



Pastor David's Weekly Devotional

One of the most dangerous consequences of biblical ignorance is believing unbiblical sayings. There are various Christian-sounding maxims that many believers mistakenly think are verses of Scripture, which are actually not biblical and are actually unbiblical. While some may be rather harmless, others have heretical implications. One such unbiblical saying is, "God helps those who help themselves." This maxim sounds very religious and astute – even Christian. In fact, surveys reveal that as many as 80% of Americans believe it to be taken right out of the pages of Scripture. But this is neither a biblical phrase, nor is it a biblical concept or teaching.

To be sure, God blesses and uses our obedience and prohibits disobedience and even laziness. There are many verses in Scripture commanding Christians to take the initiative in their obedience and submission to Christ: "*abide in [Christ]*" (Jn.15:4), "*draw near to God*" (Jms.4:8), be "*zealous for good works*" (Tit.2:14), "*train yourself for godliness*" (1Tim.4:7), and "*work out their own salvation with fear and trembling*" (Phil.2:12). Christians are called to actively, and earnestly, participate in their own Christian sanctification and spiritual growth.

But the saying, "God helps those who help themselves" intimates that God's help is conditioned upon us first helping ourselves – that God (only) works in response to our initiative, or that God is waiting for us to help ourselves before He will intervene or give us help. The Bible, as we will see, teaches the exact opposite. Thankfully, God is the Helper to the helpless.

The Bible teaches that God is completely and eternally sovereign (i.e., possesses ultimate power and authority) over all His creation (Ps.115:3; Is.46:10; Eph.1:11). All creation is always under God's sovereignty. God is either sovereign over all, or He is not sovereign at all. While God has graciously given humans the "freedom of choice", humans do not have a "free will" apart from (or outside of) God's sovereignty.

Acts 17:24-28 ~ "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.'"

God is also sovereign over salvation. Scripture tells us that the sinner is spiritually dead (Eph.2:1, 5), unable to obey or please God (Rom.8:7-8), and incapable of initiating his/her own salvation (Ezek.36:25-27; Jn.6:44, 65; Eph.2:8-9; Tit.3:3-6). God alone can awaken the one who is dead in sin (Eph.2:1). He alone can bring light to the one whose heart is darkened by sin (Jn.8:12; 12:46; Eph.5:8). He alone can open the eyes of those who are blinded by Satan (2Cor.4:4). He alone can empower us to live godly lives that are pleasing to Him (Rom.5:6, 8:7-8).

God does not help those who help themselves because people are powerless to help themselves apart from God. In the words attributed to Jonathan Edwards, "You contribute nothing to your salvation except the sin that made it necessary."

Together in and for Christ,
Pastor David
(9/28/26)

Scripture Readings for the Week (Monday – Sunday ~ Week #39):

Numbers 25-28; 2 Chronicles 6-10; Psalm 114-116; Proverbs 26-27; Obadiah; Acts 1-2; Hebrews 1-4

Recommended Reading:

"The Sovereignty of God" by A.W. Pink