

God Never Said That

“God Helps Those Who Help Themselves”

Ephesians 2:1-9 – April 5, 2026

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<i>Examining Common Statements That You Will Not Find in the Bible</i>		
Date	Message Title	Bible Text
April 4/5	God Helps Those Who Help Themselves	Ephesians 2:1-9
April 12	God Wants You to Be Happy	1 John 2:15-17
April 19	God Won't Give You More Than You Can Handle	1 Corinthians 10:13
April 26	Money is The Root of All Evil	1 Timothy 6:6-19
May 3	To Thine Own Self Be True	Luke 9:23-26
May 10	Heaven Needed Another Angel	Romans 12:15
May 17	Forgive and Forget	John 2:23-25
<i>Sermon notes are available in Mandarin and Spanish at the Welcome Desk</i>		

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- **Hosea 4:6** – *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*
- Only 11-20% of Americans have read the entire Bible.
- More than 57% of American adults are “Bible disengaged” (defined as interacting with the Bible rarely or never).

The Purpose of This Sermon Series

- To help train us to be _____.
- **Acts 17:11** (NIV) – *Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*
- **1 Thessalonians 5:19-21** (NLT) – *Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at prophecies, but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good.*
- Charles Spurgeon: “Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong, it is knowing the difference between right and almost right.”
- Jen Wilkin: “Professing Christians in staggering numbers don’t understand or ascribe to the most basic beliefs of the faith they claim to stake their lives on. They lack basic theological understanding. And the trends show that the knowledge gap is not getting better, but worse. It would appear that one generation has failed to tell the next. It would appear that we have made converts, but not disciples. Theology is words about God. You are a theologian. Be a good one.”
- 82% of Americans and 52% of practicing Christians strongly agree that the Bible teaches “God helps those who help themselves.”

The Origins of “God Helps Those Who Help Themselves”

- Greek mythology (800 BC): “The gods help those who help themselves.”
- Aesop’s Fables (600 BC): “Hercules and the Driver” and “The Shipwrecked Man and Athena.”
- Algernon Sidney (1698 AD): “God helps those who help themselves.”
- Popularized by Benjamin Franklin in his Poor Richard’s Almanac (1736)
- Bottom line: This phrase did NOT come from the Bible.

What Does the Bible Teach?

1. **God saves those who declare that they _____.**
 - Three observations from Ephesians 2:1-9
 - (1) We are dead in our sins (vv.1,5). Dead people cannot help themselves or save themselves. We don’t need improvement. We need resurrection!!
 - (2) God has done everything that needs to be done to save us through the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ (vv.4-6).
 - (3) Our job is NOT to help ourselves but to believe (trust, have faith) in what Jesus has done for us. We are saved NOT by helping ourselves (not by works) but by trusting in His free gift (vv.8-9).
 - Imagine Jesus at Lazarus’ tomb (John 11).
 - Three fancy theological terms:
 - ✓ TOTAL DEPRAVITY – “Total depravity is the doctrine that original sin has so completely corrupted every faculty of human nature – soul, body, and will – that people are naturally empty of all good and incapable of turning to God, loving Him, or doing spiritual good without divine grace.” (David Watson)
 - ✓ SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT – “The doctrine that Christ died on the cross as a substitute for sinners. God imputed the guilt of our sins to Christ, and He, in our place, bore the punishment that we deserve. This was a full payment for sins, which satisfied both the wrath and the righteousness of God, so that He could forgive sinners without compromising His own holy standard.” – Theopedia.com
 - ✓ SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH – “The Christian doctrine that rescue from sin and eternal life is a free, unearned gift from God (grace) received by trusting in Jesus Christ (faith), rather than through human effort, merit, or good works.” – Michael Houdmann
 - All of this hinges on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:1-9).
 - Application #1 – Place your faith in Jesus and His death, burial, and resurrection.

Lord Jesus, I confess that I have sinned and that I cannot save myself. I place my trust in You Jesus and Your death, burial, and resurrection. I invite You into my life. I receive Your full forgiveness of my sins, and I receive Your free gift of eternal life. Now, make me into a new person. I choose to follow You.

- After receiving Christ, the Bible says that the next step is to go public with that faith through water baptism. Our next immersion baptism service is on Sunday, April 12, at 12:45pm. Get more info or sign up here: WhatIsGrace.org/Baptisms

2. God helps those who declare their _____ on Him.

- **Psalm 46:1** – *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*
- **Psalm 127:1** – *Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.*
- **Proverbs 3:5-6** – *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.*
- **John 15:5** – *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*
- **2 Corinthians 12:9-10** – *But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*
- **2 Chronicles 20:12** – *O our God, will You not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You.*
- **2 Chronicles 20:15** – *Thus says the Lord to you, “Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God’s.”*
- **Application #2** – In the midst of the difficult circumstances that I am going through right now, I choose to declare my absolute dependence on the Lord:
 - “I am powerless against this. I do not know what to do. My eyes are on You, Lord.”
 - “Lord, please be my refuge and strength.”
 - “Lord, please build this house.”
 - “Lord, I trust in You with all of my heart.”
 - “Jesus, I plug my life (branch) into You (the Vine).”
 - “Lord, I give You all of my weaknesses. Please give me Your sufficient grace!”

3. God wants us to work diligently in _____ with Him.

- **Colossians 3:23-24** – *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as you reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*
- **Ecclesiastes 9:10** – *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.*
- **2 Thessalonians 3:10** – *If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.*
- **Proverbs 14:23** (NIV) – *All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.*
- Puritan leader Richard Baxter: “Be diligent in your callings, and spend no time in idleness, and perform your labors with holy minds, to the glory of God, and in obedience to His commands. Idleness is robbing God, who is the Lord of us and all our faculties. Take pleasure in your work, and then you will not be slothful in it.”
- Many historians point to this Puritan work ethic as one of the key foundations to young America’s success.
- There is work for us to do in our spiritual growth as well.
- **Philippians 2:12-13** – *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*
- **2 Corinthians 6:1** (NLT) – *As God’s partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God’s kindness and then ignore it.*
- Kristen Yates: “Spiritual disciplines are habits – such as prayer, meditation, fasting, and Scripture study – that serve as training exercises to foster spiritual growth, godliness, and intimacy with God. Rather than earning salvation, they function as means of grace that transform the inner being, create space to encounter God, and align one’s life with His will.”
- **Application #3** – Some ways that I hear God calling me to work diligently in cooperation with Him are...
 - To get a job
 - To do my job with excellence as though God is my Boss
 - To do my household chores faithfully and with excellence
 - To serve others by volunteering at my local church (scan this QR code to inquire about serving in Kids Ministry)
 - To spend time daily in prayer and Scripture reading
 - To pray and intercede for others



My Takeaway – My major takeaway from God’s Word today is...

Someone with whom I am going to share that takeaway is...