

How Sufficient Are You?

by Carl McMurray

I like television programs like LIVING ON THE EDGE, MOUNTAIN MEN, or DUAL SURVIVOR. They deal with people who are supposedly self-sufficient. I say supposedly, because in each program the people ARE self-sufficient as long as they have their machete and rope or their rifle or their chainsaws or their snowmobile. In other words their sufficiency is actually imaginary and dramatized. Without these helps from civilization they would be in a world of hurt, and when they lose access to these “helps” they often proclaim what trouble they are in.

The religious world can be just as imaginary and even more dramatized with self-sufficiency as men seek to devise their own way to be saved, slice and dice God’s word according to their likes and dislikes like human “salad shooters,” and determine in their own minds how to approach the Creator and what pleases Him in worship. It even creeps into the thinking of Christians who imagine that they can resist all sin and take care of themselves spiritually by their own strength and maturity.

2 Cor. 3:4-5 says, *Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God,* The original word translated, sufficient, is the Greek work *hikanos* which means; to be adequate or large enough. Paul considered that he was not large enough or adequate enough in ANYTHING or in ANY WAY to care for himself. He was completely dependant upon God through Jesus Christ.

This is the same word that John the baptizer used when he spoke of the one that was coming after him, *whose shoes I am not worthy/hikanos to bear.* In the same way the Centurion told the Lord not to trouble Himself to come and heal his servant because, *I am not worthy/hikanos that thou shouldst enter under my roof.* Neither of these men felt adequate enough or large enough, to approach or trouble the Lord. The word speaks to a sense of humility and dependency that is sorely needed in our day of supposed independence and pride and self-sufficiency.

What a challenge this is! To lay down our pride and the deceitful feeling that we can be self-sufficient and make our way to heaven on our own. What a surrender to the leadership of Jesus this must be. Of course, it means that we must be open to taking all of the scriptures together, not just the ones that we are used to. It means we must approach God in the ways that He says, without addition or subtraction. It means that we must be saved according to all His directions, not just our church’s traditional three or four scriptures. It means that we must walk by faith in his word, not by our personal interpretations. It IS a challenge just to trust and obey, but rich are the rewards for the one who is successful.