

The Truth Vs. The Prosperity Gospel

To be equipped to understand the notes I've attached a [study key](#) (click link or scroll) In this study by the help of the Lord we hope to understand the false doctrine of prosperity taught in many mainstream churches. As we dive into the doctrine taught in these churches we will utilize the perfect and Holy Word of God. While this theology has basis in scripture, we understand and know that the teachings are sufficiently removed from the roots of truth to tickle many ears. We do this understanding the truth written to Timothy in:

II Timothy 3:13-4:5

And by Peter in:

II Peter 1:19-2:3

The hope is that we can be equipped to battle against false teachings. We're all responsible to the Truth of God and each one of us at least once will face a time where someone will either challenge the truth or present a false teaching. Many of these times are during interactions with ones we know and love. Their souls and many others are at risk when they're not aware of the false teachings this world has to offer. We must all be ready to share the Truth; in love, mercy, meekness, and grace by and with the power of God. I know that I personally witnessed the effects of this false teaching work it's evil works in others lives. I've seen it destroy the faith of many souls, bringing cynicism and division. There are so many false teachers who are complicit in the spread of this false doctrine. The danger comes from the roots of the doctrine being from the Word of God. This has brought so many to the Prosperity Gospel because there is a desire for the Word of God, yet still a desire for the things of this world. This false teaching allows both. Yet as we know Jesus Christ said you cannot serve two masters, you can only serve one. We must be ready to combat this false doctrine and the wolves in sheeps clothing.

Matthew 6:19-24

Matthew 7:13-15

Matthew 10:16-18

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To be successful in this study we must first understand the differing theology and doctrine. This 'gospel' has captivated the attention of many souls across the United States and the World. However as we know, this 'gospel' is truly "fake news" not the "good news" of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Gospel - G2098: euaggelion

εὐαγγέλιον - yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on

A good message

Prosperity theology teaches that Christians are entitled to well-being and, because spiritual and physical realities are seen as one inseparable reality, interprets well-being as physical health and economic prosperity. Teachers of the doctrine focus on personal [empowerment](#), promoting a positive view of the [spirit](#) and [body](#). They maintain that Christians have been given power over creation because they are made in the [image of God](#) and teach that positive confession allows Christians to exercise dominion over their [souls](#) and material objects around them. Leaders of the movement view the [atonement](#) as providing for the alleviation of sickness, poverty, and spiritual corruption; poverty and illness are cast as curses which can be broken by faith and righteous actions. There are, however, some prosperity churches which seek a more moderate or reformed paradigm of prosperity. [Kirbyjon Caldwell](#), pastor of a [Methodist megachurch](#), supports a theology of [abundant life](#), teaching prosperity for the whole human being, which he sees as a path to combating poverty.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosperity_theology#Theology)

Here are common scriptures used by many of the leaders that teach this doctrine to support their belief system.

Malachi 3:10

Matthew 25:14-30

John 10:10

Philippians 4:19

III John 1:2

I'd like to dive into two passages, with the understanding how vital and key that context is key to understanding scripture. The two we'll focus on are Malachi 3 and Matthew 25. So many times when scripture is misinterpreted, it comes out of context of the chapter or book it is found.

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Malachi 3

Let's recap what we've just read; Malachi begins the chapter with a messianic prophecy, I find it no accident that he did so. Malachi shares his burden with the people of Israel in the first chapter, saying that the Lord loves Israel. Yet God was not pleased with His people, their sacrifices were not found acceptable.

Malachi 1:1-3,9-11

Malachi continues to share the reprimands of God to the people of Israel. Then we get to the third chapter, again he begins with a messianic prophecy. Why? Jesus truly is the only acceptable sacrifice for all the sins of the people. He is the only salvation from wickedness and from the righteous judgments of God. Malachi began with a hope of Salvation, a hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this chapter. (Malachi 3:1-6)

1904 - Forerunner, Mt 11:10

2890 - Messianic Prophecies

307 - Seeking Christ Mk. 1:37

694 - Divine Messenger

3111 - Sacrifices of Righteousness

3026 - Restoration

496 - Spiritual Refining 1Pe. 1:7

1354 - God a Judge

What does the seventh verse address?

Malachi 3:7

Gone away from mine ordinances] Never acting according to their spirit and design.

Return unto me] There is still space to repent.

Wherein shall we return?] Their consciences were seared, and they knew not that they were sinners.

-Adam Clarke Commentary

The previous generation had gone away from the commandments of God, this was a call to come back from that place of rebellion to where God has designed his people to be.

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Now we get into the meat of where those who preach a prosperity gospel pluck scripture from a chapter and book filled with vital context. Even among these sections of scripture they pluck out only one. Let's look at verses 8-12

Malachi 3:8-12

What's happening in these scriptures?
What impact does the previous context have?
Does God bless His people materially and physically?
Were there any "contingencies" or "prerequisites"?

Malachi 3:8

Will a man rob God?] Here is one point on which ye are guilty; ye withhold the tithes and offerings from the temple of God, so that the Divine worship is neglected.

-Adam Clarke Commentary

3220 - Self-righteousness

2128 - Offerings Withheld Ac. 5:2

2123 - Tithes Mt. 26:8

1054 - Spiritual Showers

481 - Blessings Mt. 6:33

1123 - Spiritual Fullness Mt. 5:6

Malachi 3:9

Ye are cursed with a curse] The whole nation is under my displeasure. The curse of God is upon you.

-Adam Clarke Commentary

Malachi 3:10

Bring ye all the tithes] They had so withheld these that the priests had not food enough to support life, and the sacred service was interrupted. See Ne 13:10

And prove me now herewith] What ye give to God shall never lessen your store. Give as ye should, and see whether I will not so increase your store by opening the windows of heaven-giving you rain and fruitful season-that your barns and granaries shall not be able to contain the abundance of your harvests and vintage.

-Adam Clarke Commentary

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God told the people what their sin was in this section of scripture, this is vital context to understanding the rest of the verses. They were withholding what they were commanded to give to God for worship. As a result the blessings that God bestowed upon the people we stopped. God offers an opportunity to come back to His commandments. This is why it's so vital for Malachi to begin this chapter with messianic prophecies, to remind the people that there will come a day when the continued sacrifices will be done with, by one. To remind them there will come a judgment day, but there's salvation in the messiah, in Jesus Christ, from the bondage and damnation of sin. God desires to bless His people so that they may be able to continue to worship Him as He called them to do! We cannot withhold from God though, this is a quick way to stop up the blessings God has for us.

We must understand there is truly only one thing that is important to God and this should be important to us as well: God desires a relationship of worship with His creation designed in His holy and righteous image. This must always come first before anything else. He desires our full and undivided dedication. Our whole life, hearts, minds, and souls. Submitted to Him, to His will, His commandment, and His worship. The prosperity Gospel uses this verse (Malachi 3:10) to tell you that if you give, God will bless you. This is too simple of an explanation of this "transaction". God's first desire is for His children to come out of their rebellion of Sin and to give their lives over to Him. By and through Jesus Christ. There's spiritual blessings that result, sometimes even physical and material blessings. This however cannot and must not be the foundation upon which one builds their salvation and desire to give. It mustn't come from a desire to become "wealthy" from the blessings of God, rather it must come from a contrite and apologetic heart for the sins committed.

John 3

Genesis 1:26

Luke 21:1-4

Matthew 6:19-24

Matthew 6:30-34

John 15: 1-6

Acts 16:30-31

Psalms 51:17

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Does God bless His people materially? Absolutely, He does, the gospel work needs financial support. This however is why we teach Holy Spirit leadership in all aspects of life; when it comes to giving I'm not here to tell how much or when to give, but this, listen to God and allow the Holy Spirit to lead your giving. There's not a thing we should withhold from God, for all things, are given to us by God.

Matthew 22:36-40

Let's move to the next scriptures:

Matthew 25:14-30

Let's look into this parable of the talents:

(14-15) Jesus establishes what the subject and purpose is going to be of this parable. His first statement establishes the "lens" with which we should view this parable through, the kingdom of Heaven. This parable is revolving Jesus Christ (the man), us (the servants), and His goods (the Gospel). We can understand this to be the case because Jesus established the "lens" to be the kingdom of Heaven, His kingdom. Thus he is the man traveling (ascending) and we're his servants working for the kingdom of God. As this man left, he gave talents to each of his servants according to their ability. Jesus Christ has done the same thing. Understanding the goods of the kingdom to be the gospel, the talents given must be related back to a calling, gifting, or ministry. Given to each one according to their ability in Christ.

Mark 1:14-15

Here we see scripture supporting the proclamation of the gospel being the goods of the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ says the kingdom is at hand, which means repent and believe the gospel. He also established his desire for His disciples, and us to go preach the gospel in

Matthew 28:18-20

Mark 16:15-18

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2088 - Go Preach

2010 - Kingdom at Hand

2011 - Kingdom of God

To preach the kingdom is at hand, is to preach the Gospel. Which is the testimony and good news of Jesus Christ. To preach His sacrifice, His victory, and His grace. The goods of the Kingdom of God is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Knowing what the goods of the kingdom of Heaven are, we can look at the last part of the verse with understanding "and deliver unto them his goods." Understanding He gave us His good news of saving and healing power, to be spread unto all those who need to hear of Jesus Christ.

3455 - Divine Ownership

3451 - Stewardship

4033 - Spiritual Exercise

4016 - Cultivate Gifts

565 - Fidelity

2814 - Spiritual Investments

3890 - Service to Ability

2872 - Godliness Profitable

1085 - Neglect of Duty

18 - Spiritual Abundance

As we see the servants after being given the talents according to their ability. They all went and did something with those talents. What are the talents to be related to? As stated above these are giftings, callings, ministries, and each one of us has a place to be. A work to be done, given to us by Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 12

Ephesians 4

I want to leave these questions to be answered:

Why were the first and second servants commended?

What did the master say to the third servant?

What is being said between the third servant and the man (v. 25-27) and what does it mean?

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Here's a message from Joel Osteen revolving around this parable:

I want to talk to you today about "Use it or lose it". God has placed gifts and talents on the inside of each one of us. There is potential in you that you've not yet tapped into. It wasn't designed to you don't become everything you were created to be overnight. These gifts were put in you on a time release. They are destined to open up at certain points throughout your life. You will come into seasons of new growth, seasons of new opportunity, seasons where you discover talent and ability that you didn't know you had.

We weren't created to reach one level and get stuck. You may have finished your education, but you haven't finished learning. You may have that position you've always dreamed of. You're satisfied, but that's not your final step. God is not satisfied. He's put more in you. He has new talents, new abilities, even new levels, but too often, we have gifts lying dormant because we're not taking time to develop them. We're not being disciplined to study, to grow, to become better. We have talent that's being underutilized because we're comfortable. We don't want to have to stretch and do something out of our routine.

We think, "Oh, man, I'm doing good enough," but good enough is sometimes we're stuck because we're intimidated. We let thoughts of fear and doubt talk us out of it, things like, "You can't take that management position," "You can't write that book," "You can't lead that class," "You're not qualified," "You come from the wrong family".

All the what-if thoughts come: "What if you try, and fail? " "What if it doesn't work out? " "What if you get up there, and you're embarrassed?" Well, what if you get up there, and you succeed? What if you go to a new level? What if you set a new standard for your family? Don't let fear keep you from your destiny. That is a time-release gift trying to come out. Don't miss your season. You look up, and another year is gone. Life is flying by. You don't have time to waste being unfocused, intimidated, letting opportunities pass you by.

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You have to draw that line in the sand and say, "That's it. I'm going to get focused. I'm going to be intentional. I'm not going to play it safe my whole life. I'm going to start stretching, taking steps of faith to release these gifts Paul said in romans, "God has given each person the ability to do certain things well". You have a gift. There's something you're good at. Find out what it is, and do it well. Maybe you can sing, and you've never had a lesson. You can figure out how things work technically, you can stand up in front of people, lead that class. You don't even think twice about it. It's just who you are. Those are gifts that God has invested in you.

Here's the key: God is expecting a return on his investment. Do you have gifts that are being underutilized? You're not taking time to develop them. You're too busy to put forth the extra effort to stretch, to learn, to become better, or perhaps you can feel that stirring on the inside. You can feel that desire in your spirit. You know you should, but you keep talking yourself out of it, letting it intimidate you.

(Joel Osteen: <https://sermons.love/joel-osteen/3394-joel-osteen-use-it-or-lose-it.html>)

As we can see there are parallels, that are deceptively close to truth, but notice the emphasis on earthly success rather than heavenly success. We're to be in the service of Jesus Christ and His kingdom, having a mind focused on His aspirations.

Matthew 6:33

I want to leave this question with all:

What are you doing with the gifts and callings God has given you?

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Study Key:

Main Scripture

Supporting Scripture

Strong's Definitions

Thompson Chain Reference

Main Thought & Title

My Notes

Direct Quotes or Writings

Commentary