

Fully Rely on God

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“God helps those who help themselves.” We have all heard this quote, and taken it for granted that it is Biblical, after all there are many passages throughout scripture which support this statement, aren’t there? Don’t the following three portions of scripture 2 Thessalonians 3:10; 2 Timothy 2:15; and James 4:8: Serve to validate the credence of this passage. along with many other passages and teachings? The challenge is to find this well known, all be it very, obscure passage.

- 1) “For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.”
- 2) “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”
- 3) “Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

While these passages do seem to support the validity of this statement, “God helps those who help themselves”, there is a Biblical stumbling block, one which is fundamental and insurmountable, one which cannot be overlooked. My friends, this passage is not found anywhere in the Bible; in the Apocrypha; or in the Tanakh (Jewish Scripture). Why include Jewish Scripture, it is important to recall that in his human form Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the Son of Man, the only Son of God, was born, lived, and was crucified on the Cross as a Jew. Therefore, to exclude the Tanakh is to ignore the foundation of Christianity.

Based upon my search of Scripture I emphatically conclude that this seemingly logical “proverb”; “God helps those who help themselves.”, is nowhere in the scriptures. In actuality this stands in direct opposition of everything taught throughout the Christian and Jewish Scriptures. The validity of this statement is at best the result of interpretive supposition and a complete misunderstanding of Scripture and Holy Writ. The truth is straight forward: God helps those who cannot help themselves.

To briefly address the origins of this statement, the fact is that there has been a variation of this statement in one form or another throughout written history dating back to the ancient Greek Philosophers.

Euripides who wrote:

“Try first thyself, and after call in God; For to the worker God himself lends aid.”

(From fragments found in the *Hippolytus Veiled* pre 428 BC)

And Sophocles who wrote:

“No good e’er comes of leisure purposeless; And heaven ne’er helps the man who will not act.”

(From his work *Philoctetes* 409 BC)

The current version, “God helps those who help themselves.”, was introduced in 1642 by the English Protestant cleric and scholar Thomas Fuller in his theological treatise: “The Holy State”. I bet you were not expecting a history lesson today.

What is actually taught throughout Scripture? My dear friends, my brothers and my sisters in Christ, having received our Salvation through Christ Jesus as a result of His crucifixion, death and resurrection, being a child of God, as a community, and as a nation we are to fully rely on God! Look at what is clearly stated in the Book of Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 8 through 10:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

This passage from the Book of Ephesians is crystal clear, there is no means for anyone, man, woman or child, to work and/or earn their salvation. Clearly what is stated in chapter 2, verses 8 through 10 refutes every single

argument, supposition, and assertion that God helps those who help themselves... NO! We are to bring all of our concerns, our fears, our doubts, our desires, our hopes and dreams, everything, to God the Father. When I consider what it means to bring absolutely everything in my life before Christ Jesus and truly lay it before His feet the very first passage of scripture that comes to my heart and mind is found in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 11, verses 28 through 30:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Unfortunately, the vast majority of us find it extremely difficult to turn every single aspect of our lives over to Almighty God: yes, the “good, the bad and the ugly”. It simply goes against our human nature, not our best interest but our sin-soaked human nature. In truth, in the modern age, I do not personally know of any single individual who has successfully done this for any sustained period of time even though we are assured by Christ Jesus himself that we will not be forsaken. Consider what God has promised each one of us in the Old Testament through the Book of Isaiah, chapter 41 verse 10.

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed. For I am your God; I will strengthen you, **I will help you**, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

Also consider what we are taught in the New Testament from the Book of 1 Peter, chapter 5, verse 6:

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: **casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.**”

Take a moment and let this sink in... there is not a single man, woman or child who can earn their eternal salvation, regardless of what any other religious tradition teaches: humans cannot gain their individual eternal salvation through any works that we do... it can't be done. Once you accept this fact, then you stand at the threshold of eternal salvation, fully washed of your sins, fully accepted as a joint heir to the Kingdom of God the Father through simple acceptance of Christ Jesus as the ONLY MEANS to your salvation. There are many great and beautiful passages throughout the entirety of scripture which describe what Salvation means, what it is to completely trust in Christ Jesus without hesitation, reservation or equivocation with every single aspect of our lives... I can not think of a more eloquent description than Psalm 23.

“The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

-NIV Translation

Allow this to sink into your heart; into your mind; and into your soul... allow this to penetrate your deepest thoughts. Open your ears and truly listen for God's soft and gentle voice to call to you and to speak to you. Open your eyes and allow God to show you His wondrous works wherever you look, may you truly see through the filter of His Holy Spirit; all that He shows you, all that He has to tell you. Accept God's gift of salvation just like a small child... with wonderment, unquestioning acceptance, and a joy that defies comprehension and brings immeasurable peace. Let go of the burdens you have been carrying, set them down at Jesus's feet and let Him deal with them as he deems appropriate. Can you and I do this? Yes, we can. Will we do this? Will we set absolutely everything down and walk away from whatever it is that we have been tethered to? Will we: man, woman, boy or girl alike: humbly, gratefully, sincerely, honestly and unquestionably accept the Gift of God's Salvation through Christ Jesus? It sounds too good to be true, doesn't it, there has to be a “catch”! Afterall, we all know through conventional wisdom that if

something sounds or seems to be too good to be true it is best to walk away from it. How can it be that we, you and I, are able to receive eternal salvation without having to earn it through hard work after all: “God helps those who help themselves.” Yet all of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures tell us that Salvation is a gift from the LORD God... freely given out of His unfathomable eternal love for each and everyone of us.

My dear, dear friends... my brothers and my sisters in Christ Jesus it all comes down to a single question which has eternal consequences and implications: do you, yourself honestly and sincerely Fully Rely Upon God for absolutely every aspect of your life? Or do you subscribe to the idea that you have to earn it, that your eternal salvation is dependent upon the work you have done; that you are doing; and that you will do in the future? When will you know that you have done enough to have earned enough to purchase your eternal Salvation?

Where do you stand...

“God helps those who help themselves.” Verses “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, **it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.**” What is your answer? DO you fully rely upon God?