

The Spirit of Holiness

June 27, 2010

John 16/17

It was the Greek writer Aesop who once wrote, “The gods help those who help themselves.” You may be aware of a similar version, often wrongly attributed to the Bible which says, “God helps those who help themselves.” Is there any truth in that?

You might think so with all the self-help or self-improvement material available. Whether is through “twelve steps” or “seven habits” (now eight!) we want to look better, feel better, and act better. There isn’t necessarily something wrong with the idea of improvement, but the reality is that our self-help is rarely done by ourselves. The growing availability of books, support groups, personal trainers/coaches and internet resources is evidence of that.

The Christian understanding is that any improvement is done by the Holy Spirit, not by us. First, He brings sinners to salvation—that’s called the Gospel (Jn 1:12; 1 Co.12:3). Second, the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to daily put to death our sinful nature and transform us into the likeness of our holy God (Jn 17:17; 1 Co. 6:11; 1 Thess. 5:23-24). That’s called sanctification.

There is no truth in the saying that “God helps those who help themselves.” He is much more generous than that, giving freely to us all that we need to follow Jesus whether we can do it or not.

** From “the Holy Spirit,” by Kory Maas, pp. 19-21*

Read the following verses below to see how the Apostle Paul describes the Spirit’s work of sanctification:

- Romans 8:12-13
- 2 Corinthians 3:18

NOTES:
