

The True Prosperity Teachings of the Bible

by Paul Benson

I'm Not Opposed To Prosperity Teachings

Since I am somewhat prone to speak unfavorably of the teachings of the 'faith and prosperity' ministries some folks get the impression I don't believe the Bible teaches a promise of blessing upon the children of God. Actually, I do very much believe that the Word of God is full of such promise. The concern I have is that people are being taught a perversion of these truths in order to rob them of their time and money.

A proper understanding of this matter is crucial to actually receiving and retaining God's blessing, and not ending up along the wayside disappointed, discouraged, and separated from your hard earned

cash. All because you listened to the unbalanced teachings of some covetous charismatic false teacher(s). Let's look at what the Scriptures really teach about the subject of God promising to bless His people, and how to walk in his favor.

God's Promise of Prosperity

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. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 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. Psalms 1:1-3

We see in this passage of Scripture a promise of fruitfulness and prosperity upon the believer who is steadfast in his faith, and walking right before the Lord. Notice it says 'in his season'. This is not

a promise that all believers will be wealthy, but that there will be seasons of fruitfulness to get you through; and that he will bless the work of your hands. It is important to have a confidence in this promise. Let me show you one of the reasons why.

We Need A Vision Of Prosperity

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

This verse says it was the knowledge of what lay ahead, after His death and resurrection, that gave Jesus the strength to endure what He did on our behalf. The joy set before him helped him to suffer the ridicule, the shame, and finally the horrible and torturous death on the Cross of Calvary. We really have no idea what he endured that day. No wonder Paul, in giving thanks, called it: *his unspeakable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15)*.

We need a joy set before us; a vision of God's willingness and promise to bless us and provide for us. Not just to give us faith to get stuff but also an endurance that will carry us through times of trial and suffering. There is a lot more incentive to plow on through a wilderness or desolate valley if you have an expectation there is a promised land waiting for you on the other side. Some people who lose sight of the promised land also lose heart; they just give up and perish in the wilderness.

I have learned this truth the hard way. This loss of vision and the resulting discouragement caused me to backslide for a number of years. *Where there is no vision, the people perish... (Proverbs 29:18)*

We need to get it fixed in our heart that God's desire is to bless His children beyond their dreams; and not just in the sense of an eternal reward. God has promised us blessing in this life also (along with trials, tribulations, persecutions, and possibly some correction thrown in for good

measure!).

For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

Psalms 5:12

God's Promise of Prosperity

The idea of God pronouncing a 'promise of blessing' upon His followers is not a heresy; nor is it some obscure teaching hard to find in the pages of the Bible. It is clearly spoken in Scripture. Here are some of the many hundreds of verses that speak of that promise:

- The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever. Psalms 37:29
- ...he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. Psalms 55:22
- The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Psalms 92:12
- The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: Proverbs 10:3

- ...the desire of the righteous shall be granted. Proverbs 10:24
- Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: Proverbs 11:31
- ...the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit. Proverbs 12:12
- ...to the righteous good shall be repayed. Proverbs 13:21
- ...among the righteous there is favour. Proverbs 14:9
- In the house of the righteous is much treasure Proverbs 15:6
- Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Isaiah 3:10

Hey now, that's a lot of promise! This list could go on and on, but I guess you get the point. Now, in all of these verses of promise, please notice they share one common factor. The promise is not for just anyone; but only for the 'righteous'! Seeing this, it might be a good idea to figure out who these

righteous folks getting all this promise are, and how might we go about joining them.

Right and Wrong Giving

...and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want. Proverbs 22:16

Here's a Bible verse on giving I doubt you have ever heard the 'prosperity teachers' quote to you; and you probably never will! Verses such as this are anathema to them. They hope you never come across them because they might cause you to question their teachings. There is one false teaching constantly coming at us from these wealthy ministers of the 'faith movement'. If you will sow into their ministry God will (so they say) give you a hundred fold return. But is this true?

Be Careful How You Give

God promises no such return on your investment; just the opposite in fact. This verse says giving to the rich will bring poverty upon you! Give that

some thought; do you want your giving to bring poverty your way? Better take heed! Jesus did not say give your money to rich ministers so you can help them carry on in an extravagant life-style. He said give to those of whom you have no hope of recompense.

...when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Luke 14:13-14

All giving is not necessarily sanctified in God's eyes. There is such a thing as unrighteous giving. Giving to get! Listening to the lies of the T.V. preachers and the traveling seminar speakers we are taught to believe: "If I give my favorite Celebrity Minister one thousand dollars then God will increase that one hundred fold and give it back to me! Then I'll be prosperous just like he/she is!" That's not charitable giving; it's covetousness and it is sinful. Yes, it is selfish and

sinful to give for those reasons.

Seed-Time And Harvest

Let me make an observation here about the teaching of seed-time and harvest. Yes, it is a biblical principle and you do have to plant seed to get a harvest, but any farmer would tell you that if you want to reap a harvest you better sow your seed in good soil. If you think the covetousness producing teachings of the faith/prosperity movement are from God, and these ministries are good soil to sow in, you need to get before the Lord and ask Him to clear your vision.

If your giving centers around a hope that doing so will bring prosperity into your life here on earth then you have allowed your belief system to be corrupted by teachings which pervert the Scriptures. God will take care of us and provide for us; but it will be through our faith in Him fulfilling the promises of His Word as we conform to His expectation, not because we give to get!

False Workers Plant Bad Seed

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Galatians 1:6-8

In dealing with these false teachers, and making the needful corrections, Paul makes some pretty remarkable statements here in this passage from Galatians:

1. False teachings can remove you from your position in Christ. Paul spends 5 chapters laying out the true gospel to them as a standard and then wham! He hits them with the statement that those carried away by the error of those false teachers had actually

fallen from grace! Galatians 5:4 (I know that is contrary to what many of you have been taught, but it's pretty plainly stated here. Could someone who Christ has become of no effect to still be in a state of righteousness? Would Paul travail in birth again for someone who was still in a born-again state? We'll deal with the notion of eternal security in another writing)

2. These false teachers did not bring an entirely new Gospel, but one which was a perversion of the truth. We need to understand that the false gospel is not an entirely different message; but a twisted and corrupted version of the genuine, and can sound quite similar to those lacking Bible knowledge and discernment.
3. And finally we learn from this exhortation of Paul that those who pervert the Gospel as these had are under a curse for it. And to bring that point home he said it a second time. This is the seriousness of being led away by error. It can damn your soul for all eternity. I

realize this as true and it is one of the reasons I place so much focus on exposing error.

A Hybrid Seed

Most of the teachings of the faith/prosperity movement have a measure of truth to them but lack the full council of God; and without the balance of the rest of the Word they now become falsehood. Many people have grown discouraged in their faith because they followed unbalanced teachings that did not produce the results they were looking for.

They were manipulated through the words of covetous preachers into adopting a covetous mentality of their own; but eventually the lack of return on their ‘investment’ began to sour them on these teachings. And then the teachers told them they just needed to hold on a little longer because, “You can’t plant a seed and expect fruit overnight; water it some more and be patient. Keep sending us your money; God will not fail you!”

They keep milking the poor folks until finally they just give up altogether. But that's okay because they'll soon have some other family conned into taking their place. (Hurry now, plant your seed! You'll get a big harvest!) Of course the promised blessing did not come. God does not bless selfishness in giving any more than He would bless selfishness in any other area of life. If God blesses people who listen to prosperity preachers it's him honoring their faith in other areas, not because they are being deceived.

Planting Good Seed In Good Soil

If you want to be pleasing to the Lord in your giving a real safe bet is to give to someone having a hard time. And try to do it in secret as much as possible. Again, just like with prayer and fasting, it's not always possible to be completely anonymous in giving; but God is able to discern between selfishness and selflessness in the motivation of your heart and bless you accordingly.

Now that we have taken a good look at the wayward message of the false teachers, let's look at what the Bible really does teach on God's promise to bless and provide for his people. We have put the spotlight on some falsehoods being presented to the believer by the false teachers of our generation. Now let's take a look at the truth. We won't need a spotlight though, the truth gives off plenty of light of its own!

The True Avenue Of God's Blessing

And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. Genesis 22:16-18

Because Abraham had chosen to take God at His word and held on to his faith, God pronounced a blessing upon him that would reverberate down through the centuries. Abraham's seed would be blessed; and that blessing would come upon all nations through this seed. Quite a promise was it not?

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:13-14

Christ Sharing His Inheritance

Fast forward to many centuries later. Here we have the apostle Paul speaking to the Gentile believers who in no way had a right to inherit this blessing promised to Abraham and his descendants. He told them the curse Christ bore on that Cross would

enable this promised blessing to come upon them also. How could that be? They were not Abraham's seed. No, but Christ was.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Galatians 3:16+18

Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of that prophesied seed of Abraham upon which the blessing would come. But what did that have to do with the Gentile believers at Galatia; and what does that have to do with us as believers today? Let's go back to the Word.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus... 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:26 + 29

It's All Through Jesus!

Can you see it now? Praise God. Through our faith in Jesus the promise of a God who cannot lie has come upon you and I. The words He spoke to Abraham are just as sure to you as they were to him. *Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee (Hebrews 6:14)*. Our redemption and all it entails: eternal life, healing, God's favor, peace, soundness of mind, you name it, all are a result of this promise of God to faithful Abraham.

Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Habakkuk 2:4

Righteousness by faith is the true right-standing we have with God, and the only leg we have to stand on. If we start thinking we have earned it we are missing it completely! Yes, we can rob ourselves of God's favor by unrighteous behavior, but not

because we are no longer earning His favor; we were not earning it in the first place. If we engage in sinful conduct it will cut us off from God's provision because we are grieving His Spirit and defiling our conscience, thereby hindering the avenue through which we receive from God: our faith.

Don't Block The Blessing

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. 1 John 3:22

Many people try to use this verse in 1 John to promote a legalistic adherence to rules and regulations. But that's not what John was talking about at all. He was talking about keeping a clean conscience and not grieving God by disobedience! Then the flow of blessing can touch all areas of our lives. See how that works?

Missing out not because we are no longer earning it, but because we are blocking it. So our sin robs us of what God was intent on giving us. Lord Jesus, please help us stay away from all that self-righteous thinking and striving for your favor. Thank you for the free gift of righteousness.

That is one thing that really worries me about the unbalanced teachings of the prosperity preachers. They teach if you do this and do that and follow these 12 'principles of prosperity' you are guaranteed to be blessed (with the doing this and doing that usually involving writing them a generous check. Don't forget principle #7. The Law of Manifold Return; give a little get a lot! Get that check in the mail today!).

But this type of teaching actually builds in people a mentality of self-righteous doing; and that is a danger to your faith and a grief to God. Do you think you have God's arm twisted behind His back because you have rigidly conformed to all the so called principles of prosperity? Hey God, I've

followed all the '12 steps to wealth' faithfully and now I want my promised blessing, so cough it up! Yeah right, keep twisting see where it gets you.

I think if God coughs up any thing it will be Him soon coughing up the prosperity teachers so He can spew them out of His mouth! (Revelation 3:16) Let's see those kind of teachings for what they really are. Covetous people manipulating you out of your dough. Don't be turned aside to that error. But don't go the other direction and throw away the promises of God because someone is perverting them either; let's seek after a balance of truth.

Imputed Righteousness Makes Us Eligible

Let's look at one more passage about Abraham's faith and how it relates to us receiving what God has in store for us.

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to

God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Romans 4:20-24

Notice the word ‘imputed’ in this passage. Do you know what this word means in regard to your relationship with Jesus? Perhaps the best way to understand the word ‘imputed’ is to look at the process we call adoption. If a son is adopted he now has gained rights and legal standing which he didn’t have before. Through adoption there has been bestowed upon him all the rights and privileges of being a true son, though in reality he is not.

These rights and privileges have been ‘imputed’ to him; they are reckoned to be his, just as if he were

born to that couple. So it is with the righteousness of the believer. Through faith the rightness of Christ is imputed to us, and we are deemed to be in 'good standing' with God even though in reality we have no proper claim to be.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Romans 8:15-17

Blessed With Faithful Abraham

Abraham had a confidence that God would be faithful and follow through with His promises. God was very pleased with that confidence and chose to regard it as righteousness. This same kind of confidence in what the Lord Jesus has done for us through His death, burial, and Resurrection is

regarded in a similar manner.

Through our faith in the blood He shed righteousness and ‘son-ship’ are imputed to us. It is through this ‘son-ship’ we receive the blessing of God. It is an inheritance promised to Christ in which we share because our faith brings the son-ship of Jesus upon us. We become that promised seed!

This is the proper way to approach God for a desired manifestation of blessing upon our lives. Whether it is healing, a deliverance, a miracle, a revelation of God’s will, a request for anointing in ministry, or even that so greatly desired blessing of financial increase, it all comes our way through the same God chosen channel. Imputed righteousness aka Son-ship aka Inheritance! It all centers around what Jesus has done for us.

We receive from God through a purified faith in the promises of his Word. Not because we did all the right things and now we deserve it. Don’t let

unbalanced teachings mold you into approaching God in a manner that self-righteously disregards what has been given us in Christ. Don't go to God and say look what I've done, now bless me. Go to God and say Lord look what you have done to bring a promise of blessing upon me!

Don't go to God waving a PhD from the University of Prosperity, demanding he honor your selfish efforts at adhering to 'the spiritual laws of Seed-time and Harvest'! Go to God as a son or daughter and say, "Abba Father I have a need, and I have a confidence in your character, and in your Word that says you will provide for me". And in His time, and His method, God will do just that; in due season. Then you will truly be that blessed person David referred to in our opening passage.

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. Psalms 1:3

