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IN SEARCH OF AN ENABLER

By Richard & Tanya Curren

We all know someone who is in search of an enabler. This is a person who is seeking affirmation, continual attention, wants to be rescued repeatedly and either isn't willing or doesn't have the skill set yet to stand on their own and live with the confident power of God in their life. The person who is in search of an enabler is usually very manipulative and knows how to get what they want. They often try to make you feel guilty for not meeting their every need. And even when you give them your heart, time or money, they always seem to need more.

The problem with those seeking this type of attention is that it can turn you into the one who is enabling their bad habits and lifestyle choices. We say this with the most compassion possible; there is a reason they are where they are, and it is not your fault. You cannot control the choices other people make. So, even if you had a part in shaping who this person turned out to be, they have to take ownership and control of their own life without placing eternal blame on you. You have to choose to release yourself from the type of bondage they would like to keep you in!

If you are a parent who has an adult child that is constantly pulling on you to rescue them from life's difficulties, you need to set serious healthy boundaries around yourself and family. One person's bad choices do not constitute an emergency for the rest of the family! In our book, *ON COURSE: Strategies For Successful Living*, we have an excellent chapter called, "You Are Not The Fire Department!" This is exactly what we are talking about here. Too often people who are seeking to be enabled make everyone else around them feel like their emergency is more important than everyone else's time. This is ridiculous and completely untrue. Of course, their emergencies are important to them and may need to be addressed, but you are not the one that needs to "fix" all of their problems and rescue them from failure.

The parent who continually tries to protect an adult child from what they perceive as failure is actually hurting their child. They are hurting them by not allowing them to fall and then get back up again. It's the same as stunting someone's growth. If you don't allow someone to fall, you won't allow them to become stronger and stronger. Failure is a natural part of life, and you learn by experience more than any other method. You can't win at everything.

As parents, we know how hard it is to stand back and watch your child make bad decisions. And we definitely understand that sometimes a loving parent's first natural instinct is to race in, swoop up your child and protect them from everything. But this is not healthy for any parent long term. God desires that you have balance and that you teach your children to rely on HIM and HIM ALONE.

One of the best things you can do when you recognize that you are an enabler is seek out resources. Satan loves to try and isolate us and get us to believe that we are alone. His goal is to make you think that there is something wrong with you or your family and that no one else will understand. This is completely untrue. Most families are dealing with situations that aren't ideal, and it is important to remember that no family is perfect. By realizing this and choosing to not isolate yourself, you become stronger. Be willing to read articles and books that will give you positive and healthy ways to deal with your situation. Don't be afraid to ask questions and seek answers. This is the best way to learn and grow! Seek out friends and support groups you can trust and get ideas and a community of support that you need as you set new boundaries that will be tough to stick to. This will benefit you greatly and will be a huge boost for your emotional strength.

If you are married and you have a spouse who continually seeks for you to be "their everything," ask God for wisdom and how you can point them to Him. You should never try to be everything to your spouse because it only sets you both up for failure. We are human, and we all make mistakes. Promises get broken, we are unable to do all we think we can at times and our energy is limited. But God's isn't! When you show your spouse how to turn to God, you are giving them eternal sustenance. There is a wise, old proverb that says, "Give a man a fish and feed him for the day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." There is wisdom in this, as it is the same concept with God. *Give someone the enabling they are looking for today and you will only help them for a short time. Teach them how to turn to the Word of God and lean on God for everything and you have given them the gift of strength for a lifetime!*

Take an honest look at yourself right now. Are you someone who pulls on others to the point that you feel like you can't survive without someone else helping you? If no one else complimented or encouraged you today, would you be able to function? Do you always need someone else to pray for you because you feel like your prayers aren't good enough or strong enough to be effective? Do you constantly need someone to save you from your emergencies as you run out of money every month, always need help or feel like you are never good enough? If this describes the pattern that you have been living, do not be discouraged. We have the perfect answer and help for you today!

First, we want to commend you for recognizing that you need change in your life. This is the first and most important step to being healthy. When someone is in denial, there is no way

to help them because they can't even see the need for change. So, if you have the willingness and guts to admit that you need improvement, congratulations! You are already on the road to a happier and stronger life!

Once you have identified the need for change, practice one of our powerful Life Application Points that we highly recommend in our book and conferences. Write down how you search to be enabled. How do you pull on others? Why do you do this? When do you do this – meaning, are there patterns or certain times of the month that you panic and have more emergencies? What void are you trying to fill in your life? Why do you think that your prayers aren't strong enough? Why do you think that others are stronger than you and can handle your issues better than you can?

Start learning who you are and why you act the way you do. This is a huge step! If you don't know who you are or why you do certain things, you won't be able to change them. For example, if you see that you have allowed certain habits into your life that drain your money, you need to know what these are so that you can decrease them or increase time spent at your job to earn more money. If you see that you typically pull on others at night because you are depressed or lonely, you need to incorporate more activities into your day that have you interacting with others with whom you can develop relationships. If you always need others to pray for you, you need to take the time to start praying yourself. The more you practice talking and listening to God, the more you realize that He hears your prayers just like He hears everyone else's. And you learn the power of prayer firsthand in your life, rather than relying on others to continually intercede for you.

After you have taken the time to write your list, stop and pray about how you can make healthy changes. God WILL show you this! Ask Him to give you wisdom to make changes, direction for new patterns and habits and strength to face anything and everything. Ask Him how you can use the gifts He gave you to earn more money to provide for yourself as you stand on your own two feet. Ask Him to comfort you when you are sad and lonely so that you won't try to fill that feeling with another person, drink, pill, food or distraction.

Then be prepared to do the work. Waiting and listening for God's voice can be very hard. We understand because we have been there many, many times. But this is part of the process. God is not the "quick fix" that so many infomercials promise. In fact, our society has become addicted to quick fixes, and this is part of the problem with our mind-sets. Remember, habits become engrained in us and are a part of who we are. Therefore, changing a habit can be harder than it seems. So you have to have patience. And just like a human relationship, you have to learn to listen. Be willing to wait on God's direction in your life as you incorporate new and healthy habits, boundaries and patterns.

Now let's look at some practical ways you can turn to Scripture. There is a big difference between being enabled versus being an enabler. Let's look at what being enabled by God means. The definition of enable is, *"to teach the skill or provide the power or means to succeed."* This is exactly what God does in our lives if we ask! He teaches us, gives us the skills that we may not be officially "qualified" for, and He is the One who provides the power and gives us the wisdom and strength to succeed. He is also the only One who provides a way for our eternal salvation.

If you have been in search of a human enabler, search no more. No one on Earth is going to be able to sustain you the way you desire. There is no other person who can continually and eternally meet your every need. Your continual quest for this in a human being will only leave you frustrated, disappointed, lonely and sad. In fact, turning to a person for your sustenance, provision or assurance at this level is idolatry. You have placed a human being in the place of God. Sure, people can pour into you, uplift you, love you, encourage you and be there for you, but there is only ONE who can be your everything and sustain you throughout every moment of your life. This ONE is God alone.

When you need strength and need to stand on some truths that will never let you down, turn to the Scriptures. In John 6:65 Jesus tells His disciples, "This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless the Father has ENABLED him." This is what God does for you and I! He gave us His most precious gift, His Son Jesus, who gave us eternal life. God enables us so that we can receive this gift!

The Holy Spirit also enabled the disciples when they were all together on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:4 says, "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit ENABLED them." The Holy Spirit is absolutely amazing! He enables us with power, wisdom, discernment, knowledge and peace. When you ask Jesus to come into your heart, ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to flow through you. If you are not familiar with the Holy Spirit's power, don't freak out! It's nothing weird or anything to be afraid of. In fact, His power and presence will bring you the most beautiful peace and focus in your life. You will be able to understand things that don't make sense to others in the world and you will have a hunger and desire to know more and more about God. He is very loving, tender and pure. If you have been missing this in your life, all you need to do today is ask for His presence to fill every part of you. Once you do, get ready for the best relationship with God and a new, focused direction in your life!

There is a great story in Acts 4:23-31 that tells how Peter and John had been released from prison and started praising God. The two men ask God in verse 28 to, "...ENABLE your servants to speak Your Word with great boldness." God answered their prayer and verse 31 says, "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly." If you desire to speak with

boldness, ask God to enable you! Our God is the same God as He was yesterday, today and forever. He can give the same power to you as He did to His disciples so many years ago! Don't allow anyone or anything to hold you back and make you feel intimidated or timid in our world. Allow God to enable you with His power so that you have the ability to handle anything you face with confidence!

Breaking out of the cycle of needing to be enabled is extremely freeing because it turns your eyes not to the limitations of man, but to the boundless limits of God! Ultimately, man will fail you. This causes hurt and discouragement, which only deepens the cycle. Turning your eyes to God allows God to develop you in the way that He wants you to grow. Continuing in a lifestyle of constant need is like trying to live a healthy, functional life while on life support. The two are not compatible.

Likewise, if you are someone who recognizes that you are an enabler, we encourage you to break the cycle. Being an enabler is exhausting. You will never give enough, do enough or be enough to satisfy every need of another person. Breaking this cycle in your life will offer you the freedom to be able to reach many more in our hurting world. When you learn how to set the necessary, healthy boundaries in your life that protect you, you will have more energy, happiness and peace. This is what God wants for you!

We must remember that it is God Almighty who can meet our needs and the needs of those in our lives. Anything other than that is a counterfeit relationship that ultimately leads to failure and hurt. Our desire is to see you live your life with the fullness of joy, freedom and peace that God has for YOU! God Bless you!

In His Love,
Rick & Tanya

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Richard R. Curren III is the co-founder and President of Boundless Limits International, Live Guilt Free and Best Life Strategies. He is a regular co-host of WATC TV's *ATLANTA LIVE*, an inspirational television show broadcast internationally. He is the co-author of **ON COURSE: Strategies For Successful Living** and its companion **ON COURSE: Life Application Study Guide**. He is also the producer of several inspirational videos including "*IT'S ABOUT TIME!*", which has been broadcast on television worldwide. He is also the developing producer for Scaly Adventures, a positive influential outreach to children using animals and nature to explore the wonders of God's creation. Rick's passion is to speak and motivate others to live to their maximum potential physically, mentally and spiritually. Through their events and publications, Rick and his wife Tanya inspire others and show that every person has boundless potential to change our world. He is a former United States Army Officer. Rick serves on the Board of Directors for the So Help Me God Project as an Advisor and is a founding Board Member. With a passion for health and fitness, he is a Black Belt in Korean Olympic Tae Kwon Do, and serves as an Associate Instructor for Palmetto Martial Arts School.



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