

# When God Butts In

## By Mike Lorence

### Self-Made

A common trait among many individuals is one of independence. An attitude of “I don’t need anyone’s help. I can do this on my own.” There are even phrases often used to illustrate this very idea. “He’s a self-made man.” Another one is “He pulled himself up by his own bootstraps.” Older boots had straps on the sides that helped to pull the boot on. I have a pair of Western boots that have these types of straps. Even the term, “self-reliant” at times is used, meaning I can only rely on my own self and abilities to accomplish important things in life. Many accept these types of statements about themselves as a compliment, but is this an attitude we should have as Christians?

### God Butts In

Certain phrases in the Word of God can catch your attention if you’re looking closely. There’s one phrase that caught mine a number of years ago. It was “but God.” Why are these two words so interesting? Because it immediately tells that whatever follows that two-word phrase is something I should seriously look at because it’s going to be in complete opposition to what was just said. Let’s look at a few of these from God’s Word.

#### **Romans 5:6-8 (KJV)**

<sup>6</sup> For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

<sup>7</sup> For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

<sup>8</sup> **But God** [emphasis added] commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

In verse 8, we see the phrase we’re looking into it, “but God.” The word “but” is a conjunction or connective which ties two thoughts together. In this case, it’s an adversative conjunction meaning that the two thoughts are an antithesis or are in contrast with one another. So, whatever was said before, God feels differently. So, what was just written?

We were without the strength and ability to save ourselves from the situation we were in. No one was good enough to sacrifice himself for another to change our course. **BUT** GOD could and did, that because of His love for us, even when we didn’t deserve it, He had Christ die for us. We should be so thankful that God butted in.

Let look at the first time this phrase is used in the Bible.

#### **Genesis 20:1-7 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.

<sup>2</sup> And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

<sup>3</sup> **But God** came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.

<sup>4</sup> But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?

<sup>5</sup> Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

<sup>6</sup> And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

<sup>7</sup> Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.

Abraham was traveling and as he camped in Gerar, Abimelech (not a name but a title – Father-King: like a Pharaoh of Egypt) saw Sarah and wanted her. If Abraham had tried to stop him, he would have been executed, so he tried to dissuade Abimelech by saying she was his sister (she was a half-sister to Abraham). So, God had to “butt in” to intervene. God had plans for Abraham so he “persuaded” Abimelech to change his mind. No one else could have done that.

This incident was even written about in the Psalms.

#### **Psalms 105:14-15 (KJV)**

<sup>14</sup> He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes;

<sup>15</sup> Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

Now let's see what happens because of God's intervention.

#### **Genesis 20:14-17 (KJV)**

<sup>14</sup> And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

<sup>15</sup> And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.

<sup>16</sup> And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproveth.

<sup>17</sup> So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children.

Now look at the profit of God getting involved in the matter. Abraham is enriched, given the best places to stay, and Abimelech's wife was healed, the first recorded healing in the Word.

Let's look at another record, one of Saul and David.

#### **1 Samuel 23:7-14 (KJV)**

<sup>7</sup> And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

<sup>8</sup> And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.

<sup>9</sup> And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.

<sup>10</sup> Then said David, O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.

<sup>11</sup> Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the Lord said, He will come down.

<sup>12</sup> Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, They will deliver thee up.

<sup>13</sup> Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth.

<sup>14</sup> And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, **but God** delivered him not into his hand.

Saul was out to kill David and had his men looking every day for him. David was considered public enemy number one and there were wanted posters everywhere for him. Yet regardless of what Saul wanted, God protected David. If God is protecting you, there's nobody that will be able to get to you.

Let's look at David's prayer regarding his enemies.

### **Psalms 64:1-10 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.

<sup>2</sup> Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:

<sup>3</sup> Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:

<sup>4</sup> That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

<sup>5</sup> They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?

<sup>6</sup> They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.

<sup>7</sup> **But God** shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.

<sup>8</sup> So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.

<sup>9</sup> And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

<sup>10</sup> The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

In verse 7, we see our phrase, "but God" again. It's in complete contrast to what it says in verses 3 and 4 "...and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him..." God butted into Saul's plans.

How about another one?

### **Acts 7:9-10 (KJV)**

<sup>9</sup> And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: **but God** was with him,

<sup>10</sup> And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery thinking that they'd removed their problem, but God had other plans for him. His own brothers rejected him, BUT GOD was with him. Sometimes we feel as though we're all alone, but God never leaves us or forsakes us so we have nothing to fear.<sup>1</sup> God will always get involved and step in for his children.

### **Acts 13:26-30 (KJV)**

<sup>26</sup> Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

<sup>27</sup> For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

<sup>28</sup> And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

<sup>29</sup> And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

<sup>30</sup> **But God** raised him from the dead:

The Devil, through his surrogates, had Jesus crucified. He had been trying since the statement in Genesis 3:15<sup>2</sup>, to destroy the Christ lineage, but when that didn't work, he killed the only begotten son of God. They put him in a sepulchre thinking that was it. Then the next verse, states that God had other plans and He raised him from the dead. WOW! What a statement. It makes all the previous plans moot. When God butts in, nothing, not even the Devil himself, can stop God's plans. God trumps all.

### **Jeremiah 32:27 (KJV)**

<sup>27</sup> Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

#### **God Butts In Today**

We've looked at several examples of where God butted in, especially in the Old Testament. Well God still butts in today. We're going to look at a few of these in the Church Epistles since they apply to us.

### **1 Corinthians 1:25-30 (KJV)**

<sup>25</sup> Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

<sup>26</sup> For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

<sup>27</sup> **But God** hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

<sup>28</sup> And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

<sup>29</sup> That no flesh should glory in his presence.

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 13:5-6 (KJV) "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 3:15 (KJV) "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

<sup>30</sup> But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Here we see that God has made the wise, the mighty and the noble to be lower than the foolishness of God. As a result, we have wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, our sonship rights, which those in the world don't understand and think they're foolishness, but God says otherwise.

### 1 Corinthians 2:7-14 (KJV)

<sup>7</sup> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

<sup>8</sup> Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

<sup>9</sup> But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

<sup>10</sup> **But God** hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

<sup>11</sup> For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

<sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

<sup>13</sup> Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

<sup>14</sup> But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

God butted into the Devil's plans and now we have spirit so that we understand spiritual things. We are no longer natural man (one of only body and soul), but spiritual. For the first time, we can now see, hear, and understand those things that God had prepared for us.

### 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 (KJV)

<sup>6</sup> I have planted, Apollos watered; **but God** gave the increase.

<sup>7</sup> So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; **but God** that giveth the increase.

Here we see our phrase used twice to emphasize a point. Yes, we all have responsibilities in planting and speaking but the results are from God, not from our efforts. So, we shouldn't get so high and mighty about our "ministry." If we think that way, we are in opposition of what God thinks. Not a good place to be.

### 1 Corinthians 10:13 (KJV)

<sup>13</sup> There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: **but God** is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

May times in our lives we'll be tempted, but God has made sure that we'll never be tempted beyond what we can overcome, because He promises that He always will make a way out. What a peace that brings if you believe it and act on it. God has not forsaken us.

## 1 Corinthians 12:20-25 (KJV)

<sup>20</sup> But now are they many members, yet but one body.

<sup>21</sup> And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

<sup>22</sup> Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

<sup>23</sup> And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

<sup>24</sup> For our comely parts have no need: **but God** hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked.

<sup>25</sup> That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

Every member of the Body of Christ is important. We have no right to disparage or disregard anyone in the Body. We may not understand why that person is doing what they're doing, but God designed the Body the way He wants it to be. If we believe it and act that way, we won't have any schism or division among ourselves, but we will care for each other, just the way we'd do it for those we most dearly love and respect.

There are others, but I want to end with one in Ephesians.

## Ephesians 2:1-10 (KJV)

<sup>1</sup> And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

<sup>2</sup> Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

<sup>3</sup> Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

<sup>4</sup> **But God**, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

<sup>5</sup> Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

<sup>6</sup> And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

<sup>7</sup> That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

<sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.

<sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Aren't we thankful that God butted into our lives. We were dead. We had no life. Our only course in this world was one determined by the prince of the power of the air. Our citizenship was in this world and only the lusts of our flesh and mind drove us. **BUT GOD** stopped all that and set us on a new course, one in complete contrast to what we had known before. We literally went from death to life.

Our lives once driven by lust are now directed by the love of God. Our citizenship is no longer of this world but we are now ambassadors to this world speaking the word of reconciliation.<sup>3</sup>

And God calls us his “workmanship.” In other words, we’re His master work, a work of art. We are God’s masterpiece.

We can see that no Christian should ever consider themselves as being “self-made” as that’s what was driving us before we were born-again. Without God we were nothing, even if we had achieved every accomplishment that was possible to receive. We now have a new life. Let’s live each day by doing those “good works” that God has ordained for us to do.

We should be so thankful each and every minute of each and every day that God butted into our lives. Aren’t you glad that God butted into your life?

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<sup>3</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:19-20 (KJV) “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.”