

Asking for Help is a Sign of Strength



Christopher News Notes

WHY IS IT SO HARD TO ASK FOR HELP? Maybe it's because of our pride. We don't want to admit that we took a wrong turn and should probably ask for directions. Maybe it's because we feel shame. We don't want to look our loved ones in the eyes and tell them we feel as though we're failing, or we can't get out of bed some mornings. But seeking help shouldn't feel so hard, especially when it's one of the things that God encourages us to do!

James 1:5 states, “If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.” In other words, asking for help is not a weakness. It is a blessing, a sign of strength, and a beautiful decision that shows not only our clarity of mind but our strength of character to put aside our pride in order to better ourselves and those around us.

“So the Lord must wait for you to come to Him so He can show you His love and compassion. For the Lord is a faithful God. Blessed are those who wait for His help. O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. He will be gracious if you ask for help. He will surely respond to the sound of your cries.”
—Isaiah 30:18-19

Sunrise Through the Darkness

“Ask for help not because you’re weak, but because you want to remain strong.”
—Les Brown

Will Jimeno was sure he was going to die. Buried underneath pounds of rubble from the collapse of the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, the Port Authority Police Officer spent his moments under the debris praying. He thanked God for a wonderful 33 years of life, and for the time spent with his wife, Allison, their daughter, Bianca, and their soon-to-be-born child, Olivia.

Just when he thought all hope was lost, Jimeno—along with his sergeant, John McLoughlin, who was trapped near him—were found and rescued. But while Jimeno was saved from death, he wasn’t out of the darkness just yet. In the ensuing months, he struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder, that left him angry and short-tempered, lashing out at his family over little things. In an interview with The Christophers about his memoir *Sunrise Through the Darkness*, Jimeno said, “I realize today, I was angry...about not being able to help my teammates that didn’t make it, about my physical and mental struggles.”

At the time, however, Jimeno didn’t think he needed help. That all changed when Jimeno got so heated one day that he picked up a shoe to throw

Before he became a famous actor and philanthropist, Danny Thomas struggled to make ends meet. One day, he found himself in church, placing his last seven dollars in the collection basket and praying that God would find him a way to pay his bills. The next day, Thomas’s prayer was answered with a good job offer.

Years later, Thomas turned to St. Jude Thaddeus, the patron saint of hopeless causes, to ask for help in finding direction in life. In return, Thomas vowed, he would build St. Jude a shrine. After his prayer, Thomas’s acting career took flight. *The Danny Thomas Show* became a successful situation comedy on U.S. television.

Thomas remembered his promise to St. Jude. In the 1950s, he began building St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. It would become a leading center in pediatric medicine, focusing on pediatric cancer. Before St. Jude’s, the survival rate for children’s cancer stood at around 20 percent. Thanks to work done by the facility, the average child has an 80 percent cancer survival rate.

Imagine if Thomas had never turned to God for help? The courage and humility to ask for divine guidance not only gave Thomas direction, it led to hope for millions of parents and children across the country—and to thousands of lives being saved.

at his wife, an action that shocked him the moment his arm pulled back. “I remember dropping the shoe and I was embarrassed,” he said. Jimeno got in his truck and drove to the country to think and pray. He recalled, “I made the decision that I was going to go seek help, because if I wasn’t a good father, if I wasn’t a good husband, a good example, my children would probably grow up to be something I didn’t want them to be.”

Jimeno started therapy and began working on ways to manage his anger. In the end, asking for help was the ultimate turning point in his road to a better mental state. “I don’t feel that I’m any different than anybody else,” Jimeno added. “If I’m able to reach my sunrise, you should be able to reach yours as well.”

A Caregiver Asks for Help

“Healing takes time, and asking for help is a courageous step.”
—Mariska Hargitay

During a football game in 2010, Chris Norton suffered a major injury that left him paralyzed, with little chance of ever walking again. But Chris believed that he could beat those odds with intensive therapy and rehabilitation. On his college graduation day—while holding on to his fiancée Emily—Chris

walked across the stage to collect his diploma.

Though Chris still requires a wheelchair to get around, he and Emily have gone on to live fulfilling, productive lives. They’ve gotten married, started a foundation, adopted a girl named Whittley, and fostered several children. Chris also works as a motivational speaker, and the couple has written a book, *The Seven Longest Yards*, about dealing with life’s hardships.

In their book, Emily opens up about a different obstacle that came from caring for her quadriplegic husband: tackling depression and stress. Emily had to serve as Chris’s hands and feet at all times, while also caring for Whittley. In their book, she writes, “If it had to be done, I did it—grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning, laundry, everything. On top of that, I was Chris’s full-time caregiver. I filled his water bottle, emptied his leg bag, set him up on his bike, stayed nearby in case he fell, and helped him get ready each morning and night.”

In an interview with *Guideposts.org*, Emily elaborated, “I went into a deep depression. How I was feeling—with the lack of energy and just wanting to stay in bed—I honestly lost hope of ever feeling like myself again.”

Chris saw his wife struggling and suggested she seek help, but Emily refused. She didn't want to appear weak. Then, after a bad outburst, Emily found herself driving to church to pray. It was clear to her then that she could no longer do everything herself, so she dove into prayer and journaling. "The switch really got flipped when we went back to church," she said. "I started feeling a little hope. That was the thing I hadn't felt [in] a long time, feeling like maybe...things could possibly change."

One Sunday, her pastor delivered a homily on how people sometimes go through difficult times so that they can release the habits that have become a hindrance to them. The message made Emily realize that she needed to ditch the fiercely independent parts of herself in order to mature. She made an appointment with a therapist and started taking medication that lifted her from her depressed state. She also agreed to hiring a caregiver to come in a few days a week to help with Chris.

"I just needed some help," explained Emily. "I realized that getting help is a strength, not a weakness...I've learned to surrender the weight to God...and just focus on what I can do. I have a strong relationship with God, and I find a lot of peace in that...I focus on what I can do each day and just keep pushing through."

Help After the Storm

*"Nothing makes one feel so strong as a call for help."
—Pope Paul VI*



**"It's better to light one candle
than to curse the darkness."**

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President: Mary Ellen Robinson
Editor-in-Chief: Tony Rossi

The Christophers

5 Hanover Square, New York, NY 10004
212-759-4050, ext. 241

mail@christophers.org • www.christophers.org

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When Hurricane Ida swept across the south in August 2021, it became the second-most damaging and intense storm to make landfall in the state of Louisiana since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, leaving thousands struggling without power or shelter.

St. Joan of Arc Church in LaPlace was heavily devastated during Ida. The church's pastor, Father David Ducote, took to Facebook to send out a call for help. His community needed volunteers to clean up debris, remove trees, and gut houses. Betty-Ann Hickey, a resident of Covington County, felt compelled to answer Father Ducote's call. "I didn't have any damage to my home, so once we got power back I didn't want to sit around feeling sorry for myself," Hickey told the *Clarion Herald*, archdiocesan newspaper of New Orleans. Little did she know the domino effect her selflessness would set into motion.

Hickey headed to St. Joan of Arc with her son, James, and local friends to help out. She decided to post their work on Facebook, and the reaction shocked her. "People started reaching out and saying, 'If you do it again, we want to be part of it,'" Hickey said. "What started last week with me and a friend now has six Catholic parishes and over 50 volunteers."

It was her faith, Hickey said, that drove her to answer someone's call for help. "In all of this, I see the best of the church," she said. "When you read the Acts of the Apostles, the apostles were of one accord—everyone cared for everyone. One who has more should care for one who has less. The church that Jesus founded is that you share what you have...If we believe in the mission of the church, we have a responsibility to be the hands and hearts of the Lord."

And to think, it all started because one priest was willing to ask for help.

*"Refusing to ask for help when you need it is
refusing someone the chance to be helpful."*

—Ric Ocacek