

The Illusion of Independence & Self-sufficiency

If you are a typical teenager, you are giving a lot of thought to your independence. You are thinking about when you might be able to get out of the house on your own, be your own person, and take control of your choices. Some may be anticipating getting your drivers license and experiencing that bit of freedom.

But searching for independence is not just a teenage phenomena; it is core to our very existence as human beings, especially in relationship to God.

Can we truly be independent or self-sufficient? Here is a thought exercise: think about all that you are able to accomplish on your own right now (your talents, abilities, and knowledge). Now imagine yourself as a newborn baby carried out in the middle of the wilderness with no person near you for hundreds of miles. How long would you survive? Think about each thing you learned between birth and today (learning to talk, to walk, to write, etc.), and ask yourself if you could have done any of that without the help of some person or people in your life.

Satan has created illusions to trick us into believing that we are in control, that we can and should do whatever we want. And he works hard at maintaining these illusions. We must dispel his deceptions and see what is real in this world.

Reality: We need God in every aspect of our lives

God is creator of all things (Genesis 1:1). We would not even exist if it wasn't for this fact.

Not only that, God continues to keep the universe in existence. Hebrews 1:3, "He upholds the universe by the word of his power."

Consider this statement about our God that He is "the God in whose hand is your breath." (Daniel 5:23). This was said to Belshazzar, a king of Babylon, who believed that he ruled the world, but whose kingdom was immediately taken from him.

The reality is that we need God and we need his people in our lives as the following points will try to illustrate.

Illusions Satan wants us to believe:

Illusion #1: We can go it alone without God.

Satan's first lie (Genesis 3:4-5) involved deceiving man in believing that he could "be like God," making himself equal to God and not really even needing God.

This is the biggest lie that the devil perpetuates. He attempts to minimize (or even eliminate) the importance of God and deceives us into placing our trust in ourselves. In Romans 1:18ff, Paul describes people who "suppress the truth" (v. 18), who "did not honor him as God" (v. 21), and were "claiming to be wise" (v. 22). By pushing down God and elevating our own importance, we trick ourselves in thinking we are independent of God.

Even though we are created to “seek God” (Acts 17:27), the illusion of independence blinds us to our need for Him and even to the fact that “He is actually not far from each one of us.”

God has given us “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (1 Peter 1:3).

Illusion #2: We don’t need God when things are going good.

Very often we turn to God when we are in desperate need of help, and certainly we should turn to Him when in this type of need.

But when things are going well, the illusion of independence is very visible and easily believed.

God warned Israel of a time that they would “not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things.” (Deuteronomy 28:47).

The church at Laodicea had become rich and prosperous, and no were no longer dependent on God (Revelation 3:14-22). Their physical prosperity blinded them to their great spiritual need.

Illusion #3: We don’t need people of “like precious faith” in our lives.

They help restore us when we are caught in transgression (Galatians 6:1-2).

By being joined and knit together, we are able to grow into Christ (Ephesians 4:16).

I cannot provide myself everything I need spiritually. Others have talents, abilities, knowledge that I do not have, but need (1 Corinthians 12:12-30).