebuild ruins and replant empty waste places. I, God, said so, and I’ll do it. Message of God, the Master: Yet again I’m going to do what Israel asks. I’ll increase their population as with a flock of sheep. Like the milling flocks of sheep brought for sacrifices in Jerusalem during the appointed feasts, the ruined cities will be filled with flocks of people. And they’ll realize that I am God.” (Ezekiel 36: 22 – 38 THE MESSAGE)

I've read these verses over and over; they speak volumes. But instead of struggling to believe WHY God would use me, I need to obey when He gives me opportunities to share my story. God alone is worthy. It really is all about Him. I just need to get "me" out of the way.

Questions to Consider:

The Greatest Commandment is "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37, 39) Do we love our neighbor so that we get the credit, or so that God gets the glory?

If God really is working for His glory and not yours, what changes in your life?

What does your life look like if you could truly die to self?

Does your life glorify you or does it glorify God?

Is prayer fundamental or supplemental in your life?

Who else would we have God exalt?

Bible verse references: Ezekiel 36: 22 - 38