



Discussion Guide

Independence: The Myth of the Self-Made Christian

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 / Pastor Dave Bennett / September 13, 2026

Session Overview

Technology, competence, and comfort can make us feel as if we do not need anyone. Eventually, that attitude can shape the way we relate to God. Scripture presents a different picture of healthy independence as a gift when it equips us to serve others, but can become unhealthy when it refuses help, hides weakness, or tries to manage the soul apart from God, turning into pride. Paul reminds us that God's power is made complete in weakness. In our session we are going to focus on bringing our needs to God and letting others help us carry what we were never meant to carry alone.

Session Flow (60-75 minutes)

Welcome and Icebreaker (10 minutes)

What is something you used to rely on another person for that you now use your phone to do?

Purpose: To get the group thinking about how they use technology that has caused them to do things alone rather than with another person.

Scripture Reading

Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 aloud together.

Leader Coaching Sidebar

- This discussion may bring up some sensitive feelings for some; be sure to create an atmosphere of safety so everyone feels comfortable sharing their burdens.
- Remind the group that vulnerability is invited to whatever extent they are comfortable sharing.
- Keep the discussion focused on the truth that weakness is not disqualification but the doorway where God's grace becomes visible.

Discussion (40-50 minutes)

- 1. After reading 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, think about how God answers Paul's request to remove the thorn in his flesh. What stands out to you about what God says to Paul?**

Leader Note: Emphasize that God did not remove the thorn but promised sufficient grace. Ask the group what it means that God's answer was presence, not removal.

- 2. Where in your life do you see or feel the pressure to appear self-sufficient the most strongly?**

Leader Note: Encourage examples from work, family, finances, ministry, parenting, or church life. Help the group distinguish between responsibility and the need to look self-sufficient.

- 3. Last week we started talking about technology having unlimited connection with limited depth. How have you felt this in your life in relation to reliance on technology?**

Leader Note: Keep this from becoming a complaint session about phones. Ask how convenience can train us away from healthy dependence on others.

- 4. How would you describe the difference between healthy independence and unhealthy independence?**

Leader Note: Remind the group of what we discussed in the sermon. Healthy independence says, "I can do this," while unhealthy independence says, "I won't let anyone help me."

- 5. Why do you think it might feel easier to manage a problem rather than surrender it to God?**

Leader Note: Listen for themes like control, fear, disappointment, pride, or not wanting to be a burden. Avoid correcting too quickly and let people name their struggles honestly.

- 6. We heard, "Your weakness is not the obstacle to what God wants to do in you. It is the doorway." How does that challenge the way you normally think about weakness?**

Leader Note: Some may resist this idea because weakness feels unsafe. Help them see that the point is not celebrating pain, but trusting God's power in places we cannot control.

- 7. What are a few of the signs that spiritual independence has crept into your personal prayer life?**

Leader Note: Remind the group of what Pastor Dave said: If our prayers could all be answered by competence and a decent budget, we may be underestimating our spiritual need.

- 8. Why is isolation so dangerous, even for people who are serving, giving, and showing up faithfully?**

Leader Note: Refer to the "Alone Meant Prey" image and 1 Peter 5:8-9. Help the group see that activity in church is not the same as being known.

- 9. Ecclesiastes 4 says, "Pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up." What makes it hard to let someone help you up?**

Leader Note: Listen for fear of judgment, past hurt, embarrassment, or the belief that others are allowed to need help but "I am not."

- 10. Of the three applications this week (naming one thing you can't fix, telling one person the truth, and accepting the next offer of help, which one feels the most important for you?**

Leader Note: Invite practical next steps on ways they can work towards these goals.