

Five Things the Bible Does NOT Say

Presented by Mary Lowman

Air Dates: February 17 – 21, 2025

Day One

It's amazing how many sayings are believed to have come from the Bible, when they do not. Some are harmless, like the customs that have grown up surrounding the birth of Jesus. For example, we don't know if there was an innkeeper, much less what he said. We have no idea how many wise men came to visit Jesus and, when they did, he was not in a manger but in a home, probably close to two years old. These are inaccuracies, but they do not do injustice to scriptural truth.

The five things I want to point out are often accepted as truth, but they are actually opposed to Scripture. Here's the first one:

God helps those who help themselves.

You won't find that in the Bible! Instead, Romans 5:8 says just the opposite:

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

There was and is nothing we can do to take care of our sin problem. Jesus paid it all—while we were still sinners and could do nothing to help ourselves!

This readily accepted saying—God helps those who help themselves—seems to imply that we can force God to help us if and when we do something to show him we are helping ourselves. In other words, we can place God in our debt—force him to help us because, after all, we are helping ourselves. Furthermore, if we don't do something to help ourselves, God will not help us.

There is so much in Scripture contrary to this belief. It's true God does not honor or approve of laziness. The parable of the talents teaches us to be diligent in the stewardship of what God has given us—talents, money, and skills. But our work for God, our obedience to him, must come from a heart of love and gratitude, not to force God's hand, as it were. Additionally, when we start to believe God helps those who help themselves, then we can easily start to take credit for our accomplishments.

When you hear someone say, "God helps those who help themselves," remind yourself God helps those who are totally helpless because of his great love and amazing grace, not from any obligation imposed on him because we "helped ourselves."

Day Two

How often have you heard this saying: **To thine own self be true?** That sounds like it might come from the Bible. However, I'm pointing out five things the Bible does not say, and this is definitely one of them! This is actually a quote from Polonius in the Shakespearean play, Hamlet.

It sounds nice, doesn't it? This is the kind of saying that appeals to us because it makes us feel good about ourselves. It appeals to my self-esteem—Be true to yourself, Mary, because your "self" is a good

thing. I could use this saying to validate my selfishness and self-centeredness. I could use it to justify my unbiblical bad habits or lifestyle. After all, I tell myself, I'm being true to myself.

Everything I read in Scripture tells me my "self" is primarily my biggest problem. It teaches me that self-control is one of the fruits of the Spirit, and because the Holy Spirit resides in me by faith in Christ, it should be evidenced in controlling my "self," not being true to myself. If you are always "true to yourself," you will make decisions based upon what you want. The Bible tells us we are by nature and choice prone to selfishness and greed.

Jeremiah 17:9 tells me:

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

Being true to my heart—if it is not controlled by God's Spirit—would mean being true to a heart that deceives me and makes me think I'm good when I'm not. A lot of ungodly stuff can reside in my heart—and in yours.

For example, your heart is the place where resentment and bitterness take root and cause you all kinds of trouble. It is where pride, envy, and jealousy all start to grow. Being true to your self—or your inner person, your heart—could cause you much grief and confusion. Your self, on its own without being transformed by God, is not trustworthy. I wouldn't advise you to be true to yourself.

But I would challenge you to be true to Jesus. Consistently and intentionally devote time and effort to know Jesus. Follow this prayer from Bishop Chichester in 1253: "To see Christ more clearly, love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly."

Don't let Shakespeare's poetic saying—To thine own self be true—blind you to the truth that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the truth that will never fail you or disappoint you. To Jesus be true.

Day Three

Do you believe cleanliness is next to godliness? You've heard it many times, haven't you? It sounds like it's straight out of the Bible, but it's not! I'm pointing out five things the Bible does not say and let me assure you that the Bible does not say: **Cleanliness is next to godliness.**

Now of course it's good to be clean and to keep your environment clean. God doesn't approve of sloppiness or unsterile places or people. But to suggest you must be clean to be godly is certainly not true. Furthermore, to say because you are dirty, you can't be close to God or know God is never right.

Don't you think sometimes we isolate ourselves from people we might consider "unclean," whose standards of dress or way of life is below what we might call acceptable? Jesus never did that, you know. He associated with lowly people—poor and needy people.

Many times in my visits to Africa, I visited very basic homes—mud huts, small shacks in the slums of Nairobi, simple dwellings with very few comforts. I found some of the most godly people I've met in those places. The widows I visited in the slums of Nairobi told me how thankful they were for their home and how blessed they were to have a safe place for their children. Not one of them complained about their tin roofs or mud floors.

I have a friend in Kenya whose home is very simple with few furnishings. Her kitchen is a cooking pit with large pans for washing. She grows her own vegetables and milks her own cows. She is one of the hardest working women I know, and she loves Jesus. Her influence in that part of Kenya is amazing.

Most of us would not call her home sufficiently clean or sterile, but her godly life is a testimony and encouragement to all who know her.

You know, God doesn't care about your outer cleanliness nearly as much as your inner cleanliness. Remember what he said to the very clean religious Pharisees:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. . . on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness (Matthew 23:25,28).

Cleanliness is not next to godliness. Loving Jesus and living for him is what makes us godly.

Day Four

Has anyone ever told you God will not give you more than you can handle? I'm pointing out five things the Bible does not say, and it does not say **God will not give you more than you can handle.**

The truth is, you and I cannot handle a lot of what life throws at us—not on our own, by our own work or our own strength. Think of people in the Bible who were faced with something they could not handle, but God could and did. David facing Goliath comes to mind. Goliath looked at David and despised him, saying he would give his flesh to the birds and wild animals. No way this boy was going to defeat Goliath! It was more than David could handle.

But David said to Goliath:

This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands...All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands (1 Samuel 17:46-47).

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that when they were tempted, God would provide a way of escape for them. You and I are not equipped to handle all the temptations Satan throws at us. It is only because God provides a way to escape that we can stand against the enemy and be pure and faithful.

Let's face it—we cannot handle everything that comes our way! If we could, we would be able to take care of our sin problem. But we can't, and that's why we need Jesus all day, every day, giving us the motivation, the desire, the strength and the power to stand true to whatever comes our way.

You often will face a lot more than you can handle, but if you're born from above, you have the power of the Holy Spirit alive in you to equip and enable you to handle anything and everything.

Day Five

How much money do you need right now to solve all your problems? I wonder: Do you daydream about how good it would be if you just found a lot of money or somebody left you a lot in their will or you won the lottery?

It's easy to think more money would make life so much better—solve all your problems and take away all your fears. Money gets a hold on your heart faster than anything else. The Bible says **money is the root of all evil**, right? No, wrong! The Bible does not say that. I'm pointing out things we think the Bible says, but it really doesn't. It doesn't say money is the root of all evil, but rather *the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil* (1 Timothy 6:10).

You see, you could be broke, homeless, and penniless and still be afflicted with this sin of loving money. In our consumer society where we judge success by how much you make and how much you

own, money is on the throne of many people's hearts—including Christians. It crawls up and takes over first place in your heart at the drop of a hat—fast and furious!

Jesus said, *Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions* (Luke 12:15).

Greed is the poisonous fruit that comes from loving money—not necessarily from having money, just from loving it, wanting it.

When you think about it, greed is pride. It is a desire in us to show the world who we are by our status in life, our possessions, and our fame. Greed is also contagious. If you're around people who have lots of things and who focus their life on getting more and more things, you'll discover it's very difficult not to be swept right along into that greedy mindset for things. Furthermore, greed is cancerous. It grows fast, and it consumes and destroys everything it touches. No wonder Jesus said we must be on our guard against all kinds of greed!

Jesus went on to say a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. He said life is more than food or clothes; rather, life is peace and contentment. Those can't be bought; they are found only in Jesus.

Remember loving money produces all kinds of greed, and greed will corrupt your heart and create many problems for you.