



Total Dependence on God

A Sample Extract

The Reason: Why this book?

Jesus was totally dependent on His Father. As believers we are to be like Jesus. Therefore, we should totally depend on God. That's it in a nutshell. Book written.

I could stop there. It's that simple. But, then again, I've had over 15 years to think about this, so perhaps I ought to unpack it a little bit more and explain what I mean.

For me, it began in 1996. I was struggling in my Christian life. Everything seemed hard. I was dealing with emotional hurts from the past, and there seemed to be no end of 'stuff' coming to the surface. By 'stuff' I mean things like insecurity, rejection, and bad attitudes. I just wanted to be free and whole. Speaking to a Christian friend one day, I asked her, "What can I do to work through all this 'stuff'?" She replied that I needed to totally depend on God. The phrase, 'totally depend on God,' was completely new to me. I didn't really understand it, but it grabbed my attention. My friend had to explain it to me again in words I was more familiar with, but it struck a chord. It excited me then and it still does today.

From that time on I realised God was drawing my attention to total dependence on God. I might be sitting in a church service listening to the preacher and as he/she mentioned something about dependence on God my ears pricked up. Yet the person sitting next to me, listening to the same sermon, got something entirely different out of it. I might be listening to a Christian teaching tape and something about depending on God stood out, so I marked the tape "TDOG" (Total Dependence On God) to remind me to return to it later. I might be reading a Christian book and a phrase or paragraph stood out relating to dependence on God, so I marked the page and put a "TDOG" sticker on the cover.

As months became years I began wondering whether God was bringing all these ideas, quotes and teachings to me for a reason. Was this just for me, or was I meant to do something with it – such as write a book? In 2008, with a change of residence more suitable for writing and taking up an offer of Voluntary Early Severance from paid work, I began to write. In the end it took much longer than expected, and by the time I returned to paid employment in 2009, the book was only two-thirds complete. It then took more than 2 years before I found enough time to carry on and finish the book.

The Subject: What is dependence?

For a long time, I struggled to come up with a simple definition of 'Total Dependence on God' and the more I read, thought and prayed, the harder the task seemed to become. Because of the huge overlap between dependence on God and faith in God, for a while, I thought dependence on God was an aspect of faith and trust. I even submitted an early sample (of the first chapter) to a publisher on that basis. The reply I received rightly pointed out that if dependence on God was an aspect of faith and trust, then why didn't I just say faith and trust? I had failed to convince the independent reader I was not dealing with faith and trust under another name. I knew dependence and faith were not the same, so I had either not explained myself clearly enough, or got the definition wrong. This led me back to basics, to the dictionary definitions of dependence in my rough notes, and as I looked at them again, the answer was right in front of me.

I have defined total dependence on God as being "totally unable to do without God". This is not the same as faith, particularly the way many understand faith as simple mental assent. It is also more than trust, although when God is the only one someone is trusting in it starts to become dependence. God's desire is that we all depend on Him, just like Jesus did. I appreciate some may not like the idea of being dependent on anyone else, even a loving heavenly Father, but total dependence on God is vital for all believers and, in this context, a good and healthy characteristic.

The Need: Why now?

In April 2008 I went into my local Christian bookshop, which was well stocked, and asked the assistant for any books on the theme of 'Dependence on God'. Five minutes later she came back and said, "No, we don't have any. Are you thinking of writing one?" This showed me that there was a definite need for teaching on this particular subject. Further Internet searches confirmed there were only a handful of books written specifically about dependence on God, all from America. These included the books of Joanie Yoder, from whose writings I have taken much inspiration.

Who is the book aimed at? Everyone who wants to grow in their Christian faith and become like Jesus through the teaching of the Bible, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. My sole objective is to help readers understand and practically apply total dependence on God in their everyday lives. From artists and lawyers to teachers and nurses, from builders and businessmen to office workers and shop managers, from students and working mums to pensioners and preachers. It is not simply for the small percentage of believers who depend on God for financial and material provision. Dependence is so much more than that.

One thing I noticed as I spoke to people from various backgrounds and traditions was that many believers, to some extent, are already depending on God, although they don't necessarily use that phrase. For those people, what I have written will confirm and strengthen them that they are on the right path. What is new is bringing all this teaching together under the theme of 'Total Dependence on God.' Highlighting this truth for a new generation, as I re-emphasise what has been known and practised for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. The Old Testament writers described dependence as relying, resting, trusting and waiting on the Lord alone. David knew God as his source of help in many kinds of situations which is reflected in the language of the Psalms. Jesus used the picture of abiding in the vine (John 15), while the apostle Paul described it as being led by, or living in, the Spirit (Galatians 5).

However the Bible writers described it, total dependence on God is more about a deepening relationship with God, than mere steps to overcoming trouble or 'stuff' as I first thought all those years ago. Nor is it simply about God meeting our material needs as some people assume. In fact, as I took time to 'fix my eyes upon Jesus', many of my issues were dealt with, not by focussing on myself, but by focussing on Him. By allowing the Word of God and the Spirit of God to do their sovereign work. I know some readers will simply want to know that in whatever they are facing right now God is still faithful. By totally depending on Him and placing the situation into His hands, He will turn the circumstances around for His glory.

Taken from the Introduction to *Total Dependence on God*

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