

Transcript 123

Shea Houdmann

Welcome to the Got Questions podcast. So today it's going to be a fun conversation. We're going to be talking about the questions we receive about things that are actually not in the Bible, common sayings, whether they have an origin in another Christian book, or even completely in secular culture. But a lot of people think are in the Bible, they're actually not. And these can kind of be broken down into different categories through going through each of those categories some one by one, just to help you, there's some things that you need to know are actually not in the Bible.

Shea Houdmann

So joining me today is Kevin. Kevin is the managing editor for Got Questions Ministries. And so Jeff, he is the administrator for Bibleref.com. So if we were to break them down, kind of the categories, the main one would be what are the things that are actually not in the Bible? And then maybe let me start off with giving you know what I think is probably the most frequently receive. And that's that God helps those who help themselves.

Shea Houdmann

This is a saying that I've heard many many times. I'm guessing we've been asked a question over 100 times in our history is like, where does the Bible verse that says God helps those who help themselves? Or what does it mean that God helps those who help themselves? And one, it's not in the Bible at all. There's not even anything in the Bible close to that saying and if you really look at it, that it's not true at all.

Shea Houdmann

I understand the motive behind it is to try to get people to actually be active in their faith. To do something rather than thinking God is going to do everything for you. But at the same time, especially relating to salvation, God helps those who are helpless. We cannot help ourselves in terms of achieving our salvation, or make yourself saveable by God. It's like no God does all of the work. All we do is at his drawing and his calling we receive it in faith.

Shea Houdmann

So in terms of salvation, God helps those who help themselves is definitely not true. And then in terms of other areas of the Christian life, we are to be active. We are to be obeying God's word. We are to be doing things to improve our walk with Christ, to improve our understanding of God's word, to improve our fellowship with others. And so they, yes, in that sense we're helping ourselves. But to make it sound like even our daily Christian life is dependent on us doing the work, that's helping ourselves. That is not the message of the Bible at all.

Shea Houdmann

God helps those who help themselves. It's not in the Bible, and for the most part, it is actually teaching the exact opposite of what the Bible teaches.

Jeff Laird

Yeah, there's others that we see that people bring up, and that mistakenly quoted area is a relatively common one where there's ideas that are just so frequently heard that people assume that they must be biblical.

Jeff Laird

It reminds me of a musical, *The Fiddler On The Roof*. There's a character, the main character in that musical, who every once in a while will make some pronouncement and he'll say as the good book says, and then he'll bring something else. And there's a Jewish scholar in the town who will roll his eyes and say no, it doesn't. No, it doesn't say that. And you'll say, well, it says something like that.

Jeff Laird

So we have a lot of these phrases that are, that are common and popular in hearing that don't really have anything to do with scripture. One of them is the idea of cleanliness is next to godliness. Now, sometimes you'll hear that. I understand where that comes from because there's a lot of talk in the Old Testament especially about things like ceremonial purity and what things you can touch and cannot touch and how you you know how you get cleaned and things like that. But there again, that is not something that's actually found in the Bible.

Jeff Laird

We have phrases like let go and let God, which is sort of the polar opposite of God helps those who help themselves. You know the one sort of says you're supposed to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps, and the other one almost says just do nothing and let God do all of it. There again neither one of those is biblical.

Jeff Laird

When it comes to cleanliness and godliness, yes, we want to take care of our bodies. We want to be reasonable and respectable and so on and so forth. But God's not judging anybody based on how long they're going between showers or how tidy their office space is. Things like that.

Jeff Laird

Let go and let God is in the same category as the idea of God helping those who help themselves. You can't take it to an extreme. God does not expect us to just sit around, do nothing, and let him do everything. There's a sense in which there are some aspects of life that we do need to say, I can't do anything about this anymore. I've done everything I can do, so I'm going to choose to trust God and allow him to take care of the rest of it. Or I'm going to let him solve a problem that I can't solve. But let go and let God very often is just used as that sort of blanket statement that says you're just supposed to leave it and let it go.

Jeff Laird

And those aren't the only ones. Some of them we have more explicit sources for. Some, we really don't know where they came from.

Kevin Stone

Jesus, take the wheel that comes to mind, right? That's going along with what you were saying there with like, let go and let God kind of thing.

Kevi Stone

No discussion of this type would be complete without mentioning Shakespeare. Because Shakespeare actually used a lot of scripture in his plays. In fact, according to the Bible in Shakespeare published by Oxford Academic, Shakespeare alluded to Bible passages in every single play he ever wrote. He quoted from or alluded to Bible verses more often than he used any other external source. So that plus the fact that Shakespeare was writing about the same time and in the same type of Elizabethan English that the King James version was written in. Makes a lot of what Shakespeare says sound an awful lot like what the Bible might say, and people get confused sometimes.

Kevin Stone

Maybe you guys have seen the quizzes online, where they give you a list of quotes and you're supposed to, you know, say, is this Shakespeare or is this Bible? And sometimes it is kind of difficult to tell the difference. But I've got three of them here that they they're Shakespeare quotes, but they kind of sound like they might be from the Bible. And I think these might be some of those quotes that people get confused with sometimes.

Kevin Stone

One of them is neither a borrower nor a lender be. So just the the the phrasing of it and the the the sentiment of it, it sounds very biblical. You know, we have warnings in Scripture against going into debt to people. And so this actually, though, is from Hamlet, it's the advice of Polonius, and it's from Act one in Scene 3. Of that particular play, so not in the Bible, but it is biblical, I guess we could say, and that it agrees with biblical principles.

Kevin Stone

Another one from Hamlet is to thine own self be true. And that's from that same speech in Hamlet. And so there again is another one that kind of sounds like it might be in the Bible, but it definitely is not.

Kevin Stone

And then here's another one, this one from King Lear, Act 4, scene 7, where we get the phrase forgive and forgive and forget. We use that sometimes. You know, this is the biblical thing to do. Just forgive and forget. Move on with life. Don't hold grudges. Don't let bitterness grow in your life. And these are all good. This is all good advice, but that actual phrase is not found in Scripture. It's more closely tied to this line in King Lear. The the the line actually says, Pray you now forget and forgive. So the order is reversed from how we usually express it. Forgive and forget, but yeah, this is from Shakespeare. There's some wisdom in Shakespeare, and some of that wisdom may even be in agreement with biblical truth, but it is good to remember where the source actually is and not get confused as to, you know, is this from the Bible or not.

Jeff Laird

It's especially important to know what the source is, because sometimes people don't realize exactly who is speaking and sometimes that makes kind of a difference as to how you're supposed to interpret

this statement, especially inside of its own context. Sometimes you'll see a joke, a meme that's passed around the Internet sometimes, where you'll see somebody who sent flowers to a funeral and the verse that they quoted said all these things I will give you if you will fall down and worship me, which sounds like nice sentiment, except that's Satan talking in the Bible. So a little bit of an awkward quote.

Jeff Laird

When you talked about Shakespeare, Polonius, that character. A lot of people don't realize that his character is sort of a politician. Depending on how you want to play him, he's either sort of a bumbling doofus or a conniving fraud, one way or the other. And that whole speech is meant to be taken by the audience as to sound like the kind of meaningless nonsense that politicians bring up. But it turns into something that we hear all the time in pop culture. And then yeah, it just gets in there and like you said with the the sound of it, I can see why people would think that might be sort of biblical, even when it's not.

Shea Houdmann

And even Jeff, when you mentioned earlier the let go, let God, I'm my. First thing that. Came to my mind was, do we have an article on that one. Because I bet you a lot of people search for that and thinking that it is actually in the Bible when it's not.

Shea Houdmann

If I were to go back into my memories as a child, I remember my mom would say this too shall pass. A lot. Whenever I'd probably whenever I was whining about something that something terrible that had happened to me that really wasn't all that terrible. And I for a long time I thought that exact quote was in the Bible somewhere, but it's not. I mean like a lot of these the principle you can say yeah, to an extent, I mean everything in this world is temporary. This world is not our home, heaven and Earth will pass away. So yeah, everything eventually is going to pass. But the way that phrase is most often used in our culture, it's it's not exactly from the Bible.

Shea Houdmann

And maybe one other that I think is also a very very true statement and I think it's helpful reminder for us is hate the sin but love the sinner. Where we can find sin in someone life, including our own lives and we can hate that sin without actually hating the person an important distinction to make. And it's not only just for us, but it's also very difficult in our current culture to do that because for so many people, if we're saying their lifestyle or their choices are wrong, they view that as us hating them, when it's like, no, we're we're hating sin. We're not hating the Sinner. But love the sinner, hate the sin is actually not in the Bible. Although I would say to a certain extent both aspects, both parts of that saying do have some biblical truth to it.

Kevin Stone

How about this one? All men are created equal. Of course the idea is biblical. We know that all people are created in the image of God, and that in Christ especially, there is no Jew or Greek or barbarian or civilian or any of the others that are mentioned there. But so we are all equal in God's eyes. But that particular quote is of course not biblical. You can go to your concordance and look and look and look. You're not going to find the reference for that. It is, of course, from the Declaration of

Independence a wonderful document, and express some some wonderful universal truths, such as that one, that all men are created equal. But no, it is not in scripture.

Kevin Stone

And then, going back to another literary source, Alexander Pope wrote an essay called an essay on Criticism back in 1711. And in that, he said, to err is human, to forgive divine. And we, we've heard this probably often in our lives, to err is human, to forgive divine and it, it kind of has the the ring of Scripture to it. Kind of smacks of something that you might find in the Bible, but it's not. It's from Mr Alexander Pope from a few centuries back. And so again, it's one of those that you can look and look and look for it in the pages of Scripture and you're just not going to find it. I had a pastor friend that used to say, well, it's it's in the book of Hezekiah. Just look up to Hezekiah 3:16, you know or whatever. And of course there is no book of Hezekiah in Scripture. And so that was his way of saying it's not in there, you're looking in vain.

Jeff Laird

A lot of those it's interesting because they do have connections to biblical ideas. In other words, they're not. Just because something is not a direct quote from the Bible doesn't mean it's totally wrong. And that is where some of these are a little more confusing and but at the same time it is important for us to distinguish when a statement in and of itself is not in the Bible. I think the idea of hate the sin love the sinner is one that's very important for us to be clear, is not actually stated in the Bible. And Shea as you were saying, I think one of the reasons is because as human beings we do have a difficult time handling concepts like hate appropriately. You know, I mean, even in our daily lives we recognize that there are some things that we should be morally, viscerally against, you know. And in that sense, there are things in the world that we should hate. But we're not always good at knowing exactly which ones we should and shouldn't. So the focus of scripture is on us staying away from sin and loving other people. So even though the principles in there, it's important for us to remember that they're they're in there.

Jeff Laird

Kevin, like you said, all men being created equal, that's a very biblical concept. In fact, that's an idea that, outside the Bible, you just don't see. It's one of the things that makes our civilization unique in its approach to things like human rights. You know the only thing about the quote from Alexander Pope that I can think of is that here in the Midwest we talk a little bit different, so to us you know, err is what we say when we're confused. Error is how we talk about making a mistake. So to us, it's to error is human. That's my only confusion on something like that. So it's, you know, it's not in the Bible. But there again there's a parallel to what Scripture says in that because we are going to make mistakes as human beings and forgiveness is something that we're called on to bring out.

Jeff Laird

Now so far what we've really talked about is we've talked about things that either are just not in the Bible at all. Or they're vaguely biblical, but they're not really in scripture. The other category that we see all the time is where people have specific verses in mind or specific phrases in mind, and what they're saying is a misquote. In other words, there is a statement or a quote like that in the Bible. But people are getting that one wrong.

Jeff Laird

I think one of the most famous one is the idea that the that money is the root of all evil. We hear that a lot. Money is the root of all evil, and that's not what Scripture says. First Timothy 6:10 says that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. So it's the same warning about money and greed that a person can get involved in all kinds of terrible things if they're greedy. But it it's the Bible does not teach that literally everything that we do wrong in the world has some sort of connection to money or greed to funding, and so on and so forth. So again, there's different categories, but they all have the same basic problem, which is we're getting wisdom from somewhere without checking it against Scripture.

Shea Houdmann

Exactly right, Jeff. We get a lot of questions about like misquotes scripture and not even like misquotes like is it, is it it's it's the person fault, it's the way a Scripture verses commonly quoted throughout cultures. You see posters with these misquotes.

Shea Houdmann

They other than the love of money being the root of all kinds of evil. Another common one is the the lion shall lie down with the lamb. We see in most Sunday school classrooms for children they'll be a poster of a lion and a lamb lying together like well, the principle is still the same, but the actual quote is, and the wolf will dwell with the lamb and the lion will lie down with the young goat. And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and the little boy will lead them. That's from Isaiah 11:6. And then Isaiah 65:25 reads, the wolf and the lamb will graze together and the lion will eat straw like an ox. So these verses mention lamb and a lion in the same verse but it's not the wolf. It's not the lion in the lamb they're lying together, it's the wolf and the lamb. But the main point is the same is that in the millennial kingdom, we believe even the animals would be a peace each other. So a lion or a wolf and lamb could lie down together, would normally be a predator, prey relationship, and they will be at peace. No risk of one of them seeking to devour the other. So again, it's not like a major theological error, but it's, we should strive to get scripture right and the scripture says the wolf is the one that will be lying down with the lamb.

Kevin Stone

I'm thinking that there should be a law of some kind where before you make a Bible poster or before you create a Bible meme to share online, you've got to make sure you're quoting it correctly. And be also nice if you were required to keep it in its proper context and not try to misquote it in in any way. I'm thinking of 1st Corinthians 10:13. It says that God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.

Kevin Stone

And a lot of people will take that verse and kind of twist it around a little bit and come out saying well, God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able. I mean, he he he knows our limits, and he's not going to push our limits, he's going to, he's going to tamp things down and make sure that whatever comes our way, we can handle. And that's not what the the verses is actually teaching. There

are times in which God allows things to happen in our lives that we cannot handle. We've got to rely on him, think of the life of Job, there was more than he could handle in his life.

Kevin Stone

And then specifically in that verse, it's talking about temptation and and trials. God is providing a way of escape so that when we are tempted, we don't have to sin, we don't have to fall into the trap. That is, that Satan is laid before us. But there will be a way of escape, even if it is as simple as what Joseph used when he was confronted by Potiphar's wife. He just ran out of the room. You know. He physically removed himself from the temptation. That might be the way of escape, just to just something as straightforward as that. But there will always be a way of escape. That's the promise. We don't have to give in to sin. We don't have to yield to sin. We can yield to the Holy Spirit.

Jeff Laird

It's interesting the way that our culture has a tendency to pick and choose which parts of that verse that they want to use or to claim. Because like you were saying, what the verse says is that God always provides some means of escape so that we do not have to sin. That God will always give us some non sinful option that we have in any circumstance. We can never look at God and say wasn't my fault. There was nothing I could have done. I just. I had to sin. We always spin that to say God will never give you anything that you can't handle, and we like to apply that when it comes to things like stress and life and things like that. Very few people want to actually apply that in the only place it does apply. Which is sort of like saying God will never put you in a circumstance where you have to sin. So when you sin, you have nobody to blame except yourself. That's not the way that we want to use that concept. We want to, you know, use that when it comes to sports and getting fired and being sick and all sorts of things like that. But we don't want to use it in the one spot where we're supposed to use it.

Jeff Laird

And I think, Shea, what you were saying before is, is a good thought, that just because we hear these things does not necessarily mean that they're automatically right or automatically wrong based on whether they're correct in the Bible or precisely correct in the Bible. Some of them do and do not have a lot of importance, but we do sort of want to follow, you know, we'll call it Kevin's law. You you have to quote it accurately, and you want to be careful of the context when you do that, because if you don't, then you're mistakenly ascribing something to the Bible that's not actually biblical wisdom, and following good wisdom is always a good idea, but you want to differentiate between good wisdom and biblical good wisdom because there is a difference.

Shea Houdmann

If I were to think of like one other ones I saw recently a this will go back to the stuff that's not in the Bible that people think it is. It's the what's commonly known as the Serenity prayer. The God helped me to, do I don't know, change the things I can accept the things I can't and to know the difference. Something to that effect.

Jeff Laird

Right.

Shea Houdmann

And someone asked, hey, where's that, that prayer in the Bible? I remember my mom had it on a poster in her in her bathroom. And I wonder, I wonder where that came from. It's not in the Bible. I think there's a lot of good truth to it.

Shea Houdmann

Maybe just a couple more that they've come to mind as I was kind of preparing for this one. Where, idle hands are the devil's workshop. In the sense of I think this is usually used with basically, you need to keep kids really busy doing something or they'll find something bad to do. That's kind of the context. Well, again, some truth to that statement, but again not in the Bible.

Shea Houdmann

And then also when I saw recently within the question was there but for the grace of God go I. And in context it's saying it's usually you see someone else who's failed in some terrible way and you say this is a reminder that you know I'm not above that. I could potentially make the same mistake, commit the same sin as that person did, but there for the grace of God protecting me, I could make the same mistake. So the helpful reminder. Something that I'd say fairly often, but again, not specifically from the Bible, although I'd say it's a biblical statement to make.

Jeff Laird

Yeah, that one has definitely got a lot of connection to the truth of Scripture. It tells us be careful where you think you stand, lest you fall, you know. And then again, we just talked about Corinthians saying God will provide a means to escape if you're confronted with temptation. And part of what Jesus told us to pray was lead us not into temptation. So it's there's something to be said for saying yeah, you know, we need to be careful about judging other people in their circumstances, because God had put me in a different circumstance or put me in that circumstance maybe I would have made that mistake, you know.

Shea Houdmann

There's been the Got Questions podcast on things that are not in the Bible or things that are kind of in the Bible, but we're misquoting it. We introduced Kevin's Law today that says if you're going to print a poster, you must make it sure it is quoting scripture accurately.

Kevin Stone

Write that one in stone.

Shea Houdmann

Yes! We have one article that kind of goes through the most common not in the Bible ones, and then some of these other ones we actually have articles dedicated to them. So if you want to learn a little bit more and you've actually learned where they actually do originate, you could check out some of these articles on GotQuestions.org. So I hope our conversation today has been encouraging to you and also educational about some things that are not in the Bible that you may have thought was, 'cause I know at

least a few of these at some point in my life I thought they were in the Bible. So got questions? The Bible has answers. We'll help you find them.