

When Do I Depend on God ... and When Do I Depend on Others?



I'm thankful God led someone to invent the DVR. This one invention has brought hours back into my life simply because I can skip the commercials. (If you advertise on TV, I'm sure your product or service is absolutely

wonderful; I'm talking about those other commercials.) But if I just turn on the TV to watch something, I will inevitably have to endure "a word from our sponsor."

- I don't have a cat, but I can handle a cat food commercial.
- I don't need a luxury car, but I'll tolerate the British voice telling me the virtues of German engineering.
- I don't need an injury lawyer, but I will even tolerate 30 seconds of notoriously bad acting.

But please, please stop it with the drug commercials.

I'll be sitting in front of the TV eating someone's leftovers I found in the frig. (Hey, I paid for that refrigerator, so whatever is in it is technically mine.) A commercial comes on talking about the woes and self-esteem issues caused by itchy tongues ... toe fungus ... or some other medical condition I was ignorant of. My dinner is ruined as they describe the symptoms, but I can't help but wonder how many people are seeing this commercial and thinking, "Hmm ... I've experienced shortness of breath ... my hair is falling out ... my nose periodically itches on the right side. Maybe I have Squidotal Hypertholius Syndrome.

These ads work. Drug companies do see an increase in sales, but according to Joseph Ross, an associate professor of medicine and public health at Yale University, "The advertisements don't often represent the best treatment or medication available."

America has an abundant crop of people diagnosing themselves and often coming to wrong conclusions. If they're not sure, they can also go and ask ...

The Internet.

No, no, no. Don't diagnose yourself based on what your friends say on Facebook. And avoid the medical websites. Although many do provide reliable information, they don't know you, your medical history, or your actual symptoms. **Too many people are depending on the Internet when they should be depending on an actual standing-in-the-same-room-with-you real-live medical doctor.**

Depending on the wrong source can be dangerous—and unnecessarily expensive.

Several years ago, I replaced a toilet and saved the \$200 expense of a plumber. But several months later it cost me \$5000 to replace the downstairs flooring ruined by a poorly installed toilet. I depended on myself instead of someone who knows what he is doing.



We get in trouble when we depend on the wrong people, and we especially get in trouble when we depend on others when we should be depending on God.

On one occasion, King Asa was facing the large army of Zerah the Cushite. Asa turned to the Lord in prayer and dependence, and God intervened. Good call, Asa. But on a later occasion, another army was coming against him and Asa turned—not to God—to another king for help. Asa won a small victory but brought greater danger on himself and his country.

"Because you depended on the king of Aram and have not depended on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from you. Were not the Cushites and Libyans a vast army with many chariots and horsemen? When you depended on the Lord, he handed them over to you.... You have been foolish in this matter. Therefore, you will have wars from now on" (2 Chron. 16:7-9).

It's OK to depend on a doctor or a plumber. It's OK to depend on others for things they are uniquely qualified for. But when it comes to life in general, relationships, or the questions you can't answer, depend on God. Whatever you're facing, start with God. Start with prayer. Go to Him before you go to other people. It may be that God will bring others into your life to give you the help and support you need, but let Him take the lead.

I left out a sentence in the above statement to King Asa. It's a strong reminder of why we should depend on God.

"For the eyes of the Lord roam throughout the earth to show himself strong for those who are wholeheartedly devoted to him" (v. 9).

Depend on God. He's strong. He's faithful.

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