

**Sermon:** God Helps Those Who Help Themselves

**Series:** Fake Verses

**Passage:** Ephesians 2:1-10

**Preached:** 8-6-2023 by Chase Snyder

**Relevant Question:** Does God Only Help Those Who Help Themselves?

**Main Point:** God Helps Those Who *Can't* Help Themselves

Today we are starting a new series: **Fake Verses**

In this series we will look at five popular Christian statements that are fake verses, meaning that these statements aren't in the Bible. The goal is to disprove these fake statements and to teach what the Bible actually says about these topics so that we can know biblical truth, correctly teach what the Bible says, and follow Jesus faithfully.

**If we want to live out the will of God we must know the Word of God.**

### **1 John 4:1-6 (CSB)**

<sup>1</sup>Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

<sup>2</sup>This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

<sup>3</sup>but every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming; even now it is already in the world.

<sup>4</sup>You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

<sup>5</sup>They are from the world. Therefore what they say is from the world, and the world listens to them.

<sup>6</sup>We are from God. Anyone who knows God listens to us; anyone who is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.

***Does God only help those who help themselves?***

This concept comes from Aesop's Fables: **Hercules and the Wagoner in 6BC**

## Hercules & the Wagoner

A Farmer was driving his wagon along a miry country road after a heavy rain. The horses could hardly drag the load through the deep mud, and at last came to a standstill when one of the wheels sank to the hub in a rut.

The farmer climbed down from his seat and stood beside the wagon looking at it but without making the least effort to get it out of the rut. All he did was to curse his bad luck and call loudly on Hercules to come to his aid. Then, it is said, Hercules really did appear, saying:

"Put your shoulder to the wheel, man, and urge on your horses. Do you think you can move the wagon by simply looking at it and whining about it? Hercules will not help unless you make some effort to help yourself."

And when the farmer put his shoulder to the wheel and urged on the horses, the wagon moved very readily, and soon the Farmer was riding along in great content and with a good lesson learned.

*Self help is the best help.*

*Heaven helps those who help themselves.*

### Problems with The Statement "God Helps Those Who Helps Themselves"

- The statement assumes that God will only help the people who are willing to work.
- The statement assumes that you know what to do.
- The statement assumes that your hard work motivates God to do good.

**If The Statement, "God Helps Those Who Help Themselves" Isn't True, Then What Is The Truth? The Truth Is That God Helps Those Who *Can't* Help Themselves.**

#### 1. Dead Things Can't Move

##### **Ephesians 2:1 (CSB)**

<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in your trespasses and sins

**Common Grace** is the universal favor that God grants to all humans - those who are followers of Jesus and who are not followers of Jesus.

### **Matthew 5:43–45 (CSB)**

<sup>43</sup>“You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

<sup>44</sup>But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

<sup>45</sup>so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. **For he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**

## **2. God, not you, took the initiative to rescue you.**

### **Ephesians 2:2–10 (CSB)**

<sup>2</sup>in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient.

<sup>3</sup>We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also.

<sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us,

<sup>5</sup>made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!

<sup>6</sup>He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus,

<sup>7</sup>so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup>For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—

<sup>9</sup>not from works, so that no one can boast.

<sup>10</sup>For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

### **Galatians 5:17 (CSB)**

<sup>17</sup>For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don’t do what you want.

## **3. What about personal responsibility?**

### **Ephesians 2:10 (CSB)**

<sup>10</sup>For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

Our work is made possible only because of God's work in us, not to our own efforts to be good.

### **Do You Need God's Help Today?**

- You are not alone - *Colossians 1:9-23*
- God will give you wisdom - *James 1:5*
- God goes before you - *Deuteronomy 31:8*
- God is your helper who can always be found - *Psalms 46:1-3*