

**Urban Legends: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves**  
**April 15, 2018**  
**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

The Lord is holy and kind. Our God is full of tender love. The Lord takes care of those who are as helpless as children. When I was in great need, he saved me. (Psalm 116:5-6 NIRV)

Are you familiar with the term “urban legend”? An urban legend is “a secondhand story told as true and just plausible enough to be believed, about some event that supposedly happened to a real person.” We’ve all undoubtedly heard a few in our day and may have even unwittingly spread one a time or two. After all, how can we know for sure that angels are really watching over us unless we forward that email of their picture to ten of our friends?! So how do we identify and debunk those urban legends that claim to have biblical origin? Many are easily drawn into the false narrative of a juicy cautionary tale, but when we hear something that sounds a little wonky and makes our Spidey senses tingle, we must pump the panic brakes and pause to fact check. Luckily, we possess the most reliable source of all to be able to do this, the Word of God. The Bible doesn’t change or conform to fit the needs of a particular generation or society. It is steady, constant and trustworthy. So, just as it was true thousands of years ago, it is true today and will be true thousands of years from now. Our mission is to know it and be able to retell it so that all confusion about its message is removed.

**Digging Deeper**

**THE MYTH: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves**

- God doesn’t require anything of us to be the loving Father that He has always been. He didn’t send Jesus to Earth preaching a message of “get up and get to work. Then you will be worthy of my love and eligible to spend eternity with me.” He loves us regardless of our sinful nature and we don’t have to do anything to earn our salvation. As a matter of fact, we can’t earn it because it’s given freely to all who believe in Him. But when we hear that urban legend about how “God helps those who help themselves” we mentally attach it to something we have read in the Bible before and situationally apply it to certain people we encounter. Have you been guilty of strapping on your “judgment pants” and assuming that some people are taking advantage of the fact that salvation is free? After all, why can’t they just (act right, lose weight, get a job, etc., etc., etc.) already? How can this type of mentality damage the way we interact with others? Do you ever find yourself judging someone based on how they appear or on your limited knowledge of their situation? Has this kind of attitude ever led anyone to Jesus? Of course it hasn’t! Can you think of an example where you incorrectly judged a proverbial book by its cover? What did that experience teach you about God’s love and the limitations of our human perspective? We have to remember while we see one small piece at a time, God sees the whole puzzle of our lives all at once. And He loves us anyway. With His help, let us pray in unison for the day that our “judgment pants” no longer fit!

### **The TRUTH: God Helps Those Who Trust In Him.**

- What does the Bible have to say about the popular notion, “God helps those who help themselves?” The truth is, in many ways, Scripture suggests the exact opposite. The truth is that God helps those who cannot help themselves and place their trust in Him. Too often we get caught in the trap of believing that we don’t need help and try to take care of everything on our own. We are bowing to the altar of self. If we habitually operate in this way how can we be seeking God or know who He is? Wouldn’t you agree it is next to impossible to trust someone you do not know? Relationship with God must come first and be the priority of your life. Then we must prayerfully seek the will of the One in whom we trust and wait patiently and expectantly for those things to come to pass. The Bible cites many examples of rewarded trust through the stories of how Jesus healed the blind, lame and sick. Is your faith as strong as the centurion who believed that all Jesus has to do was say that his son was healed and it would be done? If not, how do you think one gets to that place of trust? Is faith the same as trust? Faith is a gift from God but trust is a choice we make. Can faith be effective without trust?
- Do you see evidence of God’s work in the lives of the needy and broken in your community? If not, consider letting Him use you to be the change you wish to see. One way to begin this journey is to participate in our annual day of community service, City Serve, next Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. Find a project that suits your individual (or family) needs and sign up online or in the lobby of either campus! Beyond City Serve, our church’s Fusion Fitness Center is ripe with a multitude of daily missionary opportunities that require the dedication of everyone who calls LHUMC home. We are working on a detailed list of ways that you can play an important role in turning those four walls into the mission post needed by the unchurched and seeking in our community. Stay tuned for more information on this!

“The Lord is holy and kind. Our God is full of tender love. The Lord takes care of those who are as helpless as children. When I was in great need, he saved me.” (Psalm 116:5-6 NIRV)

“The Lord takes good care of all those who fall. He lifts up all those who feel helpless.” (Psalm 145:14 NIRV)

### **Conclusion**

When we find ourselves hurting and in need, we don’t have to be burdened by the thought, “I need to get to work and do everything I can to remedy this situation, then maybe God will see fit to help me.” Instead, since “God helps those who help themselves” is a myth, we can simply throw ourselves at the mercy of the Lord, trust in His grace, and wait on His deliverance.