



Dependence or Independence?

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THE PROBLEM

OF

INDEPENDENCE

FOR

THE CHRISTIAN

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Preface

The title of this booklet is self-explanatory. The subject is detailed to show the pathway of faith to the Christian. It is not all-inclusive, only directional.

This booklet attempts to make clear the difference between the natural man's religious nature and the path of truth as revealed in Scripture, for the new man in Christ (Colossians 3:10).

The Christian is called by God to walk in the Spirit. The Christian may stumble, possess weaknesses, fall down, or fail to understand. Nevertheless, the Shepherd's voice, by the Spirit, bids His sheep to follow Him, with Scripture giving understanding. The life of Jesus in the Christian can only be experienced through a dependent life on Him. Living in this dependent life, is where a Christian is able to hear the Chief Shepherd's voice.

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God, and not of us”
(2 Corinthians 4:7).

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February 16, 2004

Revisited July 10, 2006

1. The Problem of Independence for the Christian

Independency has become an acceptable way of life for many Christians today, with most thinking it to be quite normal. Webster's Dictionary describes "independent" in several ways. For our information, let's look at some of these as they are defined.

(A.) The **first** describes "independent" in this manner; "**not subject to another's authority.**" This has the implication of being lawless, or not influenced by lawful control.

(B.) The **second** word used is "autonomous." The meaning of this is; "**to be involved with one's self or to be distant from others.**"

(C.) The **third** meaning is "**free from authority.**" The implication is to be exempt or without external authority.

(D.) The **fourth** definition is "**not to recognize any jurisdiction.**" A person or persons making themselves exempt from authority, although it may exist for some.

(E.) The **fifth** definition to look at is "**not depending on another for value.**" This thought projects the idea that one's own value is better than that of others, or another does not have value equal to oneself, or one has no need of other people.

The first occurrence of independency from God was with Satan, before the world was created. The event is recorded in Scripture, in Isaiah 14:13, and Ezekiel 28:13-16. These chapters give Scriptural understanding of how Satan arrived at his present place of being the enemy of God. The creation of man (Adam), was a reflection of the Creator, without divinity. Scripture shows us all mankind would be Satan's target to evangelize into his kingdom. Man's protection against Satan's deceptive enticements could only be found in total dependence on Jehovah.

Satan, in attempting to evangelize the creation of God to his own fallen place, looked to the woman in the garden for a hearing ear. Satan's words of deception to the woman and her response, proved fruitful for the kingdom of darkness. God, in the beginning, made man in His image and after His likeness. Satan came tempting the woman, to bring man down to his image and after his likeness.

2. Garden Experience

The Genesis account, in chapters two and three, is the story of man (Adam), who was entrusted with headship

over all that Jehovah had made. Man's fulfillment would only be realized in occupying his God given place. The only thing needed for this pattern to continue, was for Adam and Eve to continue walking with Jehovah and trusting the word of their creator.

Then Satan went to the woman with a new, but dark set of ideas that would direct the woman after Satan's own nature and outlook. Satan questioned the woman regarding God's prohibition (with the penalty of death) for eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "Then the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5).

Satan was telling the woman to come out from under her dependence on Jehovah and His authority over her, and she would be like God, knowing good and evil. These words were spoken to the woman with the idea that she lacked something. In this proposal, it was no longer her needs being met, but her desires being stirred, with the promise of fulfilling those desires in a new age.

Here the woman was faced with a decision; to continue to be dependent on the Word of Jehovah and stay in fellowship with Him, or to move toward a new age. She decided to partake of the tree and enticed her husband to do the same, thus moving away from the intimacy and Word of Jehovah. The consequence of the woman's decision and Adam's in following her is shown to us in 1 Corinthians 15:22, "**as in Adam all die.**" The woman made her decision, based on independence. She relied on the value of her own judgment, even though it was contrary to the word of Jehovah.

"Then to Adam He said, because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:17-19).

That which was to raise Adam above a God dependent position, lowered him to being a sinful man, with death as its reward. “Therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken” (Genesis 3:23). Now, man would earn his living in a hostile, foreign environment. To the woman Jehovah said; “In pain, childbirth will take place. Your desire will be to your husband, and your husband will rule over you” (Genesis 3:16).

In this new place, Adam is seen as a fleshly (natural) man with the penalty of independence bearing its fruit. The new age movement had begun.

3. Jesus as the Example

Jesus was a man born into this world of a woman just as we are, yet unlike us, because God was His Father (Luke 1:35). Jesus would live in perfect dependency upon His Father. He would be an example for all to follow who would live a life in faith on His Father.

In Matthew 4:1-11, Satan is tempting the second Adam (Jesus) with a choice of direction. This temptation was like

the temptation of the first Adam in the Garden of Eden. The choice Jesus made was based on obeying His Father. Likewise, in Romans 5:15-21, we view the results of independency or dependency in two men, the first Adam, and the second Adam. Scripture shows us that Jesus is God the Son (John 1:1), however, He put aside His divinity (Philippians 2:5-8), to live as man, totally obedient to His Father. Jesus said, "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8:29). Jesus also said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

In John 14:9, Jesus said, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father." In His life of dependence, Jesus provides us with a clear picture of the Father. Because Jesus was the Son of God, it was a normal for Him to reflect His Father's character in all things. It would have been quite unnatural for Jesus to do anything independent, autonomous, or apart from His Father's will. Neither would He feel that His value was superior to His Father's or that His Father would have no jurisdiction over Him. In John 4:34 Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His will." With Jesus, this never changed with

circumstances. The result of Jesus living in dependence on His Father has brought eternal life to all who receive Jesus in faith (John 3:35-36). **“Where as all in Christ shall be made alive”** (1 Corinthians 15:22).

4. Practical Problems

How does this relate to the Christian? In this way; set before us are two men, two choices. The first Adam chose independence, which brought death. The second Adam chose dependence, which brought life (Romans 5:19). This same choice is set before every person, independence with eternal death as its recompense, or dependence with eternal life as its reward.

One becomes a Christian through faith in the message of the cross of Christ, and His resurrection. The Holy Spirit and Scripture bear witness to the message. The message of the cross is the instrument God uses to bring new birth, a new nature, and a new direction of heart, to all who believe God in faith. The Holy Spirit comes into the heart of every believer, to live and abide (John 15:5). In 1 John 4:17, we read, “even as He is, we also are in this world.” A Christian

has been given the Spirit of Christ, the very nature of God, to be as Jesus is in this world. The question for a believer is how does a person stay in the excellence of this new course? This is achieved by faith in God, which brings one away from dependence on self.

This problem of self-dependence is what the Galatians in Asia Minor experienced in the early Church. They were attempting to find favor with God by their own abilities and works. Paul wrote this to them; “Beginning in the Spirit (dependence on Christ), will you now be made perfect by the flesh (dependence on the flesh or self)?” (Galatians 3:3). Dependent faith is not optional or interchangeable with works, if the Christian desires to enter and live in a place of freedom in the kingdom of God. The Spirit of God cannot set the Christian free to follow Jesus, if he chooses to live the same independent life he followed before he came to Christ. Jesus came into this world, died on the cross, and was raised from among the dead, to a resurrected life. He did this to gain a people for Himself who will believe Him from the heart, so He may give them His resurrected life.

The mind of God is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, and foundationally through reading of the Scriptures. To benefit from this, our natural man, (mind, emotions, and will) must submit to the new man (Christ in us). Not submitting will prevent freedom from becoming a reality in our life. Jesus came to set the captives free, to open the prison doors, to open blind eyes, and to take off the yoke of independence. But, if a person's value system is based on pursuit of self and not faith in Jesus, how can the work of God be done? True liberty is founded only on truth (Jesus).

If we make the truth of Scripture subject to our own nature, (mind, emotions, and will); we cannot come into a dependent faith, but will drift into a deceptive, independent position of heart. Scripture shows us this about ourselves, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and incurable; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). The first Adam in us, is willing to do all kinds of religious activities, but will balk at coming under the authority of the Holy Spirit through Scripture. The first Adam has his eye set upon the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, not upon the tree of life, which is Christ.

Jesus said, “Unless you become converted, and become as little children, you will in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). Jesus used children in this illustration because of their pure and simplistic response to authority. In God’s planning, simplicity is the place which He designed for all who are in Christ. The place of enjoyment in the kingdom of God is in the place of oneness with Christ. Simplicity of faith will bring us to such a place.

Active faith necessitates that we attach our hearts fully unto Jesus. Faith is the Christian’s only true pathway and will help him overcome all his feelings of weakness, brokenness, and not measuring up; as well as the effects of his sin nature, which is always quite willing to go into action. The Christian’s course is to run the race, in the joy of the Lord Jesus. As we walk in this life of faith, it is necessary to keep things out of our heart which hinder our view of Him. Some of these intruders include: philosophies, psychologies, religion, pursuit of self, this world’s hopes, and all aspirations that cannot be put into simplicity of faith in the Lord Jesus (Colossians 2:8).

The place of enjoyment for the Christian in this life is not found in the natural man (Adam), but only in the new man (Christ).

5. Dependence, The Normal Christian Life

In Romans 8:9, we are told that every Christian has the Holy Spirit living within him. It is not God's purpose that a Christian follow his own natural or carnal desires, then seek God's power to fulfill them. This can be accomplished by using a spiritual gift or talent to elevate the flesh; such as using God's word to make money, getting people to follow a charismatic leader rather than Christ, assuming a place of hierarchy, and etc. God's purpose is to reproduce the life of His Son in every Christian (Romans 8:29), and dependent faith will open the heart for the Holy Spirit to achieve God's purpose.

The words of Jesus will take on greater importance, and our own thoughts will start to have less value. We will depend on His worth more than our own. Dependent faith brings us to a submissive place in Christ, which submits to the truths taught in Scripture. Submission is not giving

mental assent to the truth, but living a life in the physical practice of following Jesus. Christian men, who submit to Christ in faith, will enter into spiritual headship. This position of headship for every Christian man is accomplished through being made a priest of God (1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Peter 2:5, 9). Many men in our day have willingly given their headship over to women. This is ignoring God's direction for a Christian man's responsibility, and brings much confusion to families, the entire body of Christ, and to all of Christendom.

Christian women are also to submit to Christ in their hearts, with the spiritual result of the outward practice of wearing a veil, or head covering when praying or prophesying (1 Corinthians 11:5-6, 13). Following the Spirit of God is the place of blessing in this matter.

It would be quite impossible to be autonomous, and yet to be following Christ in dependence at the same time. Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Finally, the jurisdiction, which the Lord Jesus has over a Christian, has been paid for in His own blood. To all who come into dependent faith, His jurisdiction is complete.

Many Christians have not understood, that when they first came to faith, God never intended for them to transfer their hope in Jesus to other things. These include: church going, church membership, church traditions, the pastor, the priest, the apostles creed, baptism, doctrines, and serving God for wages. Keeping right conduct (the law), and practicing things that take our focus off Jesus, is not what God has planned for us. Dependence on Jesus is God's answer to the Adam nature within us. The Spirit of Christ is within all who believe in faith (1 John 4:13). The fruit of the Holy Spirit will be seen in the Christian if faith is exercised. The result in the believer is the richness of the love and grace of God, seen in his heart and actions.

A believer needs to examine himself, as self-examination is a wise and healthy spiritual work (1 Corinthians 11:31; 2 Corinthians 13:5; 2 Timothy 3:16). Self-examination is not for the purpose of condemnation but to bring a change of heart, and mind and direction in a person's life.

This is a question all Christians need to answer for themselves: Is my belief a mental assent to known facts about Jesus, paying lip service to these truths while being

determined to go on in my own ways? If so, that person will get no spiritual benefit from the kingdom of God. We should ask ourselves this: Is my faith in Jesus being allowed to take up the preeminent place in my heart? Am I allowing the faith, which I have been given, to produce a place of freedom in my heart to follow Jesus inwardly and outwardly? Am I able to agree with God, so that I am willing to live dependently upon Him?

The place of dependence is the only place we can know God and the Son of God. Only in this place can we find righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, which is the kingdom of God (Romans 14:7).

6. A Sister's Story

When I was young my whole being cried out 'I just want to be free'! To me, being free meant no one having authority over me at all. I just wanted to do my own thing and have no one tell me what to do. I was raised in church but I only went through the motions of worship. I did not accept the authority of God either. FREEDOM! Was my battle cry for many years, as I became more and more

miserable and yet continued to search for that illusive freedom that I longed for. Our world tells us to 'do your own thing'. What an enticing picture Satan paints of thoughts and deeds independent of God's will. Satan is a liar. He lied to me, as I found out. He is the father of all lies and the truth is not in him.

At the age of 35 I came to the end of MY rope. I knew at last that my way didn't work. In my very heart and soul, I cried out to the God I had really never known because of my rebellious nature. In utter anguish of soul, I asked Jesus to take my independent will and my life, and make me into what He wanted me to be.

I then started on a journey that continues one day at a time. I want to tell you a wonderful, amazing thing.....I have found what I was searching for.....FREEDOM in Jesus Christ, my Lord. Only when I gave my life and my will over to our Lord Jesus, did I know the true freedom that comes only from God. He has given me such a wonderful peace and joy. This peace and joy is what I have always searched for. I'm so thankful. Praise God. I

have found the reality of a dependent life in Jesus. He whom the Lord Jesus sets free....is free indeed! **Dottie**

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