

7. Avoid an Independent Spirit

Nothing is more abhorrent to God than to see within His people the desire for self-control and self-dependence. This is not because of any egotism in the Almighty that requires Him to be the boss, but because He knows that when we try to run our lives on our own terms we demean ourselves and fall short of His plans and purposes for us. We must face the fact that we are helplessly dependent and that God and God alone is independent. He can exist without us but we cannot exist without Him.

The periods of revival in the Old Testament came at the high peaks of corporate worship in the life of Israel, when the people acknowledged the fact that they could not successfully run their lives on their own terms but were happy and effective only to the degree that they were dependent upon God. In the chapter before us today we see how God called His people back to dependence upon Him by encouraging them to repent: "Take words with you, and return to the Lord." This means (so I believe): "Have a clear idea of what you are repenting of." The stepping stone from independence to dependence is always repentance. There is simply no other way that it can be done. That is why in all revivals the issue of repentance becomes paramount. In revival God underlines in a dramatic way the truth that the path to a continuous relationship with Him is through repentance.

Never forget this. The key to all change is in a returning to God, for every effort to change must invoke at its core a shift in direction -- away from dependence on one's own resources to dependence on the living God.

- *Adapted from "Every Day for Jesus" by Selwyn Hughes*

Avoid an Independent Spirit Daily Quiet Times

Date	Week 7
2-Jul	2 Kings 2:1-2
3-Jul	1 Peter 2:13-15
4-Jul	1 Peter 2:18-19
5-Jul	Hebrews 10:24
6-Jul	John 15:5
7-Jul	2 Corinthians 3:1-5
8-Jul	3 John 9-11

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PART 1

Passage(s) to Study

Randy Alcorn states, "We value a man who is independent. God values a man dependent on Him. We value a man who marches to his own beat. God values a man who marches to His beat. We value a man who is his own authority, who makes up the rules as he goes along. God values a man who submits, who follows the ancient rules made by Another. We value a man who believes in himself, who makes himself great. God values a man who believes in Him, recognizing He alone is great."

Read: John 15 and write down 5-10 observations that you make about abiding in Christ and the emphasis on Christ's love for us and our love for one another. How might knowing and meditating on this chapter change your view of our need to be completely dependent on Christ and on each other?

PART 2

Questions to Ponder

[Q] If we had our dependence partly on God, and partly on something else, our focus would be divided to those different things. Have you ever considered whether or not you are trying to serve more than one master? According to Matthew 6:24 what is the result of this folly?

[Q] Read Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37; How would you describe the community relationship that believers share? What does Acts 2:42-47 reveal about the basis for our need to be connected to the body of Christ? What are the implications to the body if you 'opt out' of the fellowship of believers?

[Q] What does Hebrews 10:24-25 say about where we need to focus in order to maintain interdependence in the body of Christ? Summarize in your own words.

For further study: Throughout the New Testament, 'one another' is often used to define how we are to relate as the Body of Christ. The following references are a list of some of the 'one another' phrases used in the New Testament. Describe the relational aspect of each 'one another'. John 13:34-35; Ephesians 4:32; Hebrews 3:13; 1Peter 5:5; Romans 15:14; Romans 12:10; Romans 12:16; Galatians 5:13; James 4:11; 1Peter 4:9; Romans 14:13; James 5:16; Colossians 3:13,16; 1John 2:7

PART 3

Making it Stick

Write out 1-2 of the main things that God impressed upon you this week from your time reading the daily devotions on Avoiding an Independent Spirit.

Write out in your own words a prayer to God asking him for a dependent heart for a lifetime. A sample has been provided below:

Prayer: *Father, I see that if I stumble here, over this matter of dependence and independence, I stumble all down the line. Help me not to deny this issue but to face it and repent of it. I do so now in Jesus' Name. Amen.*

Recommended resources:

'*God Glorified in Man's Dependence*' by Jonathan Edwards, online at www.reformed.org