BIBLE STUDY · SERMON NOTES

How to activate the help of God

Notes from a sermon by **Apostle Joshua Selman** · written down by **noteworthydays**

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> ANCHOR VERSE · PSALM 20:1–2 (KJV)
> *The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.*

Knowing where help comes from is not the same as enjoying it. In this message, God's help is something we activate: through the posture of our heart, through the cry of our lips, and through the seeds we sow in other people's lives. And once help comes, how we respond decides whether it continues.

At a glance

Three keys that activate God's help

- ♡ **Humility.** Maintain a posture of brokenness and humility before the Lord.
- ♡ **The cry.** Pray the prayer of mercy and help.
- ♡ **The seed.** Sow seeds of help, because help is a harvest.

Three ways to respond when He helps

- ♡ **Thanksgiving.** Never trivialise His help, however small.
- ♡ **Testimony.** Declare His goodness before His people.
- ♡ **Glory.** Use every blessing that comes from His help to glorify Him.

PART ONE · THREE KEYS

Key 1: A posture of brokenness and humility

The first key is not a technique but a heart condition. You will never truly secure the help of God while you are full of yourself, full of pride, or full of your achievements. The people God helps most are often those who live with a constant awareness that they are not much outside of Him.

Pride is described here as the soul's cancer. Like a stage-four illness, it slowly incapacitates a person, and its most dangerous symptom is that the one who carries it often cannot see it. It slips in quietly, especially when results start to show and people start to praise.

> *"Fight pride like a cancer patient fights cancer."*

Humility is the mind of Christ. Though He was God, He humbled Himself, became a man and was obedient unto death. If you master nothing else in the kingdom but humility, you have held on to the nerve of progress in the spirit.

When people celebrate you, let them. You cannot stop them. But like Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, who tore their clothes when the crowd called them Zeus and Hermes, always point back to God and remember to tremble before Him.

> *"If you see anything extraordinary, it is because there is an extraordinary God holding the hands of an ordinary man and doing wonders through those hands."*

When God opposes the proud. Pride is a divider of honour and a depleter of grace. God gives grace to the humble but resists the proud, and when God Himself is the one fighting you, the only prayer that can save you is the prayer of mercy. Jonah understood this. He never blamed the fish; he knew where the storm came from. From the belly of the fish he prayed, God brought him to safety, and he came out ready to go to Nineveh. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

> JOHN 15:5 (KJV)
> *...for without me ye can do nothing.*
>
> JAMES 4:6 (KJV)
> *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

Scriptures to study

- † **Philippians 2:5–8** · "Let this mind be in you": Christ humbled Himself
- † **James 4:6 · 1 Peter 5:5** · grace to the humble, resistance to the proud
- † **John 15:5** · without Him we can do nothing
- † **Acts 14:11–15** · Paul and Barnabas refuse the crowd's worship
- † **Jonah 1–2** · God's discipline, the fish, and Jonah's prayer
- † **1 Samuel 15:22** · obedience is better than sacrifice
- † **Psalm 139:23–24** · "Search me, O God, and know my heart"

Reflect

1. Where might pride be "secretly hiding" in my life, waiting for results to activate it?

2. When people praise me, what is my first instinct? How can I point them back to God?

3. What does it look like for me to "tremble before the Lord" in my everyday life?

PART ONE · THREE KEYS

Key 2: The prayer of mercy and help

Prayer works on a call and response system. God sees the pain you are going through, but He says, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee." Every time people were in trouble in scripture, whether individuals or the whole nation of Israel, they cried unto the Lord.

> *"Prayer works based on a call and response system."*

CRIES THAT HEAVEN ANSWERED

- **Nebuchadnezzar** lifted his eyes to heaven, and his understanding, honour and kingdom were restored (Daniel 4:34–37).
- **Blind Bartimaeus** cried, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:47).
- **Jabez** cried, "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed" (1 Chronicles 4:10).
- **Jonah** cried "by reason of mine affliction" from the belly of the fish, and God heard him (Jonah 2:1–6).
- **Jesus** prayed in the agony of Gethsemane, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

DON'T SPEND YOUR CRYING TIME GATHERING SYMPATHY

Many people in trouble ask others to pray for them but never pray themselves. They discuss their situation with people who have no power to help, post it online, and grow angry when no one responds, when they could have come to the God of all grace. Except the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it.

LEARN THE CRY OF MERCY EARLY

The most powerful prayer of mercy in the Bible is Psalm 51. Pray it from verse 1 to the end, not as a charm, but with understanding. Days will come when your intelligence in prayer will not serve you, and you will need something that gives expression to a sincere cry: "Lord, I have no one else but You." When God sees that you know no man has the capacity to rescue you, His jealousy arises over you.

> *"Spiritual men are not empty. There will always be something to say towards heaven."*

PSALM 51:1 (KJV)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Scriptures to study

- † **Daniel 4:34–37** · the repentant prayer of Nebuchadnezzar
- † **Jeremiah 33:3** · "Call unto me, and I will answer thee"

- † **Psalm 120:1** · "In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me"
- † **Mark 10:46–52** · Bartimaeus cries for mercy
- † **1 Chronicles 4:9–10** · the prayer of Jabez
- † **Matthew 26:39** · Jesus in Gethsemane
- † **Psalm 127:1–2** · except the Lord builds the house
- † **Psalm 20:1–2** · "Send thee help from the sanctuary"
- † **Jonah 2:1–6** · prayer from the belly of the fish
- † **Psalm 51** · the great prayer of mercy

Reflect

1. Am I quicker to tell people about my problems than to tell God? What would change if I prayed first?

2. Which psalm or prayer of mercy will I "archive" and learn by heart for hard days?

3. Where in my life do I need to say honestly, "Lord, I have no one else but You"?

PART ONE · THREE KEYS

Key 3: Sowing seeds of help

Help is a harvest, and the earth still works by the law of seedtime and harvest. If you do not show people mercy or help, you are not planting the seed that produces a harvest of help in your own life. Sow wickedness and don't be surprised when your farm is full of it.

> *"Help is a harvest."*

INHERITED HARVESTS

Some families never seem to find rest from battles because of seeds sown by those who went before them: gossip, cruelty, careless words. Some of us are paying for things we said that reached the wrong ears. The prayer here is for mercy to cancel every harvest of evil, whether from seeds sown on our behalf or seeds we sowed ourselves (Psalm 19:13). Saul held the coats of those who stoned Stephen, yet when God sent Ananias to him, God said, "He is a chosen vessel." Mercy can speak louder than a past.

> *"May your name never be a padlock. May it be a key that opens doors for you and for others."*

SCATTER KINDNESS LIKE SEED

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand." Give to people you know and to strangers you do not know, because you do not know which part of the farm will yield. As a young boy, Apostle Selman bought sugarcane for a group of poor women, a gift of less than 100 naira. It wasn't transactional; it was honour. One of them blessed him: "My son, forever walk upon gold." Like Isaac's blessing over Jacob, a sworn blessing can carry grace for a lifetime.

> *"Every mountain is relative to the grace that confronts it."*

HELP IS NOT ONLY MONEY

You can't solve everybody's problem, but don't watch too many people cry without choosing one to help. If you can't wipe their tears, give them a handkerchief. If you can't give them a handkerchief, give them an encouraging scripture. Sometimes help is a shoulder to lean on, or a promise to wake up and pray with someone for 30 minutes for three nights. When God comes through for them, there will be a package for you too, because when God blesses, He blesses everyone who was part of the process.

GALATIANS 6:7 (KJV)

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

MATTHEW 5:7 (KJV)

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Scriptures to study

- † **Galatians 6:7** · whatever a man sows, he reaps
- † **Matthew 5:7** · the merciful obtain mercy
- † **Genesis 8:22** · seedtime and harvest shall not cease
- † **Luke 18:1–8** · the judge who neither feared God nor regarded man
- † **Psalm 19:13** · "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins"
- † **Acts 7:58 · Acts 9:10–15** · Saul at Stephen's death; Ananias sent to help him
- † **Ecclesiastes 11:1–2, 6** · give a portion to seven, and also to eight
- † **Genesis 27** · Isaac's blessing over Jacob

Reflect

1. Who around me is crying right now, and what is one practical way I can help this week?

2. Are there words or actions I need to ask God's forgiveness for, so my children don't inherit the harvest?

3. Is my name a padlock or a key to the people who know me? What seeds am I sowing?

PART TWO · THREE RESPONSES

How to respond when God helps you

If you want to sustain the help of God, you must know how to respond to it. There is a threefold response.

1. RESPOND WITH THANKSGIVING

Every time you see God step in, give thanks. Never trivialise His help, however small. Even before the help has fully manifested, once you see the finger of God, begin to thank Him before you see His hand.

> PSALM 136:1 (KJV)
> *O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

2. TESTIFY OF HIS GOODNESS BEFORE HIS PEOPLE

It matters that you declare before God's people that you have seen His hand. The Samaritan woman left her waterpot, ran to the city and said, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" And the people came. Your testimony lets others see His goodness.

> PSALM 22:22 (KJV)
> *I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*

3. USE EVERY BLESSING FOR HIS GLORY

Whether it is finances, an open door, a promotion or a breakthrough of any kind, use it for His glory. Many believers cry to God for a spouse, children, promotion or a thriving business, and when the blessing arrives they don't even spend one week in thanksgiving. They forget. Using His blessings to destroy lives or bring reproach on His name cuts off the continuity of His help.

> *"Those who remember the goodness of God are the ones who multiply His hand upon their lives."*

Scriptures to study

- **Psalm 136:1–5** · His mercy endureth for ever
- **Psalm 22:22** · declare His name in the congregation
- **John 4:28–30, 39** · the Samaritan woman's testimony
- **1 Samuel 7:12** · Ebenezer: "Hitherto hath the LORD helped us"
- **Deuteronomy 8:10–18** · remember the Lord when you are blessed

Reflect

1. Where has God helped me recently that I have not stopped to thank Him for?

2. What testimony can I share with someone this week?

3. What blessing in my hands right now could I use more intentionally for His glory?

PRAY IT THROUGH

Prayer points

- Father, everything that looks like pride, whether it is secretly hiding in my life or waiting for results to activate it, let it die today.
- Lord, search my heart. Give me a broken and contrite spirit, and let people see the humility behind every result You give me.
- Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness. I have no one else but You.
- Lord, hear me in the day of trouble. Send me help from Your sanctuary and strengthen me out of Zion (Psalm 20:1–2).
- Every harvest of evil and pain, whether from seeds sown on my behalf or seeds I sowed myself, let Your mercy cancel it.
- May my name never be a padlock. Let it be a key that opens doors for me, my children and others.
- Give me grace to sow seeds of help, kindness and mercy, to people I know and to strangers.
- As You lift me, I will thank You all the days of my life, in secret and in the open.
- As You lift me, I will testify of Your goodness before Your people and tell them You are a prayer-answering God.
- As You bless me, I will use every blessing that comes to glorify You.

My own prayer: one or two areas where I need His help before this year ends

Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

1 SAMUEL 7:12

CREDIT

These study notes are based on the message *"How to activate the help of God"* by **Apostle Joshua Selman**. The teaching, illustrations and quotes are his; the summaries, reflection questions and layout are by noteworthydays. Watch the full message at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtsJqL51WQE. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.