

# I DIDN'T SAY THAT

## WEEK 1 – GOD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES

### MONDAY – Is that scripturally correct?



**Exodus 17: 9 (NIV)** *Moses said to Joshua “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.”*

**Philippians 2: 12 (NIV)** *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in My presence, but now much more in My absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling*

The quote “God helps those who help themselves” is not scriptural; it has its origins in ancient Greece. The British politician Algernon Sydney coined the phrase from Greek into English in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Why does this quote pose a problem? Those living by the mantra of this quote rely first on themselves to provide whatever it is that is the issue, and only afterwards turn to God. The Old Testament documents numerous cases where Israel simply could not meet the requirements as stipulated in Mosaic Law. The problem with this approach is that you and I become our own first source of help and strength in any situation, thereby making God

secondary to the equation. The truth of the matter is that our lives should not be about self-help, because that is inward-looking. As we will discover from scripture this is not what God wants, He wants us to use God-help, which is upward-looking.

Philippians 2: 12 is often misunderstood. Paul is not saying that believers should work for their salvation, but rather that they should live out, or practice, their salvation.

**Reflection:** Consider the story of Moses and the Amalekites in Exodus 17: 8-13, and think of situations in your life where, however hopeless your situation was, you could sense the help of God in resolving the issue.



**Prayer:** O God, our Abba Father, You cover us with Your loving care and gracious ways. You keep calling us, O God, to trust You and serve You. We commit our lives to faithful discipleship following Jesus Christ. AMEN

## TUESDAY – Whom does God help?



**Exodus 2: 23-25** *During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and He remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.*

**Exodus 17: 11** As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning.

**Matthew 6: 33** “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

In Matthew 5: 45 (NIV) Jesus, during the Sermon on the Mount, says that God sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matthew 6: 33 (NIV) says that one should first seek the Kingdom of God before worrying about earthly things. John Ortberg (Menlo Park Church, California) says that God helps those who ask for help, who are needy, who are weak, who are scared, who are in way over their heads, and who can't help themselves. When one studies the numerous scriptures in the Bible

(Old as well as New Testament) that make proclamations about “needing help” one does indeed come to the conclusion that God helps those who cannot help themselves.

**Reflection:** You and I have to consider what the phrase “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”, in the Lord’s Prayer below means for our faith and also where our reliance should be when we seek help. Should we be seeking “self-help” or “God-help”?



**Prayer:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, **Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.** Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.  
AMEN

## WEDNESDAY – God stands at the door and knocks...



**Revelation 3: 20** *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*

**Proverbs 3: 5-6** *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

**Proverbs 16: 9** *In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.*

**James 4: 14-15** *Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."*

The Book of Revelation was revealed by Jesus Christ to the Apostle John on the island Patmos. In Revelation 3: 14-22 Jesus says about the church in Laodicea that they are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. There is no place in the Kingdom of God for fence-sitters. Then Jesus offers His help to them – they only have to open the door.

The other scriptures above are a few examples where the Bible states clearly that we should "trust

in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding but on God's grace". It should not be about self-help but rather about seeking first the Kingdom of God and trusting in our Lord and Saviour.

**Reflection:** If we think through those times when we were really struggling, did we try to resolve it ourselves first or did we submit all our ways to God?



**Prayer:** Abba Father, I know that You are always there. You've been there from the beginning, waiting for me. Your word promises that You stand at the door and knock. Today I want to open the door and open my heart to your knock. I invite You in. AMEN

## THURSDAY – Seeking the will of God



**Proverbs 19: 21** *Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.*

**Proverbs 11: 25** *Generous persons will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.*

**Luke 9: 23** *Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.*

We have seen that we cannot go the self-help route; it takes God out of the equation. However, when we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour, the Holy Spirit comes and resides in us. We, therefore, have the most potent weapon of all at our disposal, the Word of God through the Holy Spirit. The question that each of us should ask ourselves is "How often, when I was so focused on solving a crisis by myself, and when my faith then faltered, have I failed to engage with the Holy Spirit, simply because I did not sense this presence? We have the solution in us, not self-help, but

God-help. All of the things that we could possibly need in life should pale in comparison to the glory of the Kingdom of God!

**Reflection:** In Luke 9 we are reminded of the value of discipleship and its demands on those who desire to follow Christ. Firstly, it is important to understand that a disciple is more than just being a student. While discipleship involves learning, it demands doing. Are we equipped for the doing part of discipleship?



**Prayer:** Loving Father, more and more I want to surrender my life to You, to take up my cross daily as a willing sacrifice and to cry out, "Thy will not mine be done." I pray that my old self-life will remain firmly nailed to the Cross. May I submit to Your leading and guiding in all I say and do. In Christ's name I pray. AMEN.

## FRIDAY – All in God’s perfect time



**Jeremiah 29: 11** *For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

**2 Peter 3: 9** *The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

**John 11: 17** *On His arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.*

**John 11: 40** *Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”*

Through the death of Lazarus Jesus teaches his disciples a valuable lesson. This is an equally relevant lesson for us. We know that God is able, but sometimes when we call on Him He waits, but nevertheless, we can trust Him. In the meantime, believe in His promise as given in John 11: 40. If you believe, and keep the faith, you will see the glory of God.

**Reflection:** So what do these scriptures teach us? God has the

perfect timing, even though it may sometimes look to us as if God is either not attentive to what we need, or that He is uncooperative, that is, God does not want to help us, or that God is sometimes late (such as 4 days late in the case of Lazarus), we should lean into God’s grace, says Paul, because God’s grace should be more than enough to carry us through, and ultimately we will see the glory of God. Can you relate to this?



**Prayer:** Abba Father, I thank You, blessed Father, for always answering my every call according to Your perfect will for my life. Give me the patience to wait on Your perfect timing. Lord, it may not always be the way I want or expect. But You always work it out for my benefit. Your timing is perfect and I trust in You! AMEN