

Only Human

Following are ten, if not "top" then certainly common verses or sayings which are often attributed to the Bible:

1. The words "Christian, Trinity or Rapture"
2. Charity begins at home
3. God works in mysterious ways
4. In all things moderation
5. Money is the root of all evil
6. Cleanliness is next to Godliness
7. This too shall pass
8. God won't give you more than you can handle
9. All good things come to those who wait
10. God helps those who help themselves

Along with their familiarly these share another trait, none of them can be found specifically in the Bible. Some are close, such as *the love of* money is the root of all evil, others capsule teachings that can be found in the Bible, there are a number of references to the mysterious ways of God. Still others are not close.

God helps those who help themselves is one of those which has no grounding in scripture. Throughout scripture there is a strong call to help those who are unable, either physically or based on the societal situations and circumstances which oppress. The child whom Jesus brought into the inner circle was helpless, undervalued and easily disregarded.

We, as a community of faith and as the church universal, have embraced the role of providing for those often classified as "the needy".

Yet, there is another aspect of giving and receiving help, as aspect of interdependence, which may be more of a struggle for some. For those whom "God helps those who helps themselves" resonates, the call, in today's passages to care for one another often becomes one-sided. For some, to ask for or accept help can be one of the most difficult calls of Christian living.

As with much of life, some ask and receive easily, at times too easily. Others hide their struggles and refuse help when offered. The key is to allow the Spirit to lead you to find a balance. For it is important that in our giving and in our receiving, we reflect trust and belief in God and the ways God provides for humanity.

It is understandable why some struggle with asking for help. Studies show that it is based on:

- Feelings of vulnerability or shame

- Fears of what others will think

- Fear of rejection or refusal

- Worry of being a burden

- Unwillingness to admit a lack of self-sufficiency

Each of these fears, feeling or hesitations offer opportunity to live more fully into our faith, When we are willing to show that our weaknesses, we allow others to know that each life has its struggles and that the ease or goodness of their situations are not reflected of how much they are loved or accepted by God. Also, others can find great strength when they know that others have shared similar difficulties, disappointments and even lack of faith or wisdom.

When we are willing to step past the fear of what others may think and allow them to truly know us, we are able to build and sustain deeper and truer relationships, relationships which enrich the lives of all involved and equips us to deepen our relationship with God. We also allow them the freedom to be as they are, not what we assume, for what we often fear and assume of others worse than they would ever be.

In a willingness to acknowledge that we, like anyone and everyone else, are not self-sufficient, we open the door to embracing our need for God, in all the ways that God provides, including through the gifts and compassion of others. Naming and living out our need for one another highlights the design of God for humanity to live in community and to be "one body", with each having its unique gifts and needing the others in order to be whole and healthy.

And, perhaps what might be the greatest gift in our dependency is that when we need and allow others to help us, to meet not only our needs but to brighten, ease or share our darker days, we allow them the blessing that comes with caring. We allow them the feeling of fulfillment that we know comes from sharing as God shares with us.