

Utter Dependence on God to Wear the Armor – “...apart from Me, you can do nothing.” Jesus in the Gospel of John 15:5

2008

‘Utter dependence’, God told me on my own personal Black Friday. So the battle against the temptations brought on by depression are for me to learn dependence, I pondered.

Over the weekend, I prayed for understanding of how to become utterly dependent. I looked in the dictionary for the meaning of ‘utter’ and ‘dependence.’ Utter dependence means complete, total reliance on God. Well, I *know*, in my mind, I depend on God (somewhat), but the question became, *am* I actually dependent?

So, I prayed for God to help me understand how to depend completely on Him. I also know I am prideful and independent minded, having grown up believing it as a sign of strength. During that Sunday night, I woke and lay there thinking about becoming dependent on God in practical ways. God spoke to me, telling me I must be willing to depend on Him. Ok, I answered, I’m willing. But, do you *desire* it? He persisted.

He had me there. The thing about being depressed is, it can bring us to our knees and make us willing to listen if it means relief. I was so low and wanting relief so bad, that to desire dependence on an Almighty God who says in His word that He loves me without measure, appealed to me. I understood it like when a child is willing to obey his parent is ok. But, for the child to *desire* to obey is something else. God, I prayed, I *want* to depend on You. Help me with this.

The following day, my perspective was different somehow. I began to realize how much of my relationship with God was built on grudging obedience on my part. Now, God, being a loving Father, loves us even when our motives are not the best. He has answered many of my prayers, when afterward, in light of some sin I commit, caused me to wonder why he bothers with me, knowing I am far from having it together.

As I began to put into practice dependence on my Savior by thinking of each blessing I have from Him, He began to teach me about the Breastplate of Righteousness. This piece of spiritual armor is necessary for us to stand innocent of willful sin. When I willfully sin, my conscience is no longer clear and the ensuing guilt causes me anger and frustration. (With others and myself.) God must enable me to wear this piece consistently.

How can I stand against the enemy of my soul if I give him something, some sin, with which to accuse me? If I react to depression by giving in to sin, and someone sees it, what will I do if I meet them in church? Now, all sin is forgiven for those in Christ. But, if I love my Savior, I cannot continue to sin. And, as long as my conscience functions as designed by convicting me of righteousness, I cannot teach or effectively bear witness to the love and mercy of God. So then... this piece of armor keeps us strong in the face of the enemy and when we resist Satan in the power of righteousness, he *will* flee from us.

D. Franklin Bradley – dfbradley@hopesharbor.net