

Transformed – teen devotion – July 1, 2018

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He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things.

Romans 8:32

The Bible doesn't say: "God helps those who help themselves."

This month we are going to look at sayings that people, even Christians, use which are not from the Bible. We want to be careful not to believe things that aren't from the Bible. Sometimes these unbiblical sayings seem harmless. At other times, these sayings are downright harmful and dangerous to our faith. We are going to look at a few of the more dangerous ones.

This week we look at: "God helps those who helps themselves."

At first glance, it sounds pretty good, right? It seems to say that if we want to get anywhere in life, we have to help ourselves by doing some work. It seems to say that we have to work to accomplish anything or amount to something. That's true. Even the Bible says: "If a person won't work, he won't eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). God does tell us to work with all our might in life.

But look again at that saying. We are not only being told to work or "help ourselves out in life." It is telling us that if we help ourselves, God will help us. We are told that our actions push God into action. We are even left with the impression that if we don't help ourselves, God won't help us.

Here's where the saying gets dangerous. It treats God like a vending machine. You get something out after you put something in. You have to do work, before God will do his.

Always trying to earn God's help is a stressful way to live and the wrong way to believe.

It is a faithless way to live too—using our work to try to earn God's favor. It leaves us relying on ourselves for earthly things—and heavenly things too—rather than relying on God's grace.

Look what Paul says about why our God gives, about why our God helps. *He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things.* He tells us that God gave us his Son as the proof and the evidence that God will give us all things. He uses the word “graciously” because he wants us to know our salvation is God's gracious and undeserved gift to us through his Son. He uses this word to teach us that God's help in our lives comes without our work or our help. It's all grace. It's a gift. God helps us because he is good and he loves us.

So, yes, get to work. Plan for your future. Do what you are asked to do in your daily life.

AND, believe that God will help you both now and eternally purely because he is gracious. His love for you is the reason he helps. It has nothing to do with what you have or haven't done. God helps simply because he loves you.

Prayer: Dear Lord, keep me from believing that my work earns your favor and your help. Keep me from relying on myself. Instead, teach me to trust your grace and your goodness to me. You promise to help me because you love me. In your name I pray, amen.

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