

## God Helps Those Who Help Themselves

Lesson 2 of the series: "The Bible Doesn't Say That!"

### A. The Bible says: "God helps those who need help!"

1. God helps people who are lost, confused and needy.

"Some wandered in the wilderness, lost and homeless. Hungry and thirsty, they nearly died. 'LORD, help!' they cried in their trouble, and he rescued them from their distress. He led them straight to safety, to a city where they could live. Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things." Psalm 107:4-9 (NLT)

*Life Application:* When we are lost, confused, or needy, we need to cry out to God.

"While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could rescue him from death. And God heard his prayers because of his deep reverence for God."

Hebrews 5:7 (NLT)

"...in my distress I cried out to the Lord; yes, I prayed to my God for help. He heard me from his sanctuary; my cry to him reached his ears." Psalm 18:6 (NLT)

"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV)

2. God helps people who are in bondage.

"Some sat in darkness and deepest gloom, imprisoned in iron chains of misery. They rebelled against the words of God, scorning the counsel of the Most High. That is why he broke them with hard labor; they fell, and no one was there to help them. 'LORD, help!' they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He led them from the darkness and deepest gloom; he snapped their chains. Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. For he broke down their prison gates of bronze; he cut apart their bars of iron." Psalm 107:10-16 (NLT)

*Life Application:* The first step in breaking free from bondage is acknowledging our need for God.

"God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs."

Matthew 5:3 (NLT)

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

3. God helps people who have been foolish, rebellious and sinful.

"Some were fools; they rebelled and suffered for their sins. They couldn't stand the thought of food, and they were knocking on death's door. 'LORD, help!' they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them, snatching them from the door of death. Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and sing joyfully about his glorious acts." Psalm 107:17-22 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We can cry out to God for help no matter who we are or what we've done.

"When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners... So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God." Romans 5:6-10 (NLT)

4. God helps people who are afraid.

"Some went off to sea in ships, plying the trade routes of the world. They, too, observed the LORD's power in action, his impressive works on the deepest seas. He spoke, and the winds rose, stirring up the waves. Their ships were tossed to the heavens and plunged again to the depths; the sailors cringed in terror. They reeled and staggered like drunkards and were at their wits' end. 'LORD, help!' they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He calmed the storm to a whisper and stilled the waves. What a blessing was that stillness as he brought them safely into harbor! Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. Let them exalt him publicly before the congregation and before the leaders of the nation." Psalm 107:23-32 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We need to cry out to the Lord for help when we're afraid.

"I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him."

Psalm 34:4-8 (NIV)

**B. The Bible says that when God helps us, He expects us to cooperate.**

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do." James 1:5-8 (NIV)

"Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it." James 4:17 (NLT)

**C. The Bible says that when God helps us, we need to thank Him and tell others about what He's done.**

"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever. Has the LORD redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others he has redeemed you from your enemies." Psalm 107:1-3 (NLT)

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**Connect Group Questions**

1. What's the scariest situation you've ever faced?
2. Read Psalm 107:4-9, Psalm 18:6 & Hebrews 5:7. What does "crying out" to God look like? Share a time in your life when you cried out to the Lord for help? What happened?
3. Read Psalm 103:10-16 and discuss the first three steps in a twelve-step program.  
Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behavior; our lives had become unmanageable.  
Step 2: We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.  
Step 3: We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.  
Why would these be the *first* three steps?
4. Read Psalm 107:17-22 & Romans 5:6-10. How does it make you feel to hear that God helps foolish, rebellious sinners? Why does He do it?
5. Read Psalm 107:1-3. Spend some time as a group listing items you are thankful for in 2020. Then spend some time giving God thanks.
6. Spend some time as a group listing problems faced by our church, our city, our state, and our nation. Then spend some time as a group asking God to help us overcome them.