

## March 27

**Romans 5:6 (NASB)** For while we were still helpless, at *the* right time Christ died for the ungodly.

When Carol was in the classroom, she would do her best to prepare her students not only to take tests but also to pass those tests. She would review and answer questions. On one occasion, the idea of praying before a test came up. Carol, of course, explained that prayer was always a good and viable course of action. However, she explained, if one did not take the time to study and put in the information, praying would do little good because God was not going to supply the answers. Her explanation before tests got everyone's attention.

Carol's statement reminded me of a phrase that I am sure most of us have heard at one time or another: God helps those who help themselves. Growing up, that sounded reasonable to me, and I assumed it was part of the Bible. However, it is not. The origin of the phrase is hard to determine, but it first appeared in print in 1698 and later in Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* in 1757. Knowing the Word is important because the Bible teaches us just the opposite. When we were most helpless to save ourselves, Christ died for the ungodly, which included you and me. God helps the helpless because we cannot break the bondage of sin on our own. We cannot achieve anything of lasting value without Jesus. On the other hand, once we accept Jesus, we are to participate in His life. If we pray for Jesus to help us find a better job, Jesus expects us to look for that job. If we pray for forgiveness, then Jesus expects us to forgive others. In other words, Jesus helps the helpless; yet, He also wants us to join with Him in spreading the Good News and in advancing the Kingdom in our lives and in the lives of others.