

# Dependence on God

Today in Western culture we are taught that independence and self-reliance are the most important virtues that we can possess. In religious circles we are taught that we are dependent on God for our salvation because we are sinners and desperately in need of the help and deliverance that only he can provide. This is true. But in the teaching of this we are so often left with the impression deep down in our beings that the dependence is because of our sin alone. This is not true. We were originally designed to be dependent on God. Adam was given great power to be in charge of the entire natural world. But he had this power in dependence on God. He lost this power when he took his life into his own hands. Jesus said that he did not do anything that he did not see the Father doing. Jesus walked in total dependence on God. Dependence on God is not wrong. Dependence on God is good. When our sins are dealt with by the cross of Christ, we are free from the consequences of them. But we were never supposed to be free from God. He wants us to draw from him continually. He delights in meeting our every need. The life of faith is an adventure with God meeting every need, even anticipating our needs and arranging the supply before we ask. This is healthy Christianity. To walk in grace, when we can only stop our sinning by degrees, requires us to be willingly dependent as a life long lifestyle. Only after we embrace this, can we truly understand grace. Many earthly dependencies have unwanted side effects.

Dependence on God has no unwanted side effects. The unwanted side effects of drugs, for example, are that they can in themselves be damaging to a person. Also, they will lead to a dependency which will take a person away from the good things in life. And, last but not least, the supply of the drug may be interrupted or stopped and painful withdrawal will result. A dependency on God will not lead to any of these consequences. God is not damaging to the person. His goal is to free the person and help that person to realize all his or her potential. A dependency on God will not take us away from the good things in life. Rather it will bring us into a complete fulfillment of the good things in life like health and love and relationship and joy. Finally, the prospect of not being able to receive God or the blessings of God at any time in the future is not possible, at least not from God's side of the relationship. God is always available to us and always will be in this life and in eternity. This dependency does certainly imply relationship. We are to live

in a living relationship with a living God. This is not a book of rules. The rules, called the Law, were added because of the growth of disobedience. But rules have never been the object of God's relationship with his people. A religion of rules is not the Christian faith; it is not the faith that Paul teaches; it is not the faith that Jesus teaches. They teach relationship with the living God. Sometimes it is easier for people to learn to walk by rule than by relationship. Sometimes people prefer rules to relationship. "Just tell me what the rules are and I will do it." Relationship is harder than rules because there is a living being on both sides of the issue. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is one of relationship. Rules lead to death; relationship leads to life. They say that the three most important things in real estate are location, location and location. The three most important things in the Christian life are relationship, relationship and relationship; relationship first with God and then with our fellow human beings.

The peace of God that accompanies grace is a special peace. The peace of God is not dependent on circumstances. Circumstances can be difficult and we can still have the peace of God that comes from walking in relationship with him. The peace of God passes or goes beyond understanding. Sometimes, this makes Christians look irrational. This is not because they do not understand rational conduct but because they have been enabled to live beyond the rational when necessary. Most of the time they will probably live within rational guidelines and understanding.