

How I Finally Received The Prosperity Message

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Introduction

Yes, before I even get started, I KNOW some of you who are reading this have automatically thought I've flipped my lid. Some of you are okay with it and simply curious. Others of you are in complete agreement already. Why am I so sure? Because out of all the nit-picky things that Christians argue about, I doubt there's any more divisive topic than prosperity. And yes, I'm talking about prospering in your finances. It seems today that many Christians judge the characters of today's leading Christian speakers and authors by whether or not they ask for money. I used to do the same. In fact, I did it for years. And if I can be completely blunt, that judgmental attitude is exactly what was keeping me from seeing the truth and from experiencing blessing in my own life.

As I grew up, I was inundated with scripture. I was in church at least three times per week. I attended the only Christian School in town from kindergarten through the sixth grade where the first class of each day was Bible class. Summer Camp was basically an extension of the church. All three institutions were part of the Independent Baptist movement. I can't really call the Independent Baptist churches a denomination because they weren't. However, we only associated ourselves with other Independent Baptists. I'm not going to elaborate here because I'm only writing an article, not a book. As most folks know, there are certain things that Baptists and other similar denomination simply don't accept. There's always been a proverbial line separating mainline denominations. On the left side are the Baptists and Presbyterians while the Pentecostals and Charismatics are on the right. I guess the Methodists have folks on both sides. That's also the location of many good believers that I've met who call themselves "balanced." Don't get me wrong, I'm not talking about division or disunity, we're all children of God and we're all on the same team; but maybe I should clarify this by saying that we have conflicting viewpoints concerning the things of God.

Growing up, I was completely on the left side of that line. By the time I was in college, I could absolutely disprove the use of tongues in the church, the message of prosperity, and the act of healing. I'm not going to talk about tongues or healing here because this is specifically about prosperity. Even though I'm a total believer in those things now and I've seen God move miraculously in those areas, I STILL can put together a fantastic sermon disproving all three points. I can also put together an equally great sermon PROVING all three points. And yes, I always backed it up with scripture. How could I do that, you ask? Well, I had to learn how to let GOD teach me His word. That's far different than leaning on our own understanding. And at the moment I finally got honest with myself, I had to admit that I didn't really WANT tongues, healing, or prosperity to be true for two reasons. One, I was actually scared of it. And two, I would've had to admit that I had learned it wrong for so many years. However, those are spirits of pride and fear which God does not use! So, I had to get free from those things before I received PURE truth!

You see, a few years back God taught me the most valuable lesson I've yet learned. And this is the lesson: God's truth can't be initially grasped by the human intellect. We will EVENTUALLY understand it in our minds, yes! But, His truth COMES by way of revelation of the Spirit. (I Corinthians 2:10-16) If you have a question about that, I encourage you to study the first two chapters of I Corinthians. Let me also add that you shouldn't just read this passage. You must meditate on it and expect God's spirit to commune with your spirit so that you can receive His PURE truth without the mud that comes from your thinking, your fears, or your pre-disposed ideas. If you need to, spend some time in worship first to help usher yourself into His presence. As I've said, I'm not going to elaborate on that because I'm not writing a book; I'm writing an article.

You may say: "Okay I get that, but what does that have to do with prosperity?" I'm glad you asked! As so many wonderful folks often do, I tried to get to God by understanding Him with my intellect. I also tried to understand God's WORD by my intellect, though I didn't realize

I was doing that at the time. That got me nowhere. Not even the most brilliant mind ever to exist on this earth has the capacity to understand God. If our minds could understand Him, then only the smartest people would be close to God. The rest of us dummies would still be a bunch of sinners! I'm so glad that knowing God and His word is not dependant upon our intellect. If it was, I'd be in a lot of trouble. Understanding the things of God comes from us knowing God first through relationship. It is only after that when we will receive understanding ABOUT Him in our intellect. It must come in that order, not the other way around. We'll never understand God FULLY this side of Heaven, but He will continually reveal Himself to those who seek KNOWING Him, not just understanding Him. This will also bring revelation to the intellect in order to comprehend the THINGS of God. Things like prosperity!

So, what did my MIND say about prosperity? Well, the same things as most everyone else: that's it's greedy, evil, and a sign of a false prophet. Did I use scripture to back that up? Absolutely! Mark 10:17-23, I Timothy 6:10 & 17, Psalm 62:10, Jeremiah 49:4 and the list goes on and on! So why wouldn't I be against the prosperity message if I can refute it with scripture? Well, I discovered that none of those passages are actually against riches and wealth. They're against TRUSTING in riches and wealth. And I discovered something else! Those of us who were actually AGAINST prosperity preachers were the ones who WERE trusting in wealth, not the other way around. You'll have to read this whole article in order to grasp that.

Discovering the Word

Now, let's go through God's word and see what it REALLY has to say by the revelation power of His Spirit, rather than just the mere use of our own understanding. First of all, let's deal with poverty before we move onto to actual wealth. Here it is – poverty is a CURSE! What is a curse? Simply put, it's the opposite of a blessing! Curses are not God's will for His children, but

He has placed curses before us, and they can come upon us based upon our choices.
(Deuteronomy 28:25)

Before we elaborate on this much more, let me point out a misnomer in Christianity. We as the New Testament church are NOT free from the Old Testament. We are free from the CURSE OF THE LAW. (Galatians 3:13) The law is found within the Old Testament. It is not the totality of the Old Testament. We no longer have to come to God by way of sacrifice. Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice. We are no longer ceremonially unclean by what we eat. Jesus has made us clean! However, Jesus did not come to condemn the law, but to fulfill it. (Matthew 5:17) What does it mean that He fulfilled it? It means that what the law could not accomplish, He accomplished on the cross! How do we know what Jesus accomplished in our lives? -- By discovering the law. It is within the law that we know God's will and plan. But with Jesus, those things are accomplished through his blood shed rather than by ritual and ceremony.

Why did I feel the need to expound upon that? Because I know that one of the first things the opponents of the prosperity message will point to is that so much of it is found within the Old Testament and therefore they say that it was specifically for Israel and not for New Testament believers. And to that I now say, "PHOOEY!" I used to agree with that, but no longer! Study the Abrahamic covenant and see what God had to say to Abraham and what He did for Abraham concerning his finances. You can find it beginning in Genesis chapter 12 and the proceeding chapters. Wealth was part of the covenant that God made with Abraham. You may say "that was Abraham, not me." Oh, to the contrary! This is a covenant God made with Abraham's descendants for 1000 generations. Now whether or not you believe the number 1000 here is literal or if it simply means eternity is irrelevant. Why? Because even in this day and age, we're nowhere near 1,000 generations down the line from Abraham yet. To get a better grip on this, you must also study Deuteronomy chapters 28, 29, and 30. God set before His people both blessings and curses. They received either according to their choices. That principle has resonated throughout the entire bible and you can even see it today in modern times. It didn't

disappear with the beginning of the New Testament. You'll see more about that as you continue to read this article.

You may not be of Jewish descent as Abraham's blood, but you are adopted into that same covenant and family as a believer in Jesus and therefore are potentially qualified to receive all the goodies that were promised to Abraham as a result. You can find this in Galatians 3. Study it! Once again, I'm writing an article here, not a book; so I'm not going to list every incident, but I encourage you to go through the Old Testament and see for yourself how this specific covenant that God made with Abraham applied to Israel, his descendants. Over and over again, God warned them that their disobedience would bring a curse of poverty, but their obedience would bring the blessings of abundance. Is that JUST in their finances? NO, but does it INCLUDE their finances? Yes, absolutely, 100%! It involves EVERYTHING in their lives. (Psalm 1:3) It happened over and over again in the Old Testament.

Guess what! If you are a believer, you ALSO live under that same covenant. Your obedience brings blessings and your disobedience brings curses! How do I know? Because we've been adopted in to God's people and are also under Abraham's covenant (Genesis chapters 12 - 17; Galatians chapter 3.) I can already hear some of you: "Wait a minute, Jesus paid for my sins and I'm forgiven. I don't have to "perform" to make God love me. God loves me no matter what I've done." You are absolutely correct! But NOWHERE in the bible does it say that you can live in God's blessing without being obedient to Him; that would be heresy. You will still be His child and He will still be good to you, but you'll barely get by in life and the only thing you'll ever be able to rejoice about is that fact that one day you'll go to Heaven. You won't see all that goodness on THIS side, here on earth!

Abundance, Not "Just Enough"

Let me just get blunt here. God is in no way interested in you being poor! Let me say that again. God is NOT interested in you being poor. Some of you may agree with that but still can't quite grasp that God might want you RICH. You're under the belief that there is a "happy balance of moderation" there. You're saying, "Well, I don't believe in being poor, but the Bible just doesn't promise wealth." That is a lie. He wants ABUNDANT wealth for you, and we'll see that in more detail later.

God loves His children, and it hurts him to look down and see His children living in poverty and refusing to believe that He's good enough to bless them abundantly. God said this EVERY TIME when dealing with His people: "If you are obedient, you get ABUNDANT blessing." I would list the scriptures, but it actually is just about the whole Old Testament. So, just study it! I recommend starting in Deuteronomy 28, 29, and 30; and then watch those promises that are listed there, both the curses AND the blessings, unfold in events throughout the Old Testament. God definitely stuck by His word, as He always does.

The next question some of you may ask is, "Well, why am I not experiencing that abundance. If God wanted me to have it, wouldn't I have it?" Not necessarily! All because something is God's will doesn't mean it will come to pass! That too is a piece of heresy that has spread through the church like a cancer. You're basically saying that if you have diabetes, then God WANTED you to have diabetes! Stop slapping God in the face with that kind of thinking. Your God is a healer! Satan is a destroyer! You haven't received the fullness of God's goodness. You're also implying that all of the abortions, wars, hate, murders, and crimes in this world must've been the will of God because it happened. PHOOEY! We know that's not what God wants. Those things are ALL the result of sin entering into the world. Jesus came to set us free! There are A LOT of things happening on this earth that are NOT the will of God. That includes your poverty!

So, why aren't you experiencing ABUNDANCE? By the way, simply having the bills paid and getting by okay is NOT abundance. My God is MORE than Enough. (Malachi 3:10-12)

There can be several reasons why you are not experiencing financial abundance in your life. You will find a list of possible reasons later in your reading. I will say this: At some level, it all boils down to a lack of willingness or disobedience. (Isaiah 1: 18-20) I don't necessarily mean that you are FLAGRANTLY disobedient, but there IS a part of you that has stepped away from what God has said to do. Why? Because God has promised to ALL of us abundant blessing for willingness and obedience. So, don't lie to yourself saying that you ARE willing and you've ALWAYS been obedient but you're still living in lack. NO, you just called God a liar! It's not His fault if you're in lack, it's your's. God has placed before you both blessings and curses. Which will you choose? This is found in Deuteronomy chapters 28, 29, and 30; and this scripture STILL applies today! All Christians should have an understanding of these three chapters. It will change your life. If you really want to grasp Godly Economics 101, you can't do it without understanding these passages.

Misuse of Scripture

I mentioned earlier that even during the days that I was against the prosperity message, I could support opposition with scripture, and, that I could! If you've been a Christian for any amount of time, you know that there are a lot of dear, sweet Christians who fully believe the Bible to be God's word but still totally misuse what it says due to ignorance. Their heart may not be in the wrong place; they're just deceived. The Bible IS God's inspired word, but we require Holy Spirit guidance to understand it (I Corinthians chapters 1 and 2.) There are several passages that those who are opposed to prosperity use to try to disprove it. The following is a list of those passages, each of which is followed by a discussion about the errors in thinking that have anti-prosperity believers deceived.

1. I Timothy 6:10

For the Love of Money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

I've heard this quoted as "money is the root of all evil." NO, "the LOVE of money is the root of ALL KINDS of evil," and that is 100% true. You absolutely cannot love money and say you serve God. No man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24.) But let me also tell you that being broke, busted, and disgusted ALSO breeds some forms of evil! Having money or even expecting money from God is not the issue here. If God gives you millions and then one day tells you to give it away, then you have to do it! If you can't, you're loving money. The gospel being preached is EXPENSIVE, and God knows that! In order for you to fulfill the call on your life, then you MUST have money! You can't LOVE it. However, it is okay to ENJOY it! In fact, that same passage further down in verse 17 says that "*God RICHLY provides us with everything for our ENJOYMENT!*"

2. **Philippians 4:19**

And my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.

This verse is typically understood as "God will always meet my needs, but He didn't say anything about meeting my wants." This is a misguided mindset. When I make this next statement, some of you are going to really think I've lost my mind, but hear me out. Paul didn't say, "Your needs will always be met." This bears repeating. Paul didn't say, "Your needs will always be met." If we'll get off the religiosity for a few minutes and get real, we all will admit that we HAVE gone without needs at some point in our lives. I'll explain this verse in a minute, but I first want you to think about something. Have you ever been late paying a bill? Has your car ever broken down and you couldn't pay to have it fixed? Can you not afford to have a good heating furnace in your home during the winter? Have you ever had to eat cheap, unhealthy, processed food out of a box because you didn't have the money to afford fresh fruits, vegetables, and quality meats? The vast majority of us at some point in our lives would have to say "yes!" The sad part about it is that we've tried to understand God in those situations by saying, "Well, I

really didn't NEED it...I could get by." Or "My car doesn't have to get fixed right now, I can walk." "I can throw on a few blankets instead of having a heater." Once again let me say this: "PHOOEY!" If you are going to take that attitude, then you might as well wear nothing but a burlap sack and live under a pine tree in the forest while eating berries, leaves, and bark. After all, that's all you REALLY need isn't it?!?! Can't you get by just fine like that?!?! Uh, no I can't! I like good food, a comfortable home, and a car that works. I would also want the same for my family and friends! And God wants the same for you too!

So, if I'm saying that I believe the Bible and I believe Philippians 4:19, but I also believe Christians DO go without needs sometimes, then how can I justify my viewpoint? I'm glad you asked! Let's take a deep look at this passage. The "supply" that Paul was referring to here in this chapter was a HARVEST based upon a financial SEED that the Philippians planted into the ministry of Paul. This is about the law of sowing and reaping, which is discussed later in this teaching. To further understand this passage, we need to bring in a few more misunderstood verses that are found earlier in the same chapter. Let's look at verses 11-13:

11. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

This is quoted from the NIV. However, most of us are familiar with verse 13 as saying, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Somehow, over the centuries, well meaning Christians have taken this passage and twisted it to mean that sometimes we'll be in lack, sometimes we'll be in abundance, but in either season it's just part of God's supreme plan and therefore we must accept both abundance and lack! Once again, PHOOEY! I challenge you to study and meditate upon Philippians 4.

Before I mention what Paul is really saying here, have you noticed the contradiction between the misguided understandings of these verses? On one hand, some understand vss. 11-

13 to say that at times you may have plenty and at other times you may go without, but you should accept either. On the other hand, those same folk will say: “God will always meet my needs.” Those two points are dynamically opposed! But if you mention either one to the average Christian they would be in agreement! Both of these statements are NOT true!

So what’s really being said here? The same thing that’s been left out of all other misunderstood passages concerning finances. We are not to TRUST in money. Where do I see that in this scripture? Well, study ALL of Philippians 4 and you’ll find that Paul was pointing out that GOD is his source, NOT the churches that support him. Paul set out on his way from Macedonia and nobody helped him financially at first. However, He knew that GOD was his source, not the people. So, he went about what God had called him to do, thus being willing and obedient. God was faithful in using the church at Philippi by having them sow financially into Paul’s ministry. When they had sown that seed, they were told by Paul that they could now expect a great harvest from which God would supply their needs “according to HIS glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” This is opposed to living off of their OWN riches. Because of that seed they had sown, they were then operating in the law of seedtime and harvest. That is FAR different from the worldly system of money in which most Christians choose to live.

Paul held on in faith knowing that God would bless his obedience, and God did. Paul learned that he couldn’t look to his supporting churches to be his provision. God was his sole provider. Those churches were merely a channel. If the other churches are in disobedience and are not supporting God’s anointed ones the way He said to, then God will STILL ultimately get that provision and money to His ministers. Paul had learned to be content even when those churches WEREN’T giving. If he would have lost his peace and joy, then that would prove that his hope was no longer in the Lord, but it would’ve been in the people. That’s why he said: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” because He knows when God said “Go,” He would be right there with Paul, strengthening him and meeting his needs due to Paul’s obedience. I can’t over-express this point. It’s ALL about where your TRUST is. God is your

ONLY source. Everything else is merely a channel through which He provides. Even when things don't seem to be going right, you can't lean on your own understanding. You MUST do the will of the Lord. This is the heart of true contentment.

I'm going to take this time to elaborate on something and maybe step on a toe or two. For those of you who are in ministry and you're pointing your fingers at the prosperity bunch, let me ask you some questions! Do you sweat bullets when the offering isn't good enough? When giving in the church is down, do you decide that it's now time for a sermon on tithing? Do you put pressure on your biggest givers to make sure they put their check in the plate so you can keep on the lights in the church building? If you answered "yes" to any of this, shame on you! You are guilty of the very thing that you've accused the prosperity bunch of. You've put your trust in money! The people in your flock are NOT your source! GOD is your source! As long as you are leaning on them to be your provision, then the blessings will NEVER come through! Yes, you should ALWAYS teach your people to give their tithes and offerings. However, that's for THEM. You want them to know and understand God's economic system so their lives will be blessed and they will reap a harvest that will glorify God. The financial provision for the church is God's business but you have to do things God's way. If you're not in agreement, then you should study Paul's word in Philippians 4. Let me make a clear statement. FAITH NEVER PUTS PRESSURE ON ANYONE! If you feel you have to put pressure on your people to pay the bills, then you are NOT in faith, you are NOT trusting God, and you are NOT teaching your flock the principles of correct Godly economics. Instead, you are teaching them to struggle just like you are. Now, repent of such foolishness and learn what God has to say about provision. You will find it to be so much easier than the way you've been doing it.

When a minister on television asks for donations, why is that different from you passing your plate? If a minister says that the only way the Lord can bless you is by you giving to HIS ministry, then yes, turn off the television. But all because he asks for financial partners does not mean that he only wants money. They need money to do their work, and you have an opportunity

to become a part of that. You are not their source, however. A true prosperity minister knows that. If such a minister says, “This ministry will go under without your support,” then so be it, let it go under. But I also say that about your church when you pass the plate! God wants your people to give for their sake, not for the sake of the utility bill in the church. HE wants to be in charge of that! We’ll prove that as we go along in this article. Moving on now.....

3. Mark 10:25

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

If you’ve read the New Testament at all, you’re probably aware that this is from the story of the rich, young ruler found in Mark 10: 17-31. For most of us, we have to admit that it’s been a confusing verse. We know that going to Heaven is not based upon being rich or poor. It’s based on grace through faith in the shed blood of Jesus. So, what is this about? It’s the same thing I’ve said about all the other misunderstood money passages. Know what it is? Sure you do because I’ve said it several times already! It has to do with TRUST in riches. You can’t have your faith in riches and say that you have faith in God too. Instead, put your faith in God who gives FREELY. (I Timothy 6:16-17, Matthew 6:33)

How do I know that? Well, learn to read the scripture with spiritual hearing rather than mere intellectual understanding. Jesus didn’t say it was wrong to be rich, nor did he say it would keep you out of heaven! He basically said that it’s difficult for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is NOT Heaven. Sometimes Jesus referred to “the Kingdom of God,” which is a method. Sometimes Jesus referred to “the Kingdom of Heaven,” which is a place. So, we’re not talking about Heaven here.

Many Christians throw up a red flag when you start mentioning “the Kingdom.” Some refer to it as “dominion theology.” Well, I’m a big believer in that, but I can’t spend all my efforts proving it here. This article is on prosperity, not Kingdom living. However, prosperity is certainly a big part of the Kingdom.

Pushing that topic aside, let's get back to the trust issue. The rich young ruler to which Jesus was speaking was basically a good guy. He referred to Jesus as "good" and he was careful to follow the laws and commandments. However, there was one thing he didn't have. Notice in vs. 21 that Jesus just said, "One thing you lack," but Jesus didn't tell him what it was he lacked, he just told him what to do. Jesus told him to sell all his possessions and give the money to the poor. The guy just walked away sad; and Jesus was equally sad for him because he knew the young ruler was going to miss out on some MAJOR blessings. This guy preferred to hold on to what he had instead of giving it up for God's purpose and then receiving God's multiplied blessing. This proves that he was still TRUSTING in what he had. You see, in God's economics, you CANNOT trust in what you have. (How many times have I said this?) He couldn't believe that God could bless him with FAR more than what he already possessed. And Jesus knew that God was REALLY going to bless this guy! God would've blessed him HERE ON EARTH, not just in Heaven. To prove this, let's jump down to vs. 28. Peter says "We have left everything to follow you." And Jesus replied in vss 29-31 "*I tell you the truth..... No one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.*"

So, WHEN would they receive a hundred times as much? IN THIS PRESENT AGE! WOW! You mean we can experience God's blessings on earth BEFORE we die? Yes, absolutely! In fact, I hope you EXPECT it because Jesus promised it!

Let's take a look at another phrase in this passage: "and with them persecutions." Persecutions? Persecutions from whom? Well, study the New Testament and you will find that the church was persecuted by the Romans, who are a type of the world. But Jesus had some grace for them because they were unbelievers. There was another group of persecutors that experienced Jesus' wrath. These were the Pharisees and the Sadducees, a.k.a. the religious

crowd! And I hate to admit it, but I've been one of these guys in the past. Have you ever seen someone walking in God's abundant blessings and said, "They need to sell that stuff and give it to the poor?" Or, "Look at that prosperity bunch...there they are trusting in those nice cars and homes. Don't they know they can't take that to heaven with them!?!?" If you've said such garbage, for your sake, PLEASE repent of that. Maybe it IS a person who falls into that category, but likely not. Either way, you don't know. Furthermore, it's none of your business. You don't know what seeds those people may have sown in the past as they have witnessed God pouring out an abundant harvest. So, have you left everything you have to follow Christ? Did you then experience his abundance? Or are you the "persecutor" that Jesus warned about who's been pointing your finger at those who have? Be careful!

If you're the persecutor, you might be like the disciples in Matthew 26:8. When the woman poured her very expensive perfume on Jesus from her alabaster box, the disciples became indignant and Jesus rebuked them for it. The disciples thought the money from that perfume would be best spent if used to help the poor. But Jesus saw that this woman wanted to bless Him. You see, Jesus LIKES extravagance. He accepted it. He didn't do like some of us today and say, "Oh no, I can't accept that." Jesus knew God's favor would be poured out upon this woman for her extravagance over Him. Even so, those disciples persecuted her for it. I think a lot of Christians do this frequently. Instead of perfume though, it's other things that we speak out against. "Did you see that building that new is church constructing? That cost them WAY too much money. They should've used that money to feed the poor!" Be REALLY careful. You don't want to be a persecutor who lives under a curse; you'd rather be the persecuted with the blessing. When someone places their hard-earned money into God's kingdom, it's time to speak blessings, not curses!

Can you accept good gifts? When someone offers to pay for your meal in the restaurant, can you accept it WITHOUT feeling that you need to pay them back!? Or are you too prideful to allow someone else to sow a seed into your life? If you want to be extravagant for

Jesus, then you're also going to have to learn to allow others to be equally extravagant. They're trying to sow a seed into your life. Don't rob their blessing by refusing it. You may only be able to pay them back one-fold. God can pay them back one-hundred-fold. Besides, you would also need to repent of false humility, which is actually pride.

Tithes and Offerings

I don't feel that I should spent much time on these points because it's preached so much today. However, I do think there are some important points that are painfully overlooked.

First of all, tithing is not an offering. We'll talk about offerings later. Tithing literally means "tenth." I've come in contact with a lot of Christians today who say that to put a percentage of 10 on your finances is now legalism and that tithing was of the old covenant. Well, here's one my favorite words again. PHOOEY! Let's take a look at the facts about that.

We've already established earlier that the Old Testament is as alive and well today as it has always been. We are no longer under the curse of the law, not to be confused with the totality of the Old Testament. Furthermore, if you study the covenant that God made with Abraham, you will discover that tithing did not originate with the law given to Moses. It was established with Abraham more than four hundred years prior to the inception of the law. (Genesis 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17) It was carried down through his descendants, even to those of us who have been adopted in by the blood of Jesus (Galatians 3.) So the number 10, as in 10%, is still operative today for New Testament believers as it was for those in the Old Testament.

However, I DO agree that a spirit of legalism can creep into that. If you're simply always giving 10 percent because you HAVE to, then it doesn't carry the same blessings upon it that it would if you were giving because of your love for God and the expectancy of His goodness. If you feel that 10 percent is not the number God has given you as the amount to give towards His kingdom, that's okay. Just be sure you're heart isn't rejecting it because you can't let go of the

money. In God's financial kingdom, you have to be willing to give ALL of it. And frankly, if you're truly serious about living on God's economics, there probably WILL come a time when He asks you to give it all up. After all, He expected that of his disciples in Mark chapter 10 as we discussed earlier.

I'm not going to judge your heart here, only God can do that. But I will ask you to take a deep look. If you are giving LESS than 10 percent of your income, you DEFINITELY need to take a second look. If you truly understood God's economics, you'd give as much as you can! God does expect at least 10 percent, but He'd really like more. He just wants it from your heart, not from your rulebook.

So, how do you give at least 10 percent without making it legalistic? Well, God loves a cheerful giver. And I submit to you that if you're only writing a check for 100 dollars out of your 1,000 dollars because you feel you have to, you're probably not all that cheerful! But when you realize that God wants you to be part of His economic kingdom, and you realize that this money is helping to save lives and you SHALL reap a harvest of the seeds you've sown, your countenance and your attitude should change. By the way, that does not mean you're giving out of greed. -- That's a lie from the enemy! If you want God to truly be your provider like He wants to be, you'll have nothing but joy and peace and cheer in your giving because you'll know that God WILL bless you, thus bringing thanks, honor, and glory to Him!

I feel pretty certain that there are some of you who are tithers, but the devil is still in your finances. – This is still possible! Yes, God promises blessings for tithers, but there are other spiritual laws that can block God blessings in your life. What are some of those things? Well, let's look:

1. Giving from a spirit of legalism, as we've just discussed.
2. A Poverty spirit. – This is the mindset that you should always give, but never expect to receive back from the Lord.--That's completely opposed to His word. It's also the belief that you're "destined" to be broke or even have "just enough,"

and God didn't choose you to have abundant finances. Repent from believing such a lie.

3. Judging Christians who HAVE received God's financial blessings!
4. Not walking fully in Willingness and Obedience (Isaiah 1:19)
5. Being out of "place," not living life in the location or calling where God wants you. (Psalm 66:10-12)
6. Unwillingness to receive from either God OR people. This is a spirit of false humility.
7. Building YOUR Kingdom as priority over building GOD'S Kingdom. (All of Haggai)
8. Sowing your financial seed into unfertile ground, i.e. false ministries
9. Sowing your money into Satan's kingdom, i.e. purchasing pornography, drugs, filthy movies, paying for abortions, etc.
10. Unforgiveness (Mark 11:25)
11. Doubt, unbelief (Mark 11:23)

These things listed above can and will stop God's abundant blessing into your life. If you find yourself guilty of some of these things, relax. God still loves you and He will bless you. But you must realize that YOU have made the choice not to receive all that He has. Repent, walk away, and change your life! When you get right down to it, ALL of these things can be summed up under the word "disobedience." An obedient person doesn't do these things. That's why Willingness and Obedience can't go along with "broke."

As we mentioned earlier, tithes and offerings are not the same things. Tithe means "tenth." An offering is above that. I pray that you ARE a tither. If you already are, then I pray that you step into giving offerings. Let's further differentiate the two. When you give a tithe, it's not just ANY ten percent. It's the FIRST ten percent. In other words, when you receive a one-thousand dollar check, you don't just accept that one-thousand dollars and then give one-

hundred. Rather, you MUST have the mindset that you only initially received nine-hundred dollars because the first one-hundred wasn't yours anyway. That may sound like semantics, but it's not. Take a look with me In Leviticus 9:22:

“When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.”

Notice they were instructed to LEAVE it in the first place. They weren't to harvest it and then hand it out. In fact, the edges of their field were not even to be reaped. You see, when you reap a harvest in your finances, that first ten percent simply doesn't belong to you. You can't give it away. In fact, if you keep it, you're actually stealing!

This is why your tithe is not your offering. The tithe ALREADY belongs to God. However let me stress the fact that doing this under a spirit of legalism will still block the blessings. Doing it in love and expectancy will open the floodgates of Heaven. In order to do that, you MUST realize that God wants to be your sole provider; and He can do that VERY well!

Your offering is what you give above your tithe. When you do this, NOW you're REALLY opening up some floodgates. This is TRUE giving. Your tithe isn't giving. Your tithe is simply honoring the Lord with what is already His. Offerings actually cost you something. Offerings come out of YOUR pocket. This operates under the law of seedtime and harvest, which we will discuss next.

Seedtime and Harvest

Galatians 6:7

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

I remember years ago, the old-timers had a saying: “What goes around, comes around,” and it’s true. You’ve probably heard this or even have said it during your life. It’s basically the same principle as this verse here in Galatians.

You can’t plant an orange tree and expect apples to grow. You WILL get oranges. Seedtime and harvest is a principle that God used all through the Bible. In fact, much of the Hebrew Language is centered around agriculture. When you get to know God, you’ll find most everything works as seed time and harvest. A seed is planted, time passes as God nurtures, and then we DO reap harvests for His glory. This most certainly works in your finances.

I’ve heard people, who have a giving heart, say that they have helped someone in their community with their finances that truly needed it. However, often times they wouldn’t expect a return on it. They just seem to think that the money is now gone. They’re not unhappy about it, they’re thrilled to give to others. But, that poverty spirit is at work in them and they simply don’t expect to reap from what they’ve sown. While I understand that their heart may be in the right place, it’s also a bit misguided. And, I assure you, they WON’T receive that harvest until they repent of that. When you take this viewpoint, you’re basically saying that seedtime and harvest doesn’t work. But, you CAN’T say that. It’s a LAW. Otherwise, you’re deceived and you’re mocking God. Please don’t do that.

While I understand that you shouldn’t expect that PERSON to pay you back, you CAN expect GOD to pay you back. Just don’t refuse it when He chooses to USE a person. You should expect a harvest that is pressed down, shaken together, and running over. -- That’s the word! God HAS to bring you a harvest. It cannot return void. You, however, can reject that harvest with your stinkin’ thinkin’. But what would happen when you reject God’s harvest? You would also be denying MORE SEED that would be planted again to yield another harvest. That’s a lot more Kingdom that can be built for God that you’re not believing for and you’re not willing to be a part of. ACCEPT YOUR HARVEST AND SOW ANOTHER SEED FROM IT!

Your Words

Okay, here's the part where the poverty folk like to accuse the prosperity folk. They like to call them "that name it and claim it" or that "blab it and grab it" or that "confess it and possess it" crowd. Well, there is some serious misunderstanding here. First of all, the poverty folk seem to think that the prosperity crowd simply believes that if you claim a new Mercedes in Jesus name, then the next morning you shall have it. I've not met one legitimate prosperity preacher who believes that because that's not how prosperity works. And I've listened to pretty much all of them and I know what they believe. So, don't tell me that you've heard them preach that without condition. I won't believe you! I HAVE heard the poverty preachers use this as an accusation against the prosperity preachers, but they're twisting words and taking things out of context. You may have heard one, single sermon that may have been out of balance with the rest of their teaching because there was more to it. You should always study the full points of what he or she believes before you hear one little phrase and then turn off the television. Here's how it really works:

You DO have to confess those blessings with your own mouth. If you want a Mercedes, you've got to talk Mercedes talk. You can't speak broke-down-'76-Dodge kind of speech while hoping one day you can drive a Mercedes. YOU HAVE WHAT YOU SAY! So, would you like a Mercedes? Then this needs to be the speech. "God is good to me, and He will one day bless me with a new Mercedes. I've planted my financial seed in the ground, and I expect to reap a harvest when that time comes. God knows when I'm ready. I won't buy it before the proper time has come, I will wait on the Lord. In fact, I don't plan to buy it at all. I expect it as a gift, in Jesus' name, Amen!" Personally, I prefer an Audi, but that's just me!

Now some of you who were just starting to get comfortable with what I've been saying have now got your feathers ruffled again. It sounds like greed right?! Wrong. Greed is one of the signs of not trusting in God. You can't trust God and be greedy at the same time! It's FAITH.

EVERYTHING that you will receive as a believer is through faith. This applies to your salvation, your family's salvation, the blessings you will experience, and ALL things that come to your life. Some of you are still thinking, "God said He will meet my needs, not my wants." That is simply an untrue statement as we mentioned earlier. However, we will expound on that more later.

Your faith is what pleases God (Hebrews 11.) In Colossians 2:6, we discover a key in life that many Christians have been without:

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, CONTINUE to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the FAITH as you were taught, and overflowing with THANKFULNESS."

What's this key I'm talking about? Well, it's like this: You BEGAN your Christian journey by receiving Christ Jesus as Lord. This is why we say "by faith." We have sadly forgotten that to CONTINUE to grow in the Lord requires that same kind of faith. Think of it this way: All because Jesus died for the sins of mankind doesn't mean that you automatically got saved. If that were the case, then EVERYONE would be saved and we all know it doesn't work like that. You had to RECEIVE Christ Jesus and you had to CONFESS Him with your mouth. -- This was the act of faith that took place the moment you got saved. Exercising your faith in such a manner doesn't stop there. EVERYTHING that you receive from the Lord comes from your faith. Now, is that WHY God blesses us? No, He blesses us simply because He loves us. However, He's a gentleman and He doesn't push himself onto us. Rather, we have to receive Him and the good things of Him by faith.

So, are you in faith about your finances when you're spewing a bunch of poverty garbage from your mouth? Absolutely not! Will you receive God's blessings like that? NOPE! Does God WANT to give you good, nice, things? Yes, He does! Will He force that upon you? No!

Let's take a look at Mark 11:22-25:

“22. Have faith in God, Jesus answered. 23. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea.’ and does NOT DOUBT in his heart, but BELIEVES that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. 24. Therefore, I tell you whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be YOURS.”

Notice that word, “whatever.” It means just that, whatever! It’s an all-encompassing word! Why? Well, look in the verses before it. YOU have the power to make things happen by YOUR words. The Power of Life and death are in the TONGUE. (Proverbs 18:21) It is a LAW that you will experience the Life OR the death that you speak. Which do you want? Personally, I want some life. And by the way, life is not a series of disappointments and pain that so many of us now referred to as “life.” It’s amazing when something bad happens in our life, we say “oh well, that’s life.” NO IT ISN’T!! That’s DEATH that you’ve allowed to interrupt your life, so stop saying that. You will HAVE what you say! When you want financial abundance, you have to be naming it, claiming it, blabbing it, or whatever terminology you want to use, but it MUST be a part of your speech. The poverty garbage must leave your mouth AND your mindset! When you begin to exercise constraint of the tongue, you’ll come to realize that it is not okay to even joke about certain things. All because you “don’t really mean it,” doesn’t mean that your words don’t have power. Learn to stop speaking foolishness and death, and start speaking life!

Needs and Wants

As we’ve already said, people highly misuse Philippians 4:19. I’d like to expound on this subject. This passage dealt specifically with the church at Philippi, who gave abundantly to Paul’s ministry, thus becoming a “fragrant” offering to the Lord. This church can now expect to reap a harvest “according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

It saddens me to say this, but I don’t think I’ve EVER heard that taught in today’s churches. I’ve always heard it, quoted it, and believed it as saying “A Christian’s needs are

always met.” Truthfully, that’s not even implied here. And now I’m really going to blow your mind. Please get this down in your spirit and understand it because it is a key to breakthrough: The Bible NEVER says that all because you are child of God, then you will never go without needs. I don’t know a Christian who, if they were honest, could say that they’ve never been without a need. Frankly, I can’t even count the number of stories in the Old Testament of when God’s children went through famine, thus not getting their needs met. Somehow believers have this mindset that God meets your needs, but your wants only MIGHT come by His grace.

So now, maybe some of you are a bit confused. On one hand I believe in abundant wealth; but on the other hand, I don’t even seem to believe that God will meet your needs. Well, don’t get confused. Let me explain this. First of all, get out of that mindset that all needs are met, but not your wants. Today’s church needs to bury that lie.

Have you ever had a bill coming due and there was no money to pay for it? Do you know someone who was in a severe medical condition and simply couldn’t pay the hospital bills? Well, I’ve seen this scenario time and time again. The members of the church all gather around them, lay hands on them, and claim, “My God shall supply all your needs.” Well, if you’re not living in God’s economy, then He’s not required to do ANYTHING. The people in the church of Philippi WERE living in God’s economy under the law of sowing and reaping. And we’ve all seen this; the miracle just doesn’t seem to come through. But, nobody says anything; they just keep “holding onto Jesus” and KEEP “holding to Jesus,” and STILL KEEP “holding onto Jesus.” Then when there is never a breakthrough, it’s excused as “God’s plan.” I can’t imagine how much that hurts Him! Listen carefully: don’t insult Jesus with that kind of thinking. I admire your tenacity to keep holding on, but Jesus does what He says He will do! If the breakthrough isn’t coming, then YOU are the one that needs to change!

Now, God by His grace CAN intervene in these instances, but it would totally be His grace alone. See, we keep missing this! We think God is just Santa Claus sitting up there taking care of things! In Actuality, He’s handed authority over to US. God has placed before us

blessings and curses. (Deuteronomy 28) Don't confuse this with "the curse of the law." The Old Testament is alive and well today as it was thousands of years ago. We STILL receive blessings and curses based on our choices. The Blessings were abundance and the curses were extreme lack. In either case, the Israelites were STILL God's children but their choices to obey or disobey determined which of the two they would receive. Here's what it boils down to: you need to erase this imaginary line that supposedly divides needs and wants. God never said anything about that line. The church has invented it! Now we need to get rid of it. Which do you want, blessing or curse? You get to choose!

Does God desire to meet your wants? Yes He does! (Psalm 23:1, Mark 11:24) He doesn't see your needs and wants as two different things. He sees blessing coming into your life based on your FAITH through your words and choices. He didn't define which of those blessings were wants and which of those blessings were needs. God is also not driven by your needs. God moves to action when you exercise your faith and authority. Without those, you might go without both your needs AND your wants. With those however, you can RECEIVE both. Are you starting to get the picture here?

The Naysayers

I've heard much criticism towards the prosperity message. Even though those viewpoints come through different people, they're still the same ideas. I'd like to address some of those now:

1. **This wouldn't work in a third world country.**

This statement is so untrue it's painful. It's also void of any kind of faith. There are two things that stand out to me. First of all, you've just said that God's miracle-working power for finances can only manifest in rich countries like the United States. Well, if God can get money from the mouth of a fish, then why can't He do even bigger miracles in a grass hut on the other

side of the world? He can! God can absolutely take the poorest member of a jungle tribe and make them the wealthiest man in the world! If you've actually believed that this can't work in a third world country, just exactly how big do you think God is?

Secondly, I want you to take a look at history and the current status of world countries. The root foundation of the prosperity message is "blessing for obedience, and curses for disobedience." The very fact that we DO have extremely wealthy countries while also having highly impoverished countries is proof that the prosperity message has existed over the centuries. Don't believe it? Well, let's look at it...

Who are God's chosen people? Of course it is the Jews. There hasn't been another nation of people who have had more ups and downs, blessings and curses than they have. And even to this very day, they still are the wealthiest race of any people. Why is that? Because the Abrahamic covenant is still at work! Which country is the world's wealthiest? We all know that to be the United States. What was America founded upon? -The freedom to worship and serve God. The United States is also the biggest giver of any country. It's amazing how other people from around the world point their fingers at the U.S. calling us greedy, capitalist pigs. But who's the first to show up on the scene to a world disaster giving away food and medical supplies? -- The United States! That's what God calls "sowing and reaping." What country has protected Israel more than any other and thereby gets to reap some of the same blessings? -- The United States!

America has become wealthy from God blessings due to her obedience over the years; and she didn't just become self-sufficient. She experienced massive abundance. As an American, I won't let somebody else accuse me of being a greedy pig. God has blessed us and we make no excuse for it. On the other hand, I pray America doesn't lose that blessing. We've stepped out from under God for a while now and we're beginning to get a glimpse of our blessings going down the drain. See, there's that law at work: blessing for obedience, curses for disobedience.

Have you ever wondered why God doesn't miraculously feed starving people in third world countries? Well, He can and wants to, but they're under a curse! I would like to point out that many of God's missionaries are bringing food and supplies to those people. But why doesn't God just turn that country around? Like I said, they're under a curse. These biblical principles are still in effect: blessing for obedience, curses for disobedience.

Let's take a look at whom some of the world's poorest countries are: Afghanistan and Chad, to name just a couple; there are obviously more. What do they have in common? -- How about large Muslim populations, the killing of Christians, witchcraft, and the legal abuse of women and children!

So now looking at the United States and Israel on one hand with their relationship to God and His blessings while seeing highly impoverished nations on the other with their rejection of God and the things of God and their experience of His curses, are you still going to tell me that this prosperity thing doesn't work?!? I pray not! Blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience! -- This message HAS worked on a global scale!

What happens when poor nations turn to God? Well, we often rejoice about them getting saved and getting delivered from the witchcraft that's so prevalent in those societies, but more happens. God starts to send PROSPERITY! Why? Because it's His promise: blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience! You get to choose! There is a series of documentaries available called "Transformation." I recommend that you get your hands on these. They are stories about how God has brought abundant blessings to villages in third world countries after they've turned to Him. The likes of some of these miracles even the United States has never seen. It's sad that we don't see these stories on the evening news.

This too is a biblical principle. Let's take a look at Matthew 11:5.

"The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor!"

Have you ever wondered about this verse? I thought the good news is available to both the poor and the rich!? Well, yes, it is. But why did Jesus specifically say “good news to the poor?” Because He wants to get you out of that mess! Poverty is a curse! Jesus breaks curses! It’s something He loves to do! As I just mentioned, it happens all over the world. Impoverished people who didn’t know Jesus have finally learned of Him and accepted His gospel. Then, along came some radical changes in their circumstances. They go from lack to abundance. It’s a well-documented phenomenon.

2. Nowhere in the bible does God promise wealth.

I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard that. It’s completely untrue. There is one point I will concede to: His wealth is not without condition. God will not bless you with finances before you are ready. However, here is a list of scriptures where God DOES promise wealth:

Genesis 12-17	Joel 2:18-27
Deuteronomy 28-30	Joel 3:17-21
Job 36:11	The whole book of Haggai
Psalms 1:3	Malachi 3: 6-12
Psalms 66:10-12	Matthew 6:33
Psalms 112: 1-3 (my favorite)	Matthew 11:5
Psalms 115: 14-15	Mark 4:26-29
Psalms 128	Mark 10:29-31
Proverbs 10:22	John 10:10
Proverbs 28:20	II Corinthians 8:9
Isaiah 1:19-20	II Corinthians 8:11-12
Isaiah 30: 23-26	II Corinthians 9: 6
Isaiah 55:1-2	II Corinthians 9: 10-11

Yes, God did promise wealth, abundance, and prosperity many times. These are only a small portion of those passages. Some of you are thinking that you can come up with as many or even MORE scriptures as to why wealth is bad. However, you will find some of those to be the same verses as listed above. The difference is always where you put your trust. Some versions use the term “chase after.” Do yourself a favor and never chase wealth or riches. -- That is an evil thing to do. Chase God and He will GIVE you abundance. (Matthew 6:33)

This brings me to one of Christendom’s favorite passages of scripture, Matthew 6: 19-33. Not everyone knows verses 19-32, but EVERYBODY knows verse 33: *“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things shall be added unto you.”* I’ve often heard Christians use this verse with an emphasis on the importance of seeking God first. Well, that’s good, but there’s more. Seek first His KINGDOM and His RIGHTEOUSNESS. Without having to write another book to explain, let me sum this up for you. This can simply be read as “find out God’s ways of doing things and have a relationship with Him.” You see, God operates under His kingdom principles. They’re not the same as worldly principles. Another common mistake made in the church is the thought that the term “world” used by Jesus refers to a sinful lifestyle. While there is obviously sin in the world, not all of the world is sinful. The term “world” often refers to man’s way of operating as compared to God’s way of operating in the Kingdom. On a side note, there is a difference in Kingdom principles and merely operating in a worldly system with integrity. Integrity is good and necessary, and no Christian should operate without integrity. But Kingdom principles are a step above! That’s another article for another time.

In the verses preceding Matthew 6:33, Jesus is warning His disciples not to worry about the things that concern people in the world. Don’t worry about what you will eat or what you will wear. Providing for you is God’s desire. However to tap into that, we must first seek His

Kingdom and His righteousness. When we do, all those things (food, clothing, shelter, etc) will be added to us. THAT is when God meets our needs. But notice it WAS conditional. We have to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. Just being saved, going to church, and praying regularly is not enough. If you're waiting on God to supply your needs without seeking His Kingdom and righteousness, you may very well go with those needs being unmet.

Can you now see the principle that is in EVERY passage about prosperity, provision, abundance? It's about where you place your trust. When we get honest with ourselves, many of us will admit that those of us who have rejected God's prosperity for so long are actually the ones that are guilty of doing what God said not to do; chasing after money. The key to God being your sole provider is being obedient to what He has asked you to do. When we say to ourselves, "Hmm, I don't think I can do that, where's the money going to come from?" We are the ones who have now stepped out of obedience. And we did it because of money. Yet we were always accusing the prosperity group as being guilty of that. No, they were obedient and God blessed them, and now they're trying to spread the good news. They never chased money. They chased God and He blessed them. He wants to do the same for you.

3. Jesus was poor, so I should be too.

Phooey! Let's take a look at II Corinthians 8:9.

"For you know the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."

Before you start over-spiritualizing this, let me head you off at the pass. The word "rich" in this passage IS specifically referring to money. Please don't use that old, tired argument that He means "spiritually rich." Jesus WAS spiritually rich. But this says for our sakes He became poor. When was Jesus ever spiritually poor?!? That doesn't make a bit of sense. Furthermore, you should always read God's word in context. If you decide to study all of II Corinthians 8, and I hope you do, you'll easily see that this entire passage is dealing with money.

Don't put yourself on that cross with Jesus. Only He was qualified to serve as a substitutionary death. You are not. He paid the price for your poverty so that you can become wealthy. It doesn't mean you will AUTOMATICALLY become rich, but you will if you learn to operate on God's economic plan. Call it a bail-out, if you like! Blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience.

4. I may not have money, but I'm rich.

Uh, well, okay! I guess whatever you mean by that is fine with you! That's a broad statement that could mean different things. But let's look at II Corinthians 9:10-11.

"10. Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11. You will be made rich in every way so that can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

In what ways will you be rich? In EVERY way. God doesn't want His children to be lacking in any single area. Our God is not a God of lack; He's a God of abundance. Why does He want you in abundance? Because He loves you and wants you to be able to be generous on every occasion.

Have you met someone in need and your heart ached to be gracious toward them? How about that single mom with five children down the street who works three jobs to make ends meet? Wouldn't it be nice if she only had to work one job and spent the rest of her time being a mother? Better yet, wouldn't it be great if she could spend ALL her time being a mother? Of course it would! Would God agree with that? Absolutely! Wouldn't you love to have enough money in your "storehouse" so that you could help get her to the point where she was no longer struggling? Have you ever thought about being able to do that? Guess what! --That is a GODLY DESIRE, and God will happily fill your storehouses so that you are able to do that. It's His plan, it's in His word, but YOU must tap into His economics. And what does He want in return for

that? --Thanksgiving! If you can give thanks to God for the blessings He has poured out upon you, then you won't be arrogant and say, "Look at what I've done." God doesn't work through arrogance. Then you will be rich in EVERY way! Blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience. (Deuteronomy 28)

How I received this

The title of this article is "How I Finally received the prosperity message." I've spent a lot of time telling you I am in support of it, but only a little time as to how I received it. It all goes to back to the point I made earlier about listening to God by the power of His spirit as compared to trying to understand Him with my mind. It took me many years to get that point. Thankfully, I'm still young, so I can apply this principle throughout my life. Seeking the hand of God is good, but it doesn't come before seeking the FACE of God. In fact, that's an insult to Him. Christianity has become inundated with folks who learn about Him, continue to learn about Him, and then learn about Him even more. However, so many don't actually get to KNOW Him. I've spent most of my time in ministry as a worship leader. I have first-hand experience of watching people who've learned ABOUT God all their lives try to begin a journey of getting to KNOW Him.

That's sad. It's sad because God's goal is to know you and for you to know Him. It's also sad because when you finally get to know God on an intimate level, He will start revealing His secrets to you. That means that you will then have to re-learn all the things that you've studied ABOUT God for so many years and you'll have to flush them down the toilet because they weren't true. As long as we only know God in our intellectual understanding, even if we're saved and faithful, we still won't quite "get it." We won't have full understanding until after we have full intimacy.

How much time do you spend with Him? How many times have you fasted to get your flesh to shut up and your spiritual man to rise up and take authority to hear and know God? And when I say fast (meaning to *fasten*,) I don't mean abstaining from meat or only drinking juice. I mean you don't eat. Do you turn off the television and worship Him? I hope you do! God wants to know you personally, and for you to know Him intimately. Then, not only will you know God, but you will also have understanding ABOUT Him.

This is a principle that I had to learn. Obviously as a worship leader this was very important. But in the process, I had to lay down the vast majority of what I thought I knew. I found out that so many of the people I've pointed a finger at were actually speaking truth. But, I had to get to know God first in order to come to that realization. Prior to that point, if you would've asked me if I'm intimate with God, I would've said yes. I really thought I was, but I was deceived.

The prosperity message came that way for me. The last few years of my life have been a rollercoaster ride. I've had really high highs and really low lows. It largely had to do with my finances directly related to the ministry. I used to excuse that with "being content in whatever state" until God showed me what He REALLY said about it. Being content meant knowing that He was my provider, and it's not my job to worry about the livelihood. As long as I was concerned, it wouldn't come. When I stopped striving, God showed up! Now, I have to admit that it was my own choices that got me down in those low lows. But when we admit that, we'll see the Lord come in and smooth things out.

God doesn't leave His children wandering around in ignorance. If you've been saved for a while and still have little understanding about God and you're under the lie that "God doesn't speak to you," then I suggest you get to know Him. You'll find that you'll eventually come to a place where you can get alone with God and receive wisdom, revelation, and understanding. You won't have to search out a prophet and ask him for a word from God. Just don't get prideful and then resist Him when He wants you to change your thinking about things. The very definition of

the word “growth” requires changes. If you’re the same today as you were a year ago on this same date, you haven’t grown much.

This is HOW I finally received the prosperity message. I got with God and He taught me. Of course, there were times when he used people who already had insight into this subject. This was after I was dead-set against it. I saw it as pride, greed, worldly, and a lie from Satan. But after I got to know God and He began to teach me what HE said, it came with revelation and wisdom from God, not just man’s worldly wisdom. When that happens, peace and joy will come; confusion and questions will leave. You should try it! Sit at the feet of Jesus and learn. It’s a great place to be!

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