

HALF TRUTHS

Things the Bible Doesn't Say

“Half Truths” by Pastor Adam Hamilton

Session 2: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves

October 6, 2024

5:00 PM

Opening Activity – “The Ten Commandments”

Take a few moments and jot down the Ten Commandments without using your Bible and your smartphones.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Adam Hamilton shared in Chapter 2 a segment of *The Tonight Show* with Jay Lenon when random people on the street were asked to name the Ten Commandments, and that many people identified our “half truth” for today as one of them...

Session 2: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves.

In our session today, we are going to examine this common saying, often thought incorrectly to be in the Bible, and explore some ways in which it is true, as well as other ways it is absolutely untrue.

Opening Prayer

God, we give thanks that you are always with us, sustaining us with your love. Be with us now as we seek to discern the deeper truth of your Word. In the name of Jesus Christ, who became flesh and dwelt among us. Amen.

Session 2 Video – “God Helps Those Who Help Themselves”

- When people use that statement, what do you think they intend to convey? In your opinion, what do they convey?
- How do people exemplify the idea of praying and working the blessing of food at a meal? What must happen in order for the meal to be available?
- Hamilton suggests there are ways in which the statement, “God helps those who help themselves” is not true. What are those ways, and how might they be misleading or hurtful to others?
- Hamilton notes that sometimes people are simply unable to help themselves. In what circumstances have you felt unable to cope on your own? How was God’s grace manifested to you in these situations?

Scripture Focus...

(1) Psalm 10:14, 17-18

(2) Psalm 18:6, 16

(3) Psalm 121:1-2

- Have you ever found yourself in a situation that you felt you were helpless to alleviate or stop? What was the situation and how did you feel?
- Did you turn to God for help? How did you pray, and what was the outcome?

Book Study and Discussion...

Consider Praying and Working – Theologically Right

“God helps those who help themselves” is not in the Bible and represents at best a partial truth, but does hint at one important truth.

Job Search Preparation...

- Pray about it.
- Prepare a re'sume'.
- Network with friends and former colleagues who know my skill set.
- Actively look for job openings online.
- Submit applications, along with a cover letter, to indicate my skills and qualifications.
- Prepare for interviews by dressing well and researching the company.

By a show of hands, indicate which of these steps you would follow in searching for employment.

- On a job search, how many of you would simply pray about it, then sit back and wait for God to provide a job?
- In situations like this, do you think God expects us to rely only on prayer? Why or why not?

Scripture Focus – 2 Thessalonica 3:10-12

- How and why were the Thessalonians mistakenly interpreting what it meant to trust in Jesus?
- What was their understanding of how God provided for their needs? What is your understanding of how God provides for you?
- Based on the reading, what does “*ora et labora*” mean?
- How did the civil rights movement in the 1960's model this truth?

- What current problems in the life of our community, nation, and world do you think call for Christians to pray and work for justice?
- Hamilton states that our times of prayer can empower us for and guide us into action. Do you agree?

Two Key Considerations – Theological Wrongs...

While there may be one theological right with “God helps those who help themselves”, there are two key theological wrongs.

1. *“God’s Concern for the Poor and Needy”*

- Hamilton contends that God is not requiring us to share our wealth, because it is not ours to begin with. What does he mean? How do you respond to this idea?
- Would you agree that compassion for others is a form of worship?
- Hamilton cautions that in helping others, we should be careful to aid in their independence and not make them more dependent. What are some ways we can do this?
- In your opinion, how is compassion connected to justice?

2. *“God’s Help for the Helpless = Grace”*

- We receive blessings from God even when we cannot earn them and do not deserve them. This idea is directly counter to the idea that God helps those who help themselves. What has been your experience in this regard?
- All of us have two kinds of needs: the basics of life and higher level needs. In your view, how does God call us to help others meet their basic needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter? How

are we called to partner with God in helping others attain their higher needs?

Closing Thoughts...

As we have examined this half truth statement, “God helps those who help themselves,” if you have the opportunity to offer different words, or to hear them, what would those words be?

Closing Prayer...

Join me in the following prayer and moments of silence...

*God, thank you for grace. Thank you for the many times you have helped us when we did not deserve it.
(Pause for a moment of silence.)*

*Thank you for your love. Thank you for your forgiveness. Thank you for the meaning you bring to our lives. Thank you for rescuing us.
(Pause for a moment of silence.)*

*Please use us, Lord, as your instrument to help others who are in need.
We offer ourselves to you in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

“Half Truths” by Adam Hamilton
Session 3 – God Won’t Give You More Than You Can Handle
Sunday, October 20 4:00 PM
