

In_Dependence

In prayer before a meal, I was expressing my thanks to God for the food. As the prayer progressed, I realized that I should thank God for the farmers and ranchers who had tended the plants and animals. Later, other people, who had contributed to the food on my plate, came to mind. Gradually, I realized that hundreds, even thousands, of people had contributed to the meal, which I was enjoying.

I began to consider the human food chain that feeds millions of people every day. In the human food chain, the following is a brief list of professions, which are directly involved.

1. Of course, there are the farmers and ranchers
2. Truck drivers and train engineers
3. Grocery store personnel

With a broader view of the human food chain, the following professions came to mind.

1. Truck manufacturers (vehicles to transport the products)
2. Heating and refrigeration manufacturers (systems to preserve the products)
3. Forklift manufacturers (tools to handle large volumes and weights of products)
4. Oil companies (fuel and lubricants for the vehicles)
5. Mining companies (raw materials for the production of the vehicles)
6. Agricultural supplies (tractors, implements, and fertilizers for large-scale production of the products)
7. Road/railroad design, construction and maintenance
8. Electricity and gas (used in every step)
9. Seed producers (develop and start high yield and sturdy crops)
10. Etceteras, etceteras, etceteras!

As I thought of all who had contributed to the food on my plate, the limit of the list was bounded only by the people in the world. I began to realize that I am dependent upon so many people. A review of the list suggested that, if any one of the professions had not contributed, then the food would probably not be on my table.

On a grand scale, other dependencies came to mind.

1. How many people make their car?
2. How many people know how to sew?
3. Of those who know how to sew, how many produce the thread and material or make needles and the sewing machines?
4. When eating out, how many people acknowledge their dependency upon the restaurant?
5. Who comprehends the engineering marvels of telephones, answering machines, refrigerators, computers, compact disc players, televisions, remote controls, or city water and sewer systems?

The professions within the human food chain are provided by people; these people are of every nationality, sex, religion and every other humankind description. I am dependent upon every one of them. Though I would find a few with beliefs, values, or attitudes that are disagreeable to me, I am still dependent upon them for their service. In truth, we are all dependent upon each other.

This dependency is neither from an individual's weakness nor inability. It is not socialism or another enforced social arrangement. Paradoxically, the dependency is a result of independence. We are free to work and serve others in endless ways. As someone, in independence, develops a service, others utilize the service and dependence grows. From our independence we gain dependence that, in turn promotes greater independence.

How often has someone said that they want freedom or are free? How often do people say that they are independent and self-sufficient? I have been guilty of these misstatements. The perception of independence and freedom can be very narrow. As we walk down the aisles of the food and clothing stores, our freedom to choose masks our dependence upon the producers and the stores. The vast possibilities of travel across continents and around the world foster a false sense of independence.

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It is interesting that society will often associate dependence with a weakness or a failing. A person is dependent upon a drug or alcohol. Some people are dependent upon others for their daily care and needs. A baby is dependent but should grow up to be independent. However, there is another perspective of being dependent. This greater perspective is that being dependent is called sharing (some call it teamwork).

Let me digress a little bit. Until the last century, life was primarily about survival. It typically required more than one person to accomplish the tasks of food and shelter, so that anyone would live through a year. Around the primary unit of the family, communities were built.

In recent time, in growing regions of the world, survival is assumed, not the goal. We can drive to a grocery store and get whatever food we need. Organizations provide food or lodging to the poor. Travel, whether commuting to work in town or visiting a far away land, is a matter of course. For centuries, mankind has strived to achieve the society in which some now live. Independence has come because of dependence upon others. Gloriously, this dependence is sharing.

This dependence, this independence, is a gift from God. As God gifted the people of Israel with manna and water, they journeyed through the wilderness with their survival needs met. God gifted the people of Israel with a land flowing with milk and honey; again, they were blessed with the needs of survival. There was work to be done but they could live beyond the needs of survival.

God asks us to realize and freely acknowledge our dependence. This gift from God is ours to receive and has been passed from generation to generation. By this gift, we may share our abilities and talents with others. Instead of sharing for survival, we may share from the heart; I believe that this is what scripture described as opening the eyes of the heart. Commitment is from respect and love, not from necessity, requirement or obligation. Blend your God given abilities and talents with those of another, even many others, so that each expands the territory of vision and being.

I have come to realize and acknowledge my dependence, though I hesitate. With all of my heart, I want to receive the gift from God. This gift has been passed down through the centuries. By this gift, I may share my abilities and talents with others. Instead of sharing for survival, it is my honor to share from my heart. I offer commitment in respect and love, not from necessity, requirement or obligation. I ask to blend my God given abilities and talents with those of another, sometimes many others, so that each of us expands the territory of our vision and being. Sadly, I fall far short of what I intend. I am glad that God offers me, and others like me, hope and the opportunity to mature.

In this age of abundant blessings from God for our human survival needs, I pray we each know the joy of life by choosing commitment and sharing from our heart and soul of our God given abilities and talents.