

# Misquotes and Fictional Verses From the Bible

We've all experienced it. Someone pulls a phrase out of thin air that *sounds* Scriptural. But is that what God really said? Today, we will look at some of the more famous or more common phrases that are either misquoted, misapplied, or completely made up, posing as the Word of God in peoples' hearts. We'll see if there's a kernel of truth to them, a phrase almost like it, or the correct context for understanding what is being said.

## 1. Idle hands are the devil's workshop.

This quote is not in the Bible. The phrase may use the words "playground," "plaything," or "tools" instead of "workshop."

- What do you think the phrase means?

There is a verse with similar thoughts in Proverbs 10:4. What are the differences? What are the similarities?

- Agree or disagree: This is a fine phrase for Christians to use to encourage productivity.

## 2. God will never give you more than you can handle.

Have you used this one yourself? Would it surprise you if the words and even the thoughts are not in Scripture?

- Let's see what Scripture actually says. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What is the topic?

- What is this verse actually saying?

Sometimes God tests us. Yet His goal is never to get us to sin. We pray, "Lead us not into temptation," and He answers that prayer.

Is it true that God will never give you more than you can handle? There are many statements by men in the Bible where they are driven to the point that they are overwhelmed.

See 2 Samuel 22:5-7 (Psalm 18:4,5 has it as well) and Job 30:12-15,. Agree or disagree: These are words of men who could handle on their own what God gave them.

We may have to ask ourselves if they were simply weak in those situations. Yet it may be that God purposefully puts us in positions that we cannot handle on our own.

- Why might God do that?

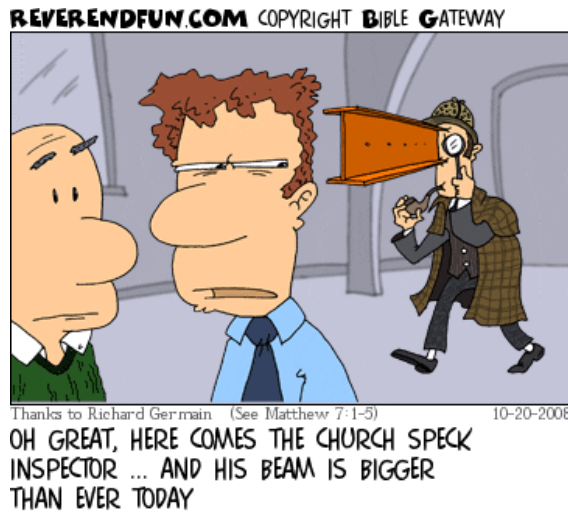
### 3. Do not judge.

This one is actually in Scripture.

- How or when do people usually quote this phrase?

Does that mean that we are never to tell anyone that what they say, do, or believe is wrong?

- Look up Matthew 7:1,2. What is the danger if we judge someone else?



The verses that follow, 7:3,4 point us to our own sinfulness. (Indeed, our own sinfulness is greater than the sin of the one whom we judge.)

- Yet in Matthew 7:5, what are we to do after we have removed the plank from our own eye?

- Summarize what these verses are really saying.

### 4. God made you the way you are.

I wouldn't be surprised if this is a morphing of the tagline from Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood. "I like you just the way you are."

- Agree or disagree: God made me. (See Isaiah 44:2, Jeremiah 1:5, or Job 31:15 for hints.)

The problem here is using logic while ignoring history. The logic says "God only makes good things the way He wants them. God made me. Therefore I am good and I am the way God wants me to be."

- What history must we remember? See Genesis 3:6, Genesis 5:1-3, and John 3:6.

The logic that "This is the way God made me, therefore it's ok to be \_\_\_\_\_" could ultimately be used to justify any sin. If God didn't want me to do this sin or that, He would have made me different, unable to do these things. The fall into sin has twisted the desires of my heart.

## 5. God helps those who help themselves.

This quote is not in the Bible. It has often been attributed to Benjamin Franklin, but he “borrowed” it from someone else. It appears in this form in Algernon Sidney’s work (died 1683, well before Franklin’s time). The thought behind this phrase is attributed to Greek wisdom. The phrase *could* be applied correctly for a Christian. But there is also a danger of a terrible misapplication as well.

- Agree or disagree: God blesses obedience.

- Agree or disagree: God is able to bless you *despite* disobedience.

- Agree or disagree: God will only bless you after you get your act together and start doing things for yourself.

This is nothing more than a recasting of the old Medieval axiom “Do what is in you, and God will aid your good will.”<sup>1</sup>

- In what area of theology *must* this saying be wrong?

## 6. My faith is between God and me.

This quote is not in the Bible. The concept isn’t in the Bible either.

- When do you usually hear a quote like this?

We do not deny that faith is a *personal* thing. It grasps the most precious truths in the universe and claims them as our own. No other relationship could be more personal than the one between my loving God and me. But just because it is *personal* doesn’t mean that it’s *private*.

- What does belief in God cause us to do? See Romans 10:9,10, 2 Corinthians 4:13,14, and 1 Peter 3:15.

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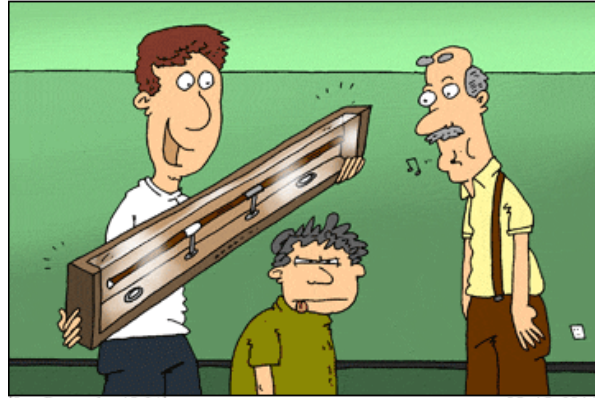
<sup>1</sup> *Fac quod in te est, et Deus aderit bonae voluntati tuae.* Thomas à Kempis has this line in Book 1, Chapter 7 of *The Imitation of Christ*

## 7. Spare the rod and spoil the child.

Maybe your parents made you believe it, but this phrase is not in the Bible in this form. Proverbs 13:24 says, “He who spares the rod hates his child, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.”

- Agree or disagree: This is a fine phrase for Christians to use to understand the purpose of discipline.

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(See Proverbs 13:24)

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MY KID IS SPOILED LIKE CRAZY, BUT MY ROD IS IN MINT CONDITION IN ITS ORIGINAL PACKAGING