



INSPIRED
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FALSE TEACHINGS

VOLUME 1

PROBLEMS WITH THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL

TOPIC SERIES

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VOLUME ONE

PROBLEMS WITH THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL

Written & Compiled By

Stewart Kabatebate

FALSE TEACHINGS – Volume 1

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most dangerous teachings is the doctrine that is popularly known as the “prosperity gospel”.

This doctrine mostly focuses on health and wealth and whilst Bible verses are sometimes used to justify this false teaching, closer scrutiny reveals that many scriptures have been used out of context to justify the prosperity doctrine.

PROBLEMS WITH THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL is Volume One of the Inspired Walk FALSE TEACHINGS – TOPIC SERIES which seeks to equip and reveal to the reader about the dangers of this false gospel.

What Does The Prosperity Gospel Teach?

What does the prosperity gospel teach? This popular but false doctrine survives & grows by taking advantage of the financially desperate, the self-ambitious, the greedy, and the spiritually deceived with the promise that those who obey its subtle but twisted doctrines will one day amass material riches, material wealth and self-fulfillment in life.

However, even the scripture is clear that money does not satisfy and fulfillment cannot be found by the pursuit of money or wealth. **(Ecclesiastes 5:10 ESV – He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity)**

Another important note is that: just because the prosperity doctrine has been made popular by charismatic and influential prosperity preachers it does not mean that this doctrine is true and sound. The Bible is clear that many people will be deceived by many false prophets and that many people will not endure sound teaching. **(Matthew 24:11 NKJV – Then MANY false prophets will rise up and deceive MANY.)**

Matthew 6:24

(Jesus speaking) “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he

will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Since the prosperity preachers encourage that the pursuit of worldly wealth and riches on this earth is a good thing for every Christian to do – then why did the devil use the prospect of acquiring the same wealth & the same riches to tempt the Lord Jesus to worship him? The reason is even the devil knows that a man cannot serve both God and money and even the devil knows that the pursuit of money leads to all kinds of evil.

In **1 Timothy 6:5,9-11** Paul warned Timothy about such men like prosperity gospel preachers. Paul said that these men who were of “corrupt mind” **supposed godliness was a means of (material) gain and their desire for riches was a trap that brought them “into ruin and destruction” (vs 9).**

2 Timothy 4:3 ESV

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,

The problem with the prosperity gospel is not only that it is heretic – but that this false gospel is so dangerous to the point that it can send deceived people straight to the fires of hell. What’s worse also is that prosperity preachers have twisted scriptures in the Bible to justify covetousness, greed, self ambition and the desire to

pursue worldly riches instead of pursuing eternal blessings and eternal rewards.

Jesus said the following: **Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say to you, 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.” – Matthew 19:23-24 NKJV**

The most important issues to learn about the prosperity gospel are the following:

- a) What is the prosperity gospel and what does the prosperity gospel really teach?
- b) Does the fact that the prosperity gospel is popular among millions of people and is preached by well-known charismatic & articulate preachers mean that the prosperity gospel is true?
- c) What are the dangers of believing and following the prosperity gospel?
- d) Who benefits from the prosperity gospel?

WHAT DOES THE FALSE PROSPERITY GOSPEL TEACH?

1) God Wants You To Be Rich

Are you aware, that whenever Jesus brought up the issue of earthly money & riches, Jesus always spoke AGAINST the idea of people pursuing material wealth & earthly riches? He was against it so much that He warned His

followers by saying **“it is HARD for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:23,24)**

So does God want you to be rich? Does God desire that you seek after money & things? As you live on this earth, is God’s desire for you to seek after the expensive cars; to wear the best looking clothes and to live in an expensive posh house? Does having such type of material possessions and wealth reflect that God’s blessings are truly on you and that you have a RIGHT relationship with God?

The answer to the above questions is found in **1 Timothy 6:6-10 and Philippians 4:11,12.**

Philippians 4:11,12 ESV – *Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.*

If God doesn’t want you to be rich, then does He want you to be poor? The truth is God wants you to be **CONTENT** in whatever situation you are in. **1 Timothy 6:6** says **“godliness with CONTENTMENT is GREAT gain”**. Therefore life is not about whether you are rich or whether you’re poor; or whether you have or whether you don’t have – **“life does not consist in the abundance of things” (Luke 12:15)**

What does God say about people who want to be rich? Here are a few out of MANY Bible verses where God

speaks against people having a desire to pursue material riches.

Luke 12:15 NKJV – *And He (Jesus) said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”*

Matthew 6:19-21 ESV – *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

1 Timothy 6:6-10 NKJV – *Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Ecclesiastes 5:10 ESV – *He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.*

From the scriptures above (and there are many other similar scriptures), it is clear that God does not promote the pursuit of material wealth or riches. God desires CONTENTMENT in whatever situation. Most of all, God desires that you seek His kingdom & His righteousness

FIRST (Matthew 6:33). God knows the temptations and distractions that come with pursuing after material riches. He therefore discourages it because the pursuit of riches actually prevents us from pursuing God, and the more riches we have, the greedy we become because money does not satisfy.

2) “Seeding” Your Money Will Compel God to Reward You

The popular term that prosperity preachers use whenever they want people’s money is the word “seed” or “seeding” / “sowing”. Therefore when a prosperity preacher asks you to “seed” or “sow”, he is really asking you to give either him or to give his church some money with a promise that the “seed money” will “harvest” a double blessing or a “reward” from God.

Matthew 7:7-11 – “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

Imagine you have a son. And your son told you that he was going to “seed” \$10 to you as his father, because he

wants you to one day buy him a car. Or imagine you have a daughter, and your daughter told you that she is “seeding” \$20 to you because she will be expecting you to buy her a house. What kind of child-father relationship would this be? Is it not somehow a manipulative and strange relationship? Would you *really* want your own child to “seed” money to you so that you can do good things for your child? Would such a relationship be a GENUINE relationship? Jesus did not teach any formulas for getting God to do something for us. Jesus did not teach that there is a get-rich formula for life. Jesus taught that if you wanted something from God, you should simply ASK – pray, believe and let God do the rest. **Matthew 7:11** says how much **more will your Father in Heaven give good things to those who ASK Him.**

The problem is not with the concept of **giving**, but the problem is that we think God should respond because we “seeded” money.

The prosperity gospel has indoctrinated its followers that God responds to our giving of money to the church or to the preacher. For example, one might expect that if he “seeds” \$100, he must expect God to give him a double portion of \$200 or a possession he desires. Therefore should the concept of giving become a tool to force God to grant somebody personal prosperity? Would such motives be pure and good?

2 Corinthians 9:7-8 ESV – Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Whenever you read the gospels and study the ministry of Jesus & His apostles you will discover something very interesting about Jesus' ministry and the ministry of His apostles that is very different from what you see from the prosperity churches and the prosperity preachers.

Jesus did not ever ask for so-called "seed" money from any person who needed His help. Unlike the false prosperity preachers, Jesus did not teach that God will materialistically reward those who "seed" money into the church or into the pockets of preachers. Jesus did not ever teach that "seeding" money is a pre-requisite for experiencing God's answer to prayer or God's deliverance.

(see articles: Can A Man Bribe God? What is the Seed Faith Teaching?) and (What is the Word of Faith Movement?)

3) Jesus Was Rich or Wealthy

Was Jesus rich? Did He look rich and wear expensive clothes? The prosperity preachers would falsely like to have people believe that Jesus was wealthy whilst on earth. However, the truth is Jesus was not rich and wealthy during His earthly ministry as the prosperity preachers teach.

It was one of the reasons why such skeptics as the Pharisees were not convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. The reason is because even to the Pharisees, Jesus didn't dress like a King; or move around with servants and an army like a king. Jesus was not the kind of King or Messiah that the materialistic Pharisees expected. Outwardly, Jesus looked like any ordinary person.

Jesus told an interested follower that **“Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head” (Luke 9:58).**

Jesus and His disciples often relied on the hospitality of others during their ministry.

Jesus in humility took the form and life of a servant and not of a rich man when He came to earth (**Philippians 2:6-8** *ESV – Who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross).*

Mark 10:45 *ESV – “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Jesus also encouraged His disciples to become like servants (**Mark 10:43-44** *ESV – But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.)*

The life of a servant or slave of God is NOT to pursue after riches. The life of a servant of God is to serve and obey his Master.

Jesus did not go around the earth preaching a prosperity gospel or giving His disciples a get-rich formula for life. Jesus preached repentance and the need for man to have a right relationship with God (**Matthew 4:17**). Jesus came as a living example of how we should serve God and live a life that is pleasing to Him. Jesus also came that we may pursue the prize of eternal life through Him and not the temporary monetary riches of this earth.

4) The Bible or Jesus Spoke More About Money Than Any Other Topic

Does the Bible speak more about money than any other topic? Several prosperity teachers have heretically claimed that God or Jesus or the Bible speaks more about money than any other topic. This claim is untrue and totally deceptive. The main message of God's word is not about the accumulation of wealth and possessions. Material prosperity has never been at the heart of God's concern in relation to man's relationship with Him. Therefore if material wealth & health is not at the top of God's heart, then what has been God's great desire concerning His creation?

2 Peter 3:9-10 ESV – *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,*

not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Matthew 4:17 ESV – *From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

John 5:39 ESV – (Jesus speaking) *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me,*

John 3:16 ESV – *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

Matthew 28:19-20 ESV – *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Contrary to the false teachings of prosperity teachers, the Bible was not inspired by God in order to supply man with a get-rich formula for life. God’s word exists because the entire Bible speaks & witnesses about Jesus (both in the Old & New Testament – **John 5:39**). The Bible also exists because it is necessary for every person to repent from sin and realize that salvation can only be found through faith in Jesus Christ whom God sent out of His love for the world.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. In what ways is the prosperity gospel spiritually dangerous to followers or believers of this false doctrine?
2. 1 Timothy 6:6 says that “godliness with contentment is great gain”. What does this mean and why is contentment important in the life of a Christian believer?
3. In Luke 12:15 Jesus says “life does not consist in the abundance of things”. What does this mean?

Can A Man Bribe God?

What is the Seed-Faith Teaching?

What is the seed faith doctrine? The seed-faith teaching is part of the false prosperity gospel doctrine whereby followers are taught to “sow” or “seed” money to a prosperity preacher and then expect a “harvest” from God.

For example, the concept of the seed faith teaching is that if you “seed” \$10 then you must trust God to give you back \$100. Or if you “sow” \$1000 then you must trust or expect God to give you a car, a new job or a “harvest” of money that is more than the amount you initially “seeded” to the ministry.

Therefore believers of the seed faith doctrine are taught that the more money you “seed” or give to a seed-faith preacher or his ministry – the more money or “blessings” that God will give you in return.

The seed faith teaching is widely taught around the world mostly within the charismatic movement or within prosperity gospel churches. This teaching has not only destroyed the spiritual lives of many people who have believed in this false doctrine – but this teaching has been one of the primary get-rich formulas and methods that has enriched many prosperity preachers around the world. The late Oral Roberts is one of the

main people who was known to be one of the “fathers” and influential promoters of the seed-faith teaching.

Preachers of the seed-faith doctrine have twisted scriptures such as the Parable of the Sower (**Mark 4:1-20**) to support this false teaching.

When read and interpreted in its proper context, the Parable of the Sower does not refer to seed as being money – but the seed is actually the word of God (**Mark 4:14**) and NOT a “harvest” of money.

The different types of soil mentioned in the Parable of the Sower are the hearts of men and the harvest mentioned in the parable are the souls of people who have responded to God’s word and NOT money.

Therefore when prosperity preachers use the Parable of the Sower to support their seed-faith doctrine they are actually twisting the scriptures in order to manipulate and coerce people for their personal monetary gain.

Prosperity preachers have also twisted **Matthew 17:20** where Jesus compares faith to a grain of mustard seed and that one’s faith can move mountains.

Again, when **Matthew 17:20** is read in context, Jesus does not speak in relation to giving so-called “seed faith offerings” nor is Christ teaching that people will acquire a multiplied return of their money if they “seed” their money to a prosperity preacher.

Problems With The Seed-Faith Doctrine

2 Corinthians 11:4 ESV

*For if someone comes and proclaims **another** Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a **different** spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a **different** gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.*

The seed faith doctrine creates a false concept of God.

The seed faith theology is a false teaching that twists the true meaning and context of scriptures so that it proclaims a different Jesus and a different gospel. This false teaching also manipulates people to give or “seed” money under the influence of a different spirit or an impure motivation.

Through this doctrine, God is falsely seen as one who can be bribed or manipulated by money. God is also falsely seen as one who is only motivated to act when He sees the “sacrifice” of “seed money”.

In fact, the god of the seed faith teaching is NOT the TRUE God of the Bible – but instead, the god of the seed faith doctrine is a different god – it is the god of mammon (money).

Matthew 6:24 NKJV

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

- The seed faith doctrine makes the prosperity preacher richer whilst making his followers poorer, desperate for wealth or anticipating the arrival of a false promise.

2 Peter 2:3 KJV says that false teachers will exploit you with false words because of greed and that *“through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you”*

- Preachers of the seed faith doctrine have gone as far as promising salvation and deliverance from curses and problems if followers “seed” their money to them or their ministries. The Bible however is clear that salvation or deliverance cannot be paid for by money. Salvation and deliverance is only through the blood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross alone.

1 Peter 1:18-19 says *“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”*

- The seed faith theology encourages its followers to give so that they can get. Therefore the giving is motivated by selfish gain or a “what’s in it for me” attitude. The giving is done from an impure motive of personal covetousness and personal monetary gain.

- The seed faith doctrine manipulates and uses coercive techniques. Therefore followers are coerced into giving out of guilt and out of a spirit of legalism. Followers are made to feel guilty that their lack of “seeding” enough money is the reason for their problems in life.

2 Corinthians 9:7 says *“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver”*.

So according to **2 Corinthians 9:7** the teaching and attitude concerning Christian giving is that one should give cheerfully as each person has decided in his/her own heart and not under coercive or manipulative techniques.

- The seed-faith theology creates a false god who lacks sovereignty and who can be controlled based on the amount of money that you “sow”. The false god of the seed-faith doctrine is transactional and this god is motivated to act only through money that is “seeded”. Therefore without the “sacrifice” of money – the god of the seed-faith doctrine will not “bless” the giver.

- The seed faith doctrine energizes the flesh of man and undermines the dangers and warnings of desiring riches.

1 Timothy 6:8-10 says: *“But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”*

1 Timothy 6:10 says that the love or craving of money causes people to “wander away from the faith” and that it pierces people with many pangs. The untold reality is

that the seed-faith doctrine has destroyed many people's lives around the world and it has negatively affected their faith in God entirely.

What Would Jesus Say About the Seed-Faith Doctrine?

Jesus did not ever ask for so-called "seed-offering" money from any person who needed His help. Unlike the seed-faith preachers, Jesus did not teach that God will materialistically or financially reward those who "seed" money into the pockets of prosperity preachers. Jesus did not ever teach that "seeding" money is a prerequisite for experiencing God's answer to prayer or God's deliverance and salvation as many seed-faith preachers preach.

Jesus taught His disciples when He sent them to minister into various towns to not request payment from those they had helped. Jesus did not teach His disciples any seed-faith doctrine or that God responds depending on how much or how little we give money to a seed-faith preacher.

Matthew 10:8,9 ESV – *(Jesus speaking) "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. 9 Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts,"*

Acts 3:6-7 ESV – *But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" 7 And he took him by the right*

hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong”.

Often during Jesus’ ministry and as He taught His disciples, the people who had need of God’s help were often poor, broke, desperate, sick, helpless and hopeless. Jesus did not also teach that if anyone has a physical or spiritual need, then one must give “seed” money or give a “seed offering” in order to activate God’s hand. God is not activated by money and nor does God choose “seed” money as being a means by which He makes decisions. God acts and responds out of His own sovereign will and NOT out of the will of man (**Luke 22:42 and Matthew 6:10**).

The seed-faith doctrine has misguided many people and given people a false perception of the true nature of God. Imagine if your young child told you that he wanted to “seed” to you \$10 because she wants you to give her \$1000 in the future. Surely, it would be a strange, manipulative parent-child relationship.

God does not require money in order to bless anyone. God is sovereign and He does and chooses to do whatever He desires within His perfect will. God cannot be bribed by “seed” money or by the manipulative techniques of the seed-faith doctrine. God cannot be controlled. The only “god” that can be bribed or controlled with money is a false god – the mammon god.

How To Give Correctly & Wisely

In the New Testament dispensation we are not under the ceremonial or sacrificial laws of the Old Testament but we are under grace. The death of Christ on the Cross and His resurrection ensures that we are not subjected to the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament in relation to the types of offerings and sacrifices because Jesus Christ became the ultimate sacrifice once and for all (**Hebrews 10:1-18**).

Therefore all giving of any kind must be done prayerfully and cheerfully and not under compulsion or guilt (**2 Corinthians 9:7**).

Our Christian giving must genuinely glorify God and be beneficial to the work of God without the expectation of a return but out of love and humility.

All giving must be done with God's wisdom, discernment and understanding in order to avoid being conned, manipulated or coerced by false teachings and false teachers.

All giving must be done out of a pure and righteous motive.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. Why is the seed-faith teaching dangerous to followers & believers of this false doctrine?

2. 2 Corinthians 9:7 says that we should not give under compulsion or guilt. What does it mean to give under compulsion and how can we become cheerful givers?
3. In 1 Timothy 6:10 the Bible describes “the love of money” as being “a root of all kinds of evil”. Why is money a root of all kinds of evil?

What is the Word of Faith Movement?

The Word of Faith or Word-Faith Movement is neither an organization nor a denomination. This movement traces its roots from the “positive confessions” and New Thought teachings of E.W Kenyon who is said to be the originator of the movement. However Kenneth Hagin is said to be the “father” of the Word-Faith Movement because he was responsible for popularizing Kenyon’s theology and teachings since the late 20th century.

To this day, the Word of Faith Movement consists of a wave of popular but heretical teachings that have been popularized by other preachers such as Joel Osteen, Kenneth Copeland, Mike Murdoch, Benny Hinn, TD Jakes, Joyce Meyer, Paula White, Creflo Dollar, Kenneth Hagin and many others.

This movement is known as Word of Faith / Word-Faith mainly because of their false teachings and distorted perceptions regarding faith. Many Word-faith preachers such as Kenneth Copeland for example are on record as teaching that faith is a “force” which can be used to get or achieve whatever you desire.

Since this movement consists of some of the most popular preachers and televangelists, it is no surprise

that the Word-Faith Movement and some of its heretical teachings have been very popular all over the world. The heart of what word-faith preachers teach is that God promises health and wealth to anyone who practices their faith related formulas and theologies.

Some of the theology and false teachings of the Word of Faith Movement are as follows:

1. Faith is a “Force” Controlled By The Words You Speak

One of the foundational theologies of the Word-Faith movement is the belief that faith is a “force” through which a person is able to acquire whatever he wants if he conjures up enough faith. They believe that the words you speak or the words you confess will control or manipulate the faith force in order to get the outcome that one desires.

Therefore your success and experience of material prosperity is dependent on how successful you are able to manipulate the faith force through your positive confession so that you get your desired outcome.

The Word-Faith movement subtly or indirectly promotes faith in faith instead of faith in God. Their theology clearly attempts to remove or ignore the sovereign will of God as it puts man as being the one who has the control and power to

create whatever he so desires by simply using his words to control the faith force.

2. Prosperity Gospel / Health & Wealth

The prosperity gospel is the teaching that every born again believer is meant to obtain material wealth and riches. These riches are available by using faith and positive confessions whilst making deliberate and practical effort to seek the riches that one desires.

The Word-Faith movement also believes that the death of Jesus Christ extends to Christ giving every born again believer the ability to obtain the material riches and possessions that one desires. Word of Faith preachers therefore teach their followers that one of the primary objectives in a person's life must be the pursuit of material wealth. In the theology of this movement, the possession of material wealth is a visible sign that a person has the "favour" and "blessings" of God upon his life.

Therefore, a bankrupt bank account can be translated as one having a bankrupt faith. Or if you do not get healed from a sickness, then it is because you lacked enough faith to receive your healing.

Therefore the Word of Faith Movement teaches that if you desire to have whatever you wish, then

you must use enough of the faith force to bring your desires or material wealth into existence.

3. Men Are Little Gods

The Word of Faith movement also teaches that men are like “little gods”. They have the belief that people are just like God in that they can control their reality and destiny by the use of their words.

The Word-Faith movement believes that since man is made in the image of God and if God created the universe by the power of His words, then it means that man also has creative power by the use of his/her words.

The Word-Faith movement therefore believes that just like God, man can control the weather; or just like God, man can change any reality or destiny.

The Word-Faith movement also heretically teaches its followers that God cannot do anything without the permission of man.

Therefore the subtle deception of this movement is that not only is man a “little god”, but that man can also control the Creator of the universe.

4. Seed-Faith Teachings

The Word-Faith movement also promotes the false doctrine of seed-faith offerings. Oral Roberts is known as one of the initial originators of this

false teaching.

It involves followers being coerced into “seeding” or giving their money in “faith” with the belief that God will give them back a multiplied harvest or return of their initial offering.

For example, the belief is that if a person gives or “sows” \$10 in “faith” to a prosperity preacher or his ministry, then God will be obligated to give that person a monetary or material reward of \$20 or more in return.

5. Name It & Claim It

The Word of Faith Movement teaches that by using the power of your words, combined with the faith force, you will be able to use the technique of naming whatever you want into existence. Therefore a car, a house, a job and many other things can be acquired simply by naming it, claiming it and declaring it into existence.

So it is believed that positive confessions and declarations for the items you need will result in obtaining the possessions or reality you want in life. However, they also believe that “negative confessions” will create a negative reality or destiny since they believe that man is a “little god” who has the power to create his own reality by the words that he/she speaks.

6. Other False Doctrines & Beliefs

- They believe that Jesus died spiritually and that He had to be “tortured in hell” and “born again in hell” before He rose from the dead.
- They believe that the office of apostles and prophets still exists today. While most Word-Faith teachers do not outright claim to have an authority that matches or supersedes the Bible, they do allege that God gives them direct or special revelation in the form of words of knowledge, prophecies, and visions. Therefore the teachings of word-faith “apostles” or “prophets” cannot be questioned or challenged by their followers as they allege to hear from God alone because they claim to hold the spiritual offices of prophet and apostle.
- They believe that Jesus and His disciples were rich and that to be poor is a sin or to be sick is a sin.

What Does The Bible Teach About Word-Faith Movement Beliefs?

The Bible teaches us that God alone is Sovereign and He alone is able to create something from nothing (**Genesis 1:3**). Therefore God cannot be commanded and neither do we have the ability to manipulate Him based on our faith.

We are not supposed to have faith in our faith nor faith in our own words. Therefore God alone should be the

object of our faith (**Mark 11:22**). We must have faith in God and God decides when and in what manner He will respond to prayer or our requests

We are not “little gods”. We are not deity. Instead we are God’s creation. Therefore we do not have the power to change the weather or create nothing from something by the power of the faith force or “positive confession”.

Therefore there is only one God who exists in 3 Persons (The Father, The Son & The Holy Spirit).

The prosperity gospel is a false doctrine according to scripture (**1 Timothy 6:3-10**). We cannot bribe or manipulate God with our monetary offerings. The seed-faith teaching encourages manipulation and coercion. The teaching is an insult to the divine nature of God and it promotes money as having some kind of power to influence the hand of God.

The Word of Faith movement is deceiving countless people around the world. It is a cultic and deceptive movement that uses both subtle and blatant methods to promote the self and individual interests rather than the genuine pursuit of Christ.

Most Word of Faith teachers have become enormously rich and wealthy because of the Word-Faith doctrine. Their prosperity gospel has made these preachers rich whilst their followers either become poorer, covetous or seek an unbiblical lifestyle in the pursuit of monetary riches.

Word-Faith preachers have managed to commercialize Christianity and make merchandise of their followers (2

Peter 2:1-3).

We must therefore be vigilant and careful to avoid being deceived by any preacher or religious groups that teach Word-Faith theology as such teachings have distorted genuine Biblical Christianity.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. Is one's financial status a correct indication of one's spiritual status or condition in life? For example, does a bankrupt bank account mean that one has a bankrupt faith?
2. Why is the Word of Faith movement and its prosperity gospel doctrine one of the fastest growing movements in religion today?
3. How do the teachings of the prosperity gospel differ from the true Biblical gospel of Jesus Christ?

Is The Selling of Anointing Oil & Holy Water Biblical?

In many churches or religious groups there has been a trend where various items such as anointing oil, holy water, handkerchiefs, and many other “anointed” products are sold to church members with the belief that the purchase and use of such objects or products will attract God’s blessings, favour and protection.

Therefore church leaders will encourage their followers to purchase their products with the promise that if the followers purchase and use their “anointed” products, then God will answer their prayers.

However, what does the Bible say about the sales of anointing oil and holy water? Should Christians use various “anointed” objects or church products in order to attract God’s favour and protection in their lives?

In the Bible, there is no record of Jesus Christ nor His disciples ever selling anointing oil, holy water or any product with the belief and promise that these products will attract God’s blessing or protection.

Jesus said the following in **Matthew 10:7-9**: *“And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You*

received without paying; give without pay. 9 Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts,”

There is no record in the scriptures where Jesus or His disciples healed anyone for a price.

God does not sell miracles. The gifts of God are for free and God's gifts and blessings cannot be bought or sold by anyone.

Selling of “Anointed” Objects Is a Form of Witchcraft and Idolatry

In **Acts 8:9-24** there is the story of Simon the Sorcerer who was strongly rebuked by Peter for thinking that the gifts of the Holy Spirit could be purchased.

Acts 8:18-22

Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” 20 But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.

The selling or purchasing of “anointed” items or products such as anointing oil or holy water in exchange for blessings and miracles is equivalent to practicing witchcraft.

God's word does not teach that people must purchase "anointed" or "holy" objects in exchange for God's miracles because the power to heal or bless does not come from objects but the power comes directly from God.

It is a form of practicing witchcraft when people purchase objects and trust in those "anointed" objects in exchange for blessings and miracles. It is the same practice when a person visits a sorcerer or witchdoctor. Such practices are therefore cult-like and demonic in nature. Any power or results that are experienced because of trusting in various objects for miracles is likely sourced from satan and not from God.

Having faith in an object for miracles and blessings is also similar to practicing idolatry. Our trust and faith must be directed towards God alone (**Mark 11:22**) and not towards objects.

Our function as Christians is simply to pray to God whenever we have a problem or petition (**Philippians 4:6-7**).

We do not need to pray PLUS purchase an "anointed" object for God to answer our prayers.

God is sovereign. Therefore God cannot be manipulated or coerced by the purchase and usage of "anointed" or "holy" objects or products which are sold by various church leaders.

God will answer our prayers without the need for us to pay anybody any money.

False Teachers Are Profiteering From Sales of “Anointed” Objects

The crux of the matter is that the selling of such products as anointing oil or holy water is done for the purposes of making money and exploiting gullible followers.

The Bible warns that there will be many false teachers who will exploit people for the purposes of making money and enriching themselves.

For example, **2 Peter 2:1-3 (KJV)** speaks about false teachers and says *“through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you”*

1 Timothy 6:3-5 says that we must beware of anyone who teaches false doctrines and of false teachers who *“think that godliness is a means to financial gain”*

Romans 16:18 says *“For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.”*

Therefore, one of the primary objectives of many false teachers is to make a lot of money by exploiting the gullibility of their followers. They deceive their followers by suggesting that their products have the power to miraculously change the lives of their followers if their followers purchase and use their “anointed” products. These false teachers exploit people who are in genuine need of help and who are desperate by selling them “anointed” oil and water. Yet this was never what Jesus did nor what Jesus taught.

It is therefore necessary to avoid any religious group or persons who exploits followers through selling “anointed” objects and products. Such people are false teachers who seek monetary gain and they are used as instruments of the devil to lead people into both witchcraft and idolatry.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. Why is the selling of anointed oil and water equivalent to witchcraft and idolatry?
2. In what other ways or methods have people been tricked or coerced into paying a monetary value for their supposed deliverance; or for miracles or for salvation?
3. Is the blood of Jesus and the sacrifice He made on the cross fully sufficient for mankind’s deliverance or salvation? Why?

Lessons From The Story of the Rich Man & Lazarus

If you had a choice between the two – what kind of life would you prefer to live? The good life here on earth or the good life in Heaven?

If you read and study **Luke 16:19-31** you will discover that there are some very interesting life lessons that we can learn from the story that Jesus gave of the rich man & Lazarus.

The story is about 2 very different men. The first is The Rich Man; a man who was rich, wealthy, respected and lived in extreme luxury on a daily basis.

The second man is Lazarus; a man who was extremely poor, had a physical illness and who lived his life as a beggar. Lazarus was so poor that he desired to eat from the left-over food or crumbs that the Rich Man threw away.

Both men eventually die with Lazarus going to heaven but the Rich Man going to hell. Lazarus is carried by angels to live in comfort to Abraham's bosom, while the Rich Man is sent to hell to suffer torment in flames.

Why would Lazarus go to heaven and the Rich Man go to hell? The conversation that occurs between Abraham and the Rich Man in **Luke 16:24-31** give some insight and some life lessons that we can learn and apply to our personal lives.

LIFE LESSON # 1

**WEALTH OR RICHES DO NOT INDICATE
SPIRITUAL MATURITY OR THAT A PERSON HAS
SPIRITUAL FAVOUR & BLESSINGS ON ONE'S LIFE.
(LUKE 16:19-21)**

The Rich Man was materialistically rich & wealthy but spiritually he was poor & bankrupt. Though the Rich Man was dressed in fine linen clothes & lived in extreme luxury, his outward appearance did not match his inward condition. One indication of his spiritual state was the Rich Man's indifference to Lazarus' plight despite the fact that this beggar stayed by his gate. The Rich Man had no compassion, love or sympathy for the poor.

In your personal life, what are you pursuing? Are you pursuing after riches & wealth at the expense of having a sound relationship with God? Are you measuring your spiritual condition based on the amount of money & possessions you have? Do you believe in the false **"prosperity gospel"** or **"word of faith"** doctrine that material prosperity is indicative or evidence of spiritual prosperity?

Matthew 6:19-21 – "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Mark 8:36-37 – For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

LIFE LESSON # 2

POVERTY DOES NOT ALWAYS INDICATE THAT A PERSON IS CURSED (LUKE 16:19-21)

Lazarus was extremely poor. He lived on the crumbs of the Rich Man and lived his life as a beggar. He also had sores all over his body, indicating that he had some kind of sickness. As a beggar Lazarus was clearly in the lowest social class in society and the world did not care about him as indicated by the Rich Man's indifference towards him. A person would be tempted to believe that God's wrath and displeasure was upon Lazarus and that Lazarus was probably being punished or under a curse. Yet the fact that Lazarus went to heaven when he died indicates something about his spiritual relationship with God. While Lazarus' reasons for being in poverty are unknown, the fact that he was living in poverty did not indicate that God had cursed him or that he was doomed to go to hell.

For Lazarus to go to heaven, he obviously had a sound & genuine relationship with God. His poverty did not hinder him from believing in God and nor did his low social status & lack of possessions mean that he had a bankrupt faith.

In your personal life – are you looking at your poor financial situation and concluding that God has cursed you or is unhappy with you? Are you persuaded that

people who are poor are probably in that particular state due to a bankrupt faith? Do you believe in the false **prosperity gospel** or **seed-faith** and **word of faith teachings** that feeds on people's covetous desires rather than on having godly contentment?

Luke 12:15 – And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

1 Timothy 6:6-8 – Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

LIFE LESSON # 3

HEAVEN AND HELL ARE REAL PLACES (LUKE 16:23)

Heaven and hell are literal places that exist. After death people will consciously know they are in hell or that they are in heaven. There are various false doctrines and teachings that claim that hell doesn't exist or that a loving God cannot allow His creation to suffer torment in hell. The Bible also does not mention any type of purgatory. However, on many occasions Jesus spoke about hell and the Bible clearly indicates that a literal hell and a literal heaven exist. The story in **Luke 16:23-31** indicate that the Rich Man was in a literal hell in which he suffered unbearable torment to the extent that he requested something as small as water from the tip of Lazarus' finger in order to cool his tongue.

In your personal life – do you take the existence of hell seriously? Do you take seriously that you may have friends, colleagues, family members who might go to hell if they do not have a relationship with God? Are you aware that hell is a literal place?

Matthew 25:41-42 – “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:”

John 14:2 – In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

LIFE LESSON # 4

HOW YOU LIVE IN YOUR LIFETIME WILL AFFECT WHERE YOU WILL SPEND ETERNITY (LUKE 16:25)

Even though he was rich and wealthy on earth, the Rich Man did not have a relationship with God. If he did, he may have treated Lazarus better and would have been compassionate towards Lazarus. The Rich Man’s wealth was not evidence that he would spend eternity in heaven. Instead his life choices on earth sent him to hell. In contrast, Lazarus suffered on earth, but ended up spending eternity in comfort in heaven. This clearly indicates that even though Lazarus lived in poverty and suffering, he clearly had better life choices in God’s eyes than the Rich Man.

In your personal life – what kind of life choices are you making? Do you know where you will spend eternity when you die – heaven or hell? Are you making choices

that have an eternal benefit or are you making choices that gratify the flesh only and have a temporary benefit?
Romans 6:23 – For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

LIFE LESSON # 5

JUDGEMENT TO HELL IS PERMANENT. THERE ARE NO SECOND CHANCES OR ESCAPE OUT OF HELL (LUKE 16:26)

Abraham told the Rich Man that nobody can walk out of hell. Also we discover from Abraham's statement in Luke 16:26 that nobody who is in heaven can travel into hell.

Being in hell is an eternal punishment in which there is no second chance as soon as a person dies.

Therefore as long as a person is alive on the earth, that person has many, many chances and opportunities to repent before he/she dies. However, that chance is no longer available when the person dies.

In your personal life – are you resisting Jesus; are you refusing to repent and accept Christ as your Lord & Saviour? Are you aware that life is short and we can die at any moment due to a variety of causes? Therefore it's important for us to accepted & trust Jesus to be our Lord & Saviour before we die?

2 Peter 3:9 – The Lord is not slack concerning His

promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Ephesians 2:8-9 – For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

LIFE LESSON # 6

THE SCRIPTURES BRING US TO THE FOOT OF THE CROSS. SIGNS & WONDERS DON'T (LUKE 16:27-31)

In **Luke 16:27-31** the Rich Man tries to persuade Abraham to send Lazarus back to earth from the dead to testify to the Rich Man's brothers of their need to repent to avoid the torment of hell.

Imagine a person you know, perhaps a loved one, resurrecting from the dead and testifying to you that you need to repent. Imagine hearing the testimony of a miracle healing of a terminal disease. Would such signs & wonders convince certain people of their need to repent & receive Christ as their Lord & Saviour? The Rich Man believed that such a sign as someone rising from the dead would convince people to repent, but Abraham rebutted this claim by saying that people have Moses & the Prophets to listen to. Abraham was basically referring to the scriptures and all that people need in order to come to a knowledge of the grace and need of repentance is the word of God.

The irony is that Jesus Himself died & resurrected but yet people such as the Pharisees did not repent. In fact

they tried to spread lies & rumours that Jesus' body was stolen (**Matthew 28:11-15**).

Jesus also healed the blind & the sick before the presence of the Pharisees but yet they did not believe or repent despite seeing miracles.

Therefore Abraham was correct by saying *"If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."*

God's word will bring us to a knowledge of our sinful nature & the need that we need Jesus and that we need to live according to God's values.

In your personal life – are you busy looking for signs & wonders instead of searching for God Himself; Are you searching for the gift instead of the Giver? Do you believe that the Bible is infallible & the final authority on matters concerning life? Do you believe we must be doers of the word and not just hearers?

Galatians 3:24-25 – Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Therefore the above are very important life lessons we can learn about the Rich Man & Lazarus.

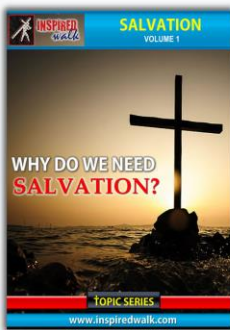
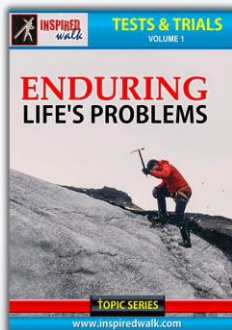
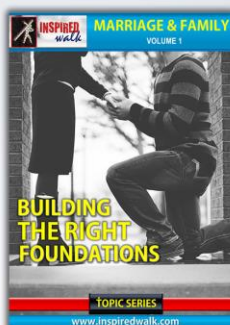
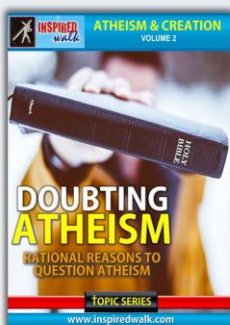
Was Jesus' story of the Rich Man & Lazarus a parable or a real-life account / event? Unlike other parables that Jesus spoke, Jesus uniquely named 2 of its characters in

this particular story making it very different from any of Jesus' other parables.

Whether we believe it's a parable or real-life account, what's most important is that this story came from Jesus Himself & the Bible is infallible & inspired by God Himself.

The life lessons from Jesus' story in **Luke 16:21-31** are therefore to be taken seriously.

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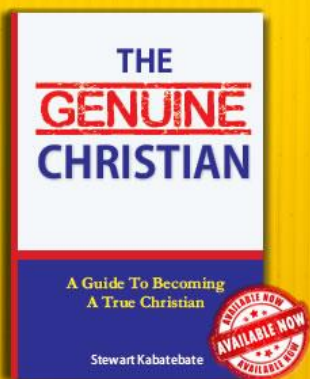
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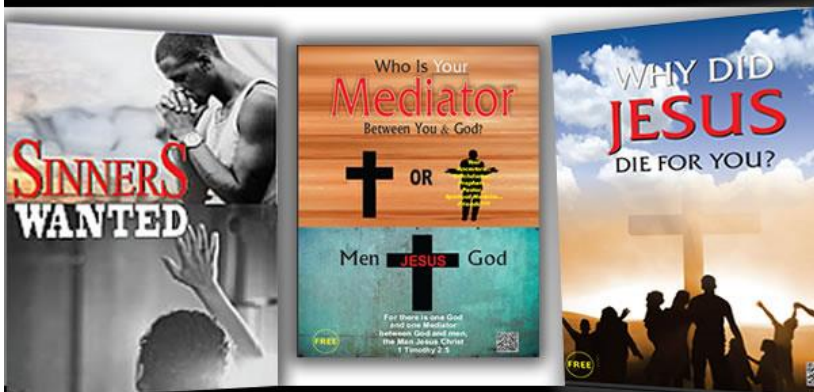
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