

Is It True That "God Helps Those Who Help Themselves?"

I've been sitting in this hazy limbo for a while, trying to figure it out. Trying to understand when my efforts meet up with God's sovereign plan, and when my actions are wheat and when they're sifted as chaff. I've been trying to understand "my part" and "His part," but mostly wishing that we operated in an economy where I could check the boxes on my to-do list and then have God deliver a glittery box of my-dreams-in-a-package, right to my doorstep.

But it seems God is not working for UPS this year.

I'd like to think that life is a series of $X + Y = Z$ procedures. That if you do this "list" of things --and especially if you do them well-- then you'll be positioned to reap a list of predetermined outcomes.

But hard work and diligent effort have not produced that coveted (*and possibly hypothetical*) list of outcomes. It has not polished the brass ring and readied it for my clammy, white-knuckled, yearning finger.

Apparently I know nothing about algebra or brass jewelry.

What Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob teach us about "helping themselves."

September began with our Bible Study diving into the book of Beginnings. I'll admit that I've been troubled at how often God levels discipline upon those who do not wait on him.

Despite *desiring God*, we see these godly men make critical errors time and time again:

Rather than waiting for God to show up and blind everyone with his majesty, they take matters into their own hands and wreck everything.

So is it true? Does God "help those who help themselves?"

I'd like to think so. (*after all, he still blessed Jacob -- even after his goat-skin trickery*)

I'd like to think that God is honored when we use our gifts and when we work hard.

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I'd like to think that he wouldn't prefer us to sit around waiting for the UPS man. That instead, we're planning and dreaming and working on the dreams that *He* placed in our hearts.

I guess the hitch is that we can't do all those things in our own flesh and without constant prayer. Instead, in some mystical union of human desire and divine will, *our* work marries with *God's* been-there-since-the-creation-of-the-world Plan for *our puny little lives*.

These lives that are mere breaths -- that are barely a blip on the radar of this world.

Isn't it *amazing* that God even *cares about our dreams*?

That He even *notices* our work?

Yet He does.

And when we trust and pray and pray and trust...we get to be witnesses when God shows up to blind everyone with his majesty.

That's a box I can't wait to unwrap.