

Kingdom Faith Ministries International

Newsletter

Teaching God's People To Hear The Voice of the Lord

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How God Prospers His People

Our Heavenly Father has created us for His glory! He loves us so much more deeply than a loving earthly father loves his children. He wants to care for them, love on them, and bless them always. His blessings and His favor include the physical blessings of prosperity and health. And although His sincere desire is for us to be prosperous, there is a piece of prosperity which is often overlooked when we hear teaching on this subject.

We have all been inundated with prosperity Gospels. Television and large ministries tend to be full of them. The worst of them speak soul-exciting messages about the availability of riches from God. Prosperity teachings typically connect the giving of our tithes and offerings to God, with His giving back a multiplied financial blessing to us. And this message does have many elements of Biblical truth. There are many wonderful New and Old Testament Scriptures to back up the principle of giving and receiving. But such teachings tend to enshrine a portion of God's truth on this subject, and ignore another. By doing so, they enable satan to deceive God's people.

The part of prosperity Gospel messages which is often missing is the part about having a hearing heart. It is the hearing heart which brings the prosperity, not the mechanical application of an otherwise divine principle (i.e. the principle of giving) without such a heart!

Learning From King Solomon

Let's begin with King Solomon, a man who accumulated more wealth than even the wealthiest people today. Since we know from Deuteronomy 8:18¹ that God is pleased to give power to get wealth, and from I Timothy 6:10² that the love of money, not the accumulation of it, is the root of all evil, it is clear that there is an issue of the heart involved with the acquisition of wealth. Let me say that again. In God's view, there is a distinct issue of the heart when it comes to operating the principle of giving and receiving.

¹ Deuteronomy 8:18 *But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day.*

² I Timothy 6:10 *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

It is this issue which is paramount with God, but which is often missed by prosperity Gospel teachings. The mere act of giving, especially with the expectation of receiving a return, can be as worldly as worldly gets! Even when coated with a veneer of thankfulness for God's supply, or with a studied mindfulness of giving-getting Scriptures, its mechanical application without a hearing heart is still based upon a craving for money.

God has a different perspective! He genuinely wants to lift His people out of poverty! He truly wants to prosper His people. His Word declares that He wishes above all things that we prosper and be in health, even as our soul is prospering.³ It is in the "even as our soul is prospering" that the modern prosperity Gospel falls so short, that it becomes a deception for God's children.

The Prospering Soul

Solomon was an awesome man of God until he allowed sexual perversion (1,000 foreign-god infested wives and concubines⁴ have a way of doing that, just like pornography and sexual perversion today accomplishes a similar effect in a man's heart) to take root in his heart. But before he allowed his heart to become this way, he was blessed with more riches and wisdom than any man before or since in all the world. When we take a close look, the principle of God's desire to prosper His people becomes visible.

1 Kings 3:9-14

In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

***Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart** to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?*

And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

³ *3John 1:2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*

⁴ *1Kings 11:3-4 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.*

For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked both riches, and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days

And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

The key to God's prosperity to Solomon is in understanding what Solomon wisely requested from God – an understanding heart. But the Hebrew word for “understanding” in verse 9 has a deeper meaning. It means “to hear.” What Solomon was really asking for was a hearing heart, one that could hear the voice of the Lord, and thereby grow in wisdom! Wisdom only comes from learning to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.⁵ And according to Proverbs, wisdom is the basis of wealth.

Proverbs 4:5-9

Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her.

She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

Proverbs 14:24

The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly.

In our search for deliverance, financial or otherwise, we must determine to first search for the Lord. We must seek first the presence of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto us.⁶ Nowhere is this connection more obvious and plain than in Deuteronomy 28.

⁵Deuteronomy 8:2-3 *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or not.*

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

Matthew 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Micah 6:9 The LORD's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

⁶ *Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God [the Kingdom of God is the presence of God] and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Deuteronomy 28:1-20

And it shall come to pass, **if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God**, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.

The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

The LORD shall establish thee a holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.

And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers to give thee.

The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:

And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that **all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee**:

Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.

Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it.

The curses from failure to hear and obey the voice of the Lord continue through the end of the chapter (a total of 68 verses). Notice the above verses say nothing about giving tithes and offerings in order to enable God to give back to you. Instead, they speak of learning to hear and obey what he tells you. Prosperity from God has much more to do with hearing and obeying his voice, than it does with operating the principle of giving. This can also be seen in Psalm 91 where if we dwell in the secret place of continuing intimacy with Him, we are afforded God's protection and many blessings.

However, please note that in many Scriptures with which we are familiar,⁷ God distinctly and definitely instructs His people to give, and His giving back to us is linked to our obedience to give as He directs, both already in the Scriptures (with tithes and freewill offerings) and in direct obedience to what He is speaking into our spirit. In other words, we are to give out of our intimate relationship with the Lord. Our giving should reflect our intimacy!

The Role of Tithes And Offerings

Discipleship involves discipline, and tithes and offerings are part of developing such discipline in giving. They are not outmoded. They are still valid in the New Testament. However, for the mature believer, they are to be surpassed with the giving that comes out of a hearing heart (relational giving) that is involved with an active walk by the Spirit. This is the part which most prosperity Gospel teachings omit. God's prosperity plan is also linked to acquiring wisdom, and wisdom is linked to hearing and obeying the voice of the Lord.

Wisdom comes from above. As mentioned previously, the power to get wealth comes from above. So let's consider the means by which we get wisdom – a key part of acquiring Godly prosperity. Consider that every one of the men and women whom God prospered in the Bible had learned to hear and obey the voice of the Lord. From Hebrews 11 (by faith Abraham, by faith Enoch, Noah, Sarah, etc.) to Moses, Joshua, Joseph, Solomon, and to Daniel, to each of the Apostles – these all learned to hear the voice of the Lord and obey it. Some of them became the wealthiest men in the world, and their wealth in today's standards still exceeds the billionaires of today by several fold. Each one of these people gained wisdom from above through hearing His voice. The book of First Peter shares insight into how this hearing process begins.

1 Peter 5:5-6

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, **that he may exalt you in due time:***

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

⁷ Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15; Acts 4:32-37; Malachi 3: 8-12, etc.

The word “exalt” in verse six above is the same word that is used in the Septuagint⁸ when talking about how God magnified Solomon exceedingly.⁹ God magnified, He exalted, Solomon exceedingly with both wealth and wisdom. All this because Solomon sought after neither one. He only sought after a hearing heart, to hear what God wanted to tell Him.

Notice that He exalts His people who humble themselves before Him *in due time*. God’s prosperity is not the lottery. Just as growing in relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to our heavenly Father, occurs over time, and just as our Godly prosperity comes from God, it should be clear that our prosperity will also grow over time. It is directly linked to the strength of our relationship to God, faithfulness over time, **and** it will increase in due time. It is planting and harvesting (perhaps with some heavy weeding along the way!). It is neither sudden riches nor is it poverty. It is God’s sufficiency and abundance, and it will occur in the right season.¹⁰

Most of us petition God for our finances. Most of us seek God. We do well to ensure we are seeking Him for Who He is. When our needy petitions are voiced more fervently than our simple desire to be with our First Love, we will hinder the receipt of our petitions. While He does tell us to pray without ceasing, and to continue asking Him without getting weary and faint, does it not bless Him more when our hearts simply desire more of Him? As we seek Him just to be with Him, instead of what we can get from Him, He adds to us those things we need and even desire! As He writes His wisdom into the fleshly tables of our hearts,¹¹ He establishes the New Covenant – a conversion from law and outward actions, to inward relationship with Jesus Christ. Answers to our prayers come out of our relationship to Him, not out of the severity of our need. The favor of God flows from our relationship with God.

⁸ The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew.

⁹ *2Chronicles 1:1 And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly.*

¹⁰ *Psalms 1:1-3 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

¹¹ *Hebrews 8:10-13 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

Thus our prosperity does not hinge upon following the law of the tithe alone, but upon following the Wisdom of God from the heart. And if hearing and obeying the voice of the Lord is not something you are used to doing, you will not prosper to God's full desire for your life no matter how much you tithe.

Psalms 1:1-3

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; **and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.***

The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Poverty is not the plan of God for His children. Nor is God limited to all the reasons that a person uses to lament their poverty. Let me give you an illustration.

Lately the Lord has been sending me to minister in East Africa and India. The countries in these areas are known for poverty. As in every place around the world, physical needs are often very great, and poverty thinking can be very dominant, even among Christians. This is true no matter what country a believer is from, but sometimes money issues are especially impacting in these regions of the world.

After teaching various conferences centering on hearing the voice of the Lord, many of the saints in one African country desired prayer for healing. In two cities, several people asked for prayer for getting a job. As you might well imagine, many of these places have few jobs available. Most of the people who needed jobs had been honestly looking for jobs for years and years. None were to be found. Yet in each case after prayer for a job, these individuals found jobs **the very next day!** This happened in multiple places, with multiple individuals. In fact, although there were many miracle healings of all kinds of serious health issues, it was the miraculous provision of a job by our heavenly Father which opened many eyes, and which birthed a new hunger for God. This hunger resulted in an overnight expansion of churches and planting of new churches in these areas. And, now a year later, these churches are still growing. So many people are exiting their old ways (and in some cases their old churches) that one local pastor has actually received death threats from jealous leadership in other churches.

God Has Your Answer

One day, as I was asking the Lord to help with some of my own finances, He said some startling words to me. I want you to know that I am still trying to walk them out, and there is more waiting for us to receive that we have not yet received. It takes a tree a while to ripen its fruit. Here is what God spoke to me that day:

“Paul, if you will hear My voice, and obey the covenant, you can be out of debt in a year.”

God has been very kind in supplying to us all that we need financially, and in our health, in expansion of international ministry to bless more people with His Word, and in divine favor. His favor is so enormous, that often He has solutions awaiting us before we even know we have a problem. God’s favor is something we can experience, but we honestly do not understand. But it is very real. My wife and I are excited to see how the Lord will fulfill the words he gave to me.

We still diligently tithe and give offerings as the Lord directs. This principle of tithes and offerings is like fasting is to the body – it is a discipline which gets a person to lose their covetous love of money. So I am not a person who teaches not to tithe. The cycle of poverty will never be broken if people find a way to rationalize not tithing, because tithing starts to release the heart’s grip on money.

I remember some years ago being at an apostles and prophets conference in which I wanted to give an offering to the speaker. As a basket was being passed around, the speaker exhorted the audience to ask the Holy Spirit how much to give. As I silently did this, the Lord reminded me that I had forty dollars in my wallet. He told me I could give half of this money, or the entire amount of this money. In my heart, I reasoned that I still needed some money to travel home, and thus I would be wise to give half.

When the basket was passed to me, I placed twenty dollars in it. In my heart, I was happy that the Lord had given me the choice. As soon as I put the money in the basket, the man next to me tapped me on the shoulder, and handed me a check for one hundred dollars. How amazing and wonderful God is! Except the man told me, “You know, it is a funny thing. When the Lord told me to write this check to you a few moments ago, He told me to write it for two hundred dollars. But as I was writing it out, He stopped me and told me to cut it in half, and write it for one hundred instead.”

We have heard it said that we can never out-give God. I had obeyed God. But if I had trusted God bigger, I would have seen more of His blessing. So it is with trusting God, stepping out to hear and obey his voice. Our blessing comes by learning to live by every word that proceeds out of His mouth, not by mechanically obeying our interpretation of a written law. However, we do have to begin somewhere, and for some Christians, they have not even come close to obeying the law, much less obeying out of the heart. Thus for them, they do well to begin obeying at least the law if they are doing so already. Tithes and offerings are thus a stepping stone for something greater, not something less.

God wants to take us far beyond the Old Testament law of the tithe. He wants to prosper us with financial and health blessings, and cancel the curse of poverty. However, we must realize that He ties all such blessings to how our soul is prospering. And how our soul is prospering is tied directly to how well we have learned to hear and obey His voice.

In The New Covenant

Hearing the voice of the Lord is also a part of obeying the New Covenant, because the new covenant is all about the Lord writing His Word on the fleshly tables of our heart. What exactly is this? It is developing conversational intimacy with the Lord in which we hear and obey His voice. It is learning to respond to His thoughts that are higher than our thoughts, and His ways that are higher than our ways. In this way, our relationship with Him grows with inside experiential knowledge rather than mere academic knowledge.

Isaiah 55:1-13

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

So shall my word [in Hebrew this is the word “dabar”, which is the speaking of God’s voice] *be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

The New Covenant has to do with the new relationship that we are to be continuously building with God. It involves daily feasting on His bread, which is the manna of revelation He gives to us by His speaking when we draw near to Him.¹² This, above all

¹² Read John chapter 6 over and over again!

the other things we can ever do as Christians, enables our souls to prosper and be in health.

He Has Given Us Help

Jesus gave us the most marvelous gift to help us connect with the voice of the Lord. His name is the Holy Spirit. Part of the Holy Spirit's job is to lead us to the All Truth. Who is the All Truth? The All Truth is Jesus, elsewhere called "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Talk about the most wonderful Helper, and Guide, and Comforter! One of the primary functions of the Holy Spirit is to help us develop the capacity to hear and obey the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this way, God continues to enable the New Covenant function to proceed – the writing of His Word into the fleshly tables of our hearts.

Beloved, what we do today to still our hearts, and come beside the still waters at which He will restore our souls,¹³ has everything to do with receiving the prosperity of God. Everything God does to prosper His people revolves around teaching them greater reliance on His voice. May the Holy Spirit lead you and guide you into the pleasure of intimate conversations with our Master, Jesus Christ. May our hearts no longer dwell on what we need, but on Who we need. May the prosperity of God rest upon each of us as we allow Him to draw us beside the still waters, where He restores our soul.

With you in the Father's love,

Paul and Rita Norcross

¹³ *Psalms 23: 2-6 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*