

*"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding."*

*~Ephesians 1:7-8*



# NEWS Regeneration

[www.RegenerationMinistries.org](http://www.RegenerationMinistries.org)

## Maturing Dependency

by Rev. Bob Ragan

Childhood is usually a wonderful time in life. It is a time to discover, explore, and become without the conscious reality that we could not exist without the care of another. Children generally exist in carefree unawareness of their total dependency on their parents. As a child becomes more cognitively aware and develops as an individual, however, a desire to escape from this dependency begins to grow. We start wanting freedom 100% freedom without restrictions and on our own terms.

As adolescents we yearn for the day we can embrace our independence. With limited vision, we see adults as having freedom without constraint. We long to be free from dependency, making our own decisions and doing what we desire. How ironic as we grow older and mature, we often find ourselves longing for those early years of blissful, childhood ignorance! As adults, we often yearn to be a bit less aware of the world around us with all its challenges and hardships.

Childhood dependency is a good thing which later helps us enter into the childlike trust and dependency which God desires and is expressed so powerfully in Mark 10:13-16: "... He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Unfortunately, those who have a past of life-dominating sin sometimes have difficulty growing into a mature, God-centered dependency. This journey toward a healthy dependency is all too often met with unhealthy reactions rather than a wholesome and good response. There are three reactions that I have seen which I believe delays our maturing into wonderful dependency on God: presumption, complacency, and resentment/ resistance.

*It is one thing to know what is right and quite another to actively choose to do what is right.*

### PRESUMPTION

There are many paths we can take in recovery from life-dominating sin. Go into any bookstore and you'll see shelves laden with a variety of self-help books. We utilize multiple resources and options for the means to overcome our struggle. Regrettably, the primary focus is all too often simply on behavior modification rather than pursuing the deepening of intimacy with God. The gaining of knowledge, application of truth, and the paradigms shifts we embrace can, and sometimes do, bring desired goals and freedom from our sin. However, these changes can shift our reliance from being on God to trusting more in our own efforts and understanding, which will ultimately lead back to failure.

I have seen individuals begin to experience victories in one particular area and then abdicate their process. Instead of seeing their sinful brokenness as multi-layered and pervasive to other areas, they make the presumption that they have "arrived" and they no longer have a problem. This presumption is derived from the faulty belief that they now know what their real issues are and their success proves a particular issue to be fully resolved. Wrong!

Although our victories do indicate the gaining of new ground, it is never achieved solely through our own efforts. The *only* role we play is solely to obey. It is God and God alone who brings us to this new place (Exodus 4:8/Ezekiel 36:24). It is God who put His Spirit in us to *move us* to follow His decrees and laws (Ezekiel 36:28). It is God who completes the good work *He has* begun in us (Philippians 1:6). As we obey, God completes His transforming work within us.

I do not want to minimize the active participation in our recovery process that is made through difficult choices and sacrifices. However, our process must always begin

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through the simple act of obedience. Once we obey, the actions we take are not derived from our own strength, but from the Presence of God who enables us to stand in our true self. This healthy, God-centered enabling is a very good thing. Without God's presence we would all wander to our own devices. Obeying God's will allows us to enter into His purposes which He actively enables us to accomplish.

When our sense of security in one area is derived from victories, then our reliance can so easily be placed on achievements rather than dependency on God. We become vulnerable to the presumption God is somehow *needed less* in this area. This is not so! Our level of dependency on God that we needed on square one is the same—perhaps more—and we continue to need it as we mature during our journey. God demonstrates his trustworthiness as we place our dependency in Him to work through an area of our life. Our dependency on Him will grow as He continues to work and refine this and other areas in our life.

Oswald Chambers states it best in his January 12<sup>th</sup> reflection from *My Utmost for His Highest*: “God is making us spell out our own souls. It is a slow work, so slow it takes God all time and eternity to make a man and woman after His own purposes... We have to get rid of the idea that we understand ourselves, it is the last conceit to go. The only One who understands us is God. The greatest curse in spiritual life is

conceit.” Presumption stands in the face of our utter dependency upon God and delays our becoming.

### COMPLACENCY

The difference between complacency and presumption has to do with the sin of sloth. Sloth, which is not mere laziness, is when we make the choice to stop becoming. It is a *passivity* resulting in non-action. Presumption is more of a mental, cognitive process presuming we have arrived. Complacency is associated with the will where we make the choice to no longer press into the hard work required for the journey of becoming. We embrace inactivity. It is one thing to know what is right and quite another to actively choose *to do* what is right.

Complacency and sloth are much intertwined. Does sloth open the door to complacency or does complacency open the door to sloth? I'm uncertain. However, complacency is a slow, insidious process whereby we begin to acquiesce to the lowest common denominator. The end result is an atrophy of the will and an unwillingness to move forward. Complacency grows out of the soil of presumption; if I've arrived then less participation or effort is necessary. There is an abdication of will whereby we no longer are dependent on God and begin to take God's provision for granted. This is an attitude problem.

We can know and rely upon God's promises to provide for our every need. When my relationship with God is motivated by love and intimacy, my heart is overwhelmed by His mercy and grace. The attitude of my heart is one of humble gratitude and acknowledgement of my utter need of Him. God encourages my dependency on Him which allows Him to reveal even more the depths of love He has for me. My need for oxygen, food, or relationship does not make me “needy”. Likewise, my true need for God does not make me needy but actually leads me to become whole and complete.

In my life, there's a balance where I recognize my dependency on God and yet have the capacity to embrace an active, dynamic faith. I know my human frailty, but in spite of it God is transforming me into something which is beyond my limited comprehension (1 Corinthians 2:9). In my childlike trust, I know I can depend upon Him so I can do all things through His strength (Philippians 4:13). I embrace the joy of my dependency without it being an indicator of something negative or being less.

In true dependency, I celebrate my smallness and at the same time experience the freedom to become. It's like early

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### Please Pray With Us . . .

#### PRAY FOR:

- The board of directors as we are beginning some exciting changes.
- Venues for our spring fundraisers in Northern Virginia and Baltimore. Opposition from a potential venue has occurred.
- Financial stability. We had a significant downturn in donor numbers between 2008 and 2009; possibly a result of the recession.

#### WE THANK GOD FOR:

- His healing hand in Alan Medinger's life. Alan's leukemia is in remission and he is working on his 2nd book.
- Remarkably dedicated Living Waters leadership teams in Northern Virginia and Baltimore.
- New staff in the Baltimore office: Robert Passman (Men's Ministry Associate) and Matt Pladna (Database Specialist).

For more information or in-depth monthly prayer requests,  
E-mail [info@RegenerationMinistries.org](mailto:info@RegenerationMinistries.org).

**Maturing Dependency**

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childhood where I was totally dependent on my parents but yet was able to move forward, exploring the possibilities at hand. This has become a mature, blissful dependency in which I am not ignorantly unaware but, rather, experience a grateful and humble awareness of my dependency on God.

**RESISTANCE & RESENTMENT**

Presumption and/or complacency set the stage for resistance. If we have presumed we've arrived, then there isn't a need for us to be dependent. We resist recognizing a need of anyone fearing we'll appear "needy". If we have allowed the presence of sloth and a growth of complacency, then resistance is rooted in our passivity: "Why should I bother?" We are inhibited from rising up and acting on right choices. These issues block our capacity to see that we have an attitude problem.

**In order for us to become the men and women God has created us to be, we must discern any resistance or resentment to our dependency on God.**

We also live in a culture that encourages self-reliance. It promotes the achieving of success and all too often turns a blind eye to illegitimate means of its gain. We are encouraged on television, in magazines and books to have an independent spirit. There are many good aspects to independence. But being independent can also make us resist acknowledging our healthy need or dependency on others. In our culture the very word "dependency" has a negative

association which can significantly influence our understanding of it.

The maintaining of control is an underlying drive I have frequently observed in those struggling with life-dominating sin. The desire to be free from the sin becomes a drive to gain total control over any aspect which might make that person vulnerable to that sin. The focus shifts to "being in control," taking charge and making sure that there is no risk. Dependency is not part of their vocabulary because they are in charge. These people who desire to be in control have often had the experience of being let down by those they were dependent on in the past. This can lead to the feeling that no one can be fully trusted and control must be maintained at all costs.

The influence of our culture and these reactions to our brokenness set the stage for us to be resistant to growing in our dependency on God. Doesn't God call us to be strong and very courageous? Doesn't He call us to stand for truth? Yes, He does but it is only after we have humbled ourselves

before His Cross, and have acknowledged our total need of Him. "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, and only You have I sinned and done evil in Your sight..." (Psalm 51:3-4a) There needs to be a healthy fear of God in response to His holiness and righteousness.

Not only is there resistance to dependency but there can also be resentment to it. We all too often strive in our flesh to be an overcomer but never quite gain the full victory we desire. In our frustration, we resent having to acknowledge our sometimes repeated failures and need for help. We just don't want to admit our inability to overcome sin. We want to be self-sufficient. We want to never struggle or be tempted again. We resent the fact there will always be a place of weakness this side of heaven. We resent having to admit current the condition of our heart.

In order for us to become the men and women God has created us to be, we must discern any resistance and/or resentment to our dependency on God. There must be a willingness to admit our need and any associated negative reactions which may hinder the acknowledgment of it.

**ACCEPTANCE**

With greater regularity we need to incorporate step 10 of the 12 steps which asks us to bravely take a moral inventory of our lives. There is wisdom in stopping and discerning where we are in our recovery process. Not only will this help prevent the insidious slipping in of presumption or complacency, but this self-examination will also allow any unrealized expectations and resulting emotions, like resentment, to surface. Periodically doing this step has allowed me to reflect on how God has proven Himself faithful in bringing me to where I am today and also to where He will take me tomorrow.

Our recovery process becomes burdensome when we take on the mantle of the one being in charge. Weariness and hopelessness enter in when the flesh fails to live up to the demands placed on it. Paul states it so well at the end of Colossians 2 when he indicates our following of the law and flesh-striving principles have no value for restraining sensual indulgence. Accepting our dependency on God releases us from having to prove ourselves or take control.

I heard Charles Stanley recently state that when we choose to obey God, He is responsible for the consequences. However, when we choose to disobey God, then we are the one responsible for the consequences. The young child choosing to trust in his or her parents for their care releases the

## MINISTRY NEWS

### Next Men's CrossCurrent Begins March 29<sup>th</sup>

If you or someone you know is a man struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions, consider joining the next *CrossCurrent* program, beginning at the end of March in Fairfax, Virginia. This is an 8-week program specifically designed for men wanting to begin exploring what it means to find freedom from unwanted same-sex attractions and behavior. Led by Peter Mitchell and a small team of other men who themselves have experienced Christ's healing love in this area of their lives, this is a safe and supportive environment to begin. **For more information, contact Peter in our Northern Virginia office at 703-591-HOPE.**

### Next Rescue Program Begins April 6<sup>th</sup>

This 12-week session is specifically designed to help all men gain a greater capacity to walk in ongoing sexual purity. The focus of these 12 weeks is on transforming our minds and hearts with truth. We live in a culture that is awash with subtle deceptions about sex, temptation, men, women, and God. *Rescue* provides a confidential and grace-filled environment to begin replacing those subtle lies with Christ's loving truth. Join other men on the journey toward sexual purity and deeper intimacy with Jesus. **For more information, contact Josh Glaser in our Baltimore office at 410-661-0284.** Registration for this program fills up fast, so contact us soon!

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responsibility of any resulting consequences. When the young child chooses to ignore this parental covering, they are responsible for any immediate consequences. And yet, when his children make foolish choices, God still steps in and actually can use the consequences for our good (Romans 8:28). Even when we choose to sin, God will instruct our hearts, turning it into opportunity for growth.

When we choose to release ourselves to God's total care, we will be better able to see all which we encounter as opportunities for continued growth. If we accept the fact that we are not the one in charge, then temptations or challenges are actually seen as sovereign opportunities for God to prove His faithfulness to us. Our utter dependency on Him allows us incredible freedom to breathe and be free from striving. Although there will be times when we have to make some very courageous and painful choices, as soon as we choose to obey, God comes in with everything we need to overcome. My closing prayer for myself and for you is: "In my growing dependency on You, Jesus be formed in me." ■

## FINANCIAL NEWS

As many of you remember, the end of the summer/beginning of the fall was a difficult time for Regeneration financially. We used the full reserve fund we save for lean times just like that, but we also had to put a few important projects on hold until we were more financially stable.

Many of you responded generously to the appeals we made between October and December, which was a great help. We are so grateful and we've resumed the projects mentioned. But we still ended the year \$14,000 behind budget. This is of particular concern because November and December are usually when giving is highest, and we count on this to help us through leaner times throughout the rest of the year.

Please pray for Regeneration's finances as we begin 2010, and if you are able to give a special gift (big or small) at this time, it would help the ministry tremendously! Thank you for your concern and prayerful consideration.

## Regeneration Is . . .

### Staff Team

**Joshua Glaser**  
Executive Director

**Rev. Bob Ragan**  
Northern Virginia  
Director

**The Rev. Peter Mitchell**  
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**Matt Pladna**  
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**Cheryl Durgin**  
Administrative Assistant

**Alan Medinger**  
Founder

### Groups and Programs

**Baltimore, MD**

- Living Waters
- Rescue  
(Sexual Purity Group)
- New Directions
- Just for Wives

**Northern, VA**

- Living Waters
- Women's Group
- Wives' Group
- Men's Group
- s.a.l.t.  
(Sexual Addiction Group)