

Adult Group Study Guide for October 18, 2020

Series: "The Bible Doesn't Say That"

Message: "God helps those who help themselves"

Goal: To place our confidence in God in prayer and in life and not in our own self-sufficiency.

Key Verse: *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."* – John 15:5

1. Most of us grew up hearing some "wise sayings" that seem to capture something that is true about life. For example: "The apple never falls far from the tree" or "A fool and his money are soon parted." Write down two or three quotes that you can recall. What makes them stick in your mind?
2. One survey indicated that 75% of Christians agree that the Bible says that "God helps those who help themselves" even though those words do not appear in the Bible. Why do you think that so many Christians would hold that belief?
3. Read James 2:14-26. How are faith and works related? Why is it important to both pray and work? (St. Benedict) Why does God choose to work through people who are committed to prayer and action? (Discuss the Old Testament examples of Nehemiah, David, and Isaiah.) How does our dependence upon God give us the freedom to act in his name?
4. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. What do these verses teach us about our condition (dead in sin) and our need for a savior? How do you keep in balance the teaching that we are not saved by works (so that no one can boast) with the teaching that we were "created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"?
5. Read the story of Jesus healing the invalid near the pool of Bethesda in John 5:1-9. What happens when helplessness turns to hopelessness? Think of other examples that affirm the truth that "God helps those who know they cannot help themselves."
6. Read the key verse above (John 15:5) and 2 Corinthians 3:4-6. What did Jesus say was the source of our fruitfulness? Where did Paul place the credit for his competence (NIV) or sufficiency (ESV) as a minister of the new covenant?