

Spiritual Growth

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Spiritual maturity:

- Don't compare your maturity to someone else. Compare your progress to your past story.
- Don't brag about your experience. Your experience is not an indication of your maturity and is always dependent on grace.
- Some things are too intimate, too personal to talk about. Do not take the sacred and make it common.

Declaration of Independence: We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Today in America our strongest commitment and our highest value is Independence. Like Adam and Eve and like the people of Babel we have declared our independence from the rule of God and the restraints religion only to find ourselves enslaved to hedonism.

Independence is a great hindrance to our spiritual maturity. Independence and responsibility are different. Independence says, I do not want your help. I can do this on my own. Responsibility says I believe my future is determined by the choices I make today. Responsibility is good but independence is a handicap.

Romans 1:17 says, "For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Abraham, Genesis 18

1. Faith begins with a promise.

What I am learning. I can pursue God independent of God. How does God help us overcome our independence?

Romans 10:17, Psalm 1:1-3

"Independence silences the voice of God."

2. Faith grows through the crisis.

a. God takes us out of our comfort zone.

- i. Leave our pain- Haran, the place where his baby brother and his father died.
- ii. Leave our ceiling- Often our environment limits our capacity.
- iii. Joseph, Moses

b. God tests and builds our character

- i. Abram and Sarai- Egypt
- ii. Abram and Lot divide the land- family is more important than land

- iii. Abram battles 4 kings to rescue Lot
- iv. Abram gives a tithe
- v. Abram and Hagar
- vi. Abraham and Isaac- build an altar
- vii. Every trial is a test of faith. Every trial is a lesson in trust. Every trial is designed to teach us dependence.
- viii. **Genesis 15:6**, "*Abram believed God and it was counted him as righteous because of his faith.*"

2 Corinthians 12:7-10