



BUMPER STICKER THEOLOGY

SESSION 2 - GOD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES

SERIES BIG IDEA

This series takes a look at some familiar Christian axioms as we ask the question, “Is it Biblically sound or just sound Biblical?”

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

Through his people, God helps those who can’t help themselves.

SCRIPTURE

2 Thess. 3:6-13; Leviticus 23:22

ICE BREAKER

Share a time you were busted as a kid getting a cookie/dessert/candy for yourself. As a kid, did you ever steal candy from the convenience store? Share your story.

OPENING THOUGHT

A Barna research study found that more than 8 in 10 Americans think “God helps those who help themselves” is in the Bible. Spoiler alert: It’s not! The statement originated in Greek mythology in the 5th century before Jesus. It was popularized in America when it appeared in 1736 in Ben Franklin’s Poor Richard’s Almanac, and it’s been part of the American consciousness ever since.

BIBLE DISCUSSION

1. Read 2 Thess. 3:6-13. What stood out to you in this passage?
2. Imagine you were the preacher of a church and you were about to speak on this passage. What would be your main point or points of application? What do you hear Paul asking us to do when you read this text?
3. Read Leviticus 23:22. What is God commanding the Israelites to do? What do you imagine God’s economy looks like based on this verse?

LIFE APPLICATION

4. Picture a church that only takes care of themselves. What would be the strengths of a church like this? What would be the weaknesses? How would a world who is far from God respond to this kind of church? Now contrast that with a church that allows for dignity for the poor and outcast, a church that actively cares for everyone.
5. 25% of our homeless population suffers from mental illness. How do you think that might impact their ability to obtain stable housing? Would you judge those incarcerated less harshly if you knew that 60% of young men who had been in foster care in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin had been convicted of a crime? Might we see prostitutes differently if we knew 80% of those in prostitution were sexually assaulted as children? How have you seen or experienced these kinds of realities?
6. In what ways might God be commanding you to help others? At work, at home, in your neighborhood, in your small group, or among your family?

CHALLENGE

Consider partnering with one of COMMUNITY’s ministries that come alongside those who are facing challenging circumstances: World Relief, Safe Families, Community 4:12, Kids Hope USA, Compassion International, or join a small group to serve on mission together.