

# Transformed!

Until he was 25, Todd Phillips had just one goal: to become filthy rich and move to a deserted island so that he'd never have to deal with people again. And until the end of 1993, it looked as if he might achieve it, starting a series of popular night-clubs and other successful ventures. As up-and-coming as he was, however, he recognized an emptiness that no amount of money, an expanding network of acquaintances, or a beautiful girlfriend could fill.

That was when Todd had his literal "mountaintop" experience with God, and his whole life—including his goals and desires—changed in an instant. In the middle of a cold January night in 1994, Todd Phillips met Jesus on a hilltop overlooking Denver, Colorado. His friend, Todd Riddle,

who had become a Christian singer a few years before, was the catalyst God used to show the young entrepreneur how truly bankrupt his life was. The singer challenged his friend to take his new CD out to the

**"Everyone has a story to tell, even if it's as simple as the blind man who says, 'One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!'"**  
(John 9:25).

hilltop and talk to God. This challenge came after Phillips had called him every night for a month

to ask questions about a relationship with Christ, only to hang up whenever Riddle would ask him to pray.

"I was unbelievable," laughs Phillips, remembering the patience of his friend. But after vehemently declaring that he wouldn't pray and hanging up again, Todd went up to the hilltop and talked to God.

You can still hear the affection in his voice as he remembers the event. "It was like God the Father took my resume of sin and handed me back a blank slate. And I remember driving off that hill thinking, 'Man, this is it. I'm born again. I'm breathing eternally right now. I'm going to be hanging out forever in heaven.'"

The experience was so powerful, he signed away his interest in several thriving businesses, left

Todd Phillips' dreams for success changed the instant God breathed eternal life into him.

his live-in girlfriend and moved back to Texas to be disciplined by his friend-turned-mentor. He read the Bible all day long for a month and went to church to meet with pastors every night.

Finally, Todd needed to help his friend pay rent, so he secured a job and went back to school to finish his bachelor's degree in business administration. Along the way, he sought out a contingent of his old, unsaved friends and gathered them into a Bible study. His singles' pastor encouraged him to teach the group even though he had no experience and had only been a Christian for a year.

by Randall Bonser

PHOTO CREDIT ED LALLO



# True Riches

Todd regularly encourages believers to reach out and share Christ with others, even if they've never had formal Bible training. He uses the example of his marriage: "I haven't been married that long, and I don't know everything there is to know about how to be married, but I can tell you very clearly about the honeymoon!

"Everyone has a story to tell, even if it's as simple as the blind man [in the Bible] who says, 'One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!'" (John 9:25).

After five weeks of telling his own story and studying the book *Experiencing God*, one of

his buddies got saved, a transforming experience for both men—or as Todd puts it—"It rocked my world!" A year later the Bible study that had started with five had grown to more than one hundred, and people were coming to Christ regularly through Todd's passion and teaching.

"That opened my eyes to exactly what God wanted me to do. I was to reach out to my generation. I looked around at the people in my age group and none of them claimed to have any relationship with Jesus. I said, 'They're hopeless, they're clueless, they don't know there's a heaven and a hell, they

have no idea who God is and they need to know what I know!' It was that simple."

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So Todd quit his job and took a part-time position at his church. He was fearful of how he would make ends meet and unsure if God really wanted him to give his life to "full-time" ministry work. But the day he quit, God confirmed Todd's step of faith by providing three different speaking opportunities at churches and conferences.

"I feel like God very clearly said, 'You stepped out in faith, you've been obedient to me. Well done good and faithful

**A**s a budding entrepreneur, all Todd Phillips wanted was to get rich. But the more he tried to put the pieces of his life together, the more miserable he became. When he finally met Christ, he came with a "resume of sin": drugs, greed, disobedience to his parents, living with his girlfriend. Fortunately, God is not like a human employer—He didn't require Todd to "clean up his act" before accepting him.

Todd explains: "In Romans 5:8 it says, 'God demonstrated his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.'—Not when you get your act together, not when you clean yourself up. Christ died to take away your sin in whatever shape you're in."

Salvation is a free gift, as it says in Romans 6:23: the normal wages for your sin is eternal separation from God, but through Christ Jesus, God gives us eternal life as a free gift.

After trying the party life, the entrepreneurial life, the so-called love life, Todd realized that the only fulfilling life is new life in Christ. All it takes is talking honestly to God and asking Him to give you a clean slate—a brand new heart. God promises that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

If you decide to seek a new life in Christ, share the good news with someone at the church that gave you this magazine.



Todd enjoys an afternoon Bible study with some friends.

servant, here's where I'm taking you."

Todd believes a person's calling in life comes from a God-given passion in a specific area for which God also equips that person with appropriate gifts and talents. More importantly, everyone is called to "24-7" ministry, regardless of who signs the believer's paycheck each week.

"I think being a career minister or evangelist is no different than being called to be a physician or a construction worker. We're all put in specific environments to minister. Remember the television show, "Charlie's Angels?" They would wait around until they got their assignment from Charlie, then they would go undercover until they solved the

crime. I believe every job that we perform, every sport that we play, every hobby that we have is a gift from God for the purpose of putting us in front of our next assignment. Our job is to find the next opportunity to share in the passion of God's heart—His life-changing love for the lost."

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