

Prosperity

God wants you to do well

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Introduction

*“The Lord takes pleasure
in the prosperity of His servant.”*

Psalm 35:27

Prosperity

Shalom: safety, welfare, peace

In a world ravaged by sin, sickness and lack, God manifested His goodness towards us in the life and ministry of Jesus:

‘I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.’

John 10:10

If ever you are tempted to doubt or at least wonder about the nature of God, look at Jesus. He perfectly represented the Father’s heart to us. God sent Jesus to share a quality of life with us that knows no lack or shortage. Do you ever see Jesus coming up short as He fulfilled His purpose? He always enjoyed a full supply of God’s provision: spirit, soul and body. As our example, we should be encouraged to walk in His ways and enjoy the same covenant provision in every area of our lives.

‘Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.’

3 John 1:2

The Apostle John who knew the heart of God prayed this Holy Spirit inspired prayer. He had leant his ear on Jesus’ breast at the last supper, having come to know and trust Him intimately. John knew no artificial separation between the well being of the inner man from the outer. He had seen Jesus meet people’s needs whether they were internal spiritual ones or external needs like food. Only through man’s tradition and religious unbelief do some people have a warped idea that God only cares about the inner soul of man. Prosperity or a state of well-being, is not restricted to merely the soul, but includes provision for the outer man as well.

The Bible definition of prosperity means to enjoy ‘good success or a full supply.’ It also means in the original languages of the Bible to be ‘helped on your way.’ I don’t know of anyone who does not feel they could do with a little help on their way.

Another meaning is to ‘push forward, break out, or to be profitable.’ The peace, safety and preservation that comes from receiving God’s help in our daily affairs is something I know we could all enjoy more. God is our great ‘helper’, not the great ‘hinderer.’ He gets glory when we do well in life.

There is no glory for God in a broke, busted and disgusted Christian stumbling along the sidewalks of life. Our Father's heart is never to mistreat anyone, let alone His children.

May this book help you understand God's will concerning your prosperity, and build up your faith so that you can begin trusting God in this vital area of your walk with the Lord. You'll be glad you did.

What God is Like

God Wants to Meet Your Every Need: Spirit, Soul & Body

God's person and nature is clearly revealed in His dealings with His people throughout history. His goodness is progressively revealed to us in our need and shortcomings. For example, His will for us is to come into our own 'promised land' of provision and protection. God promised Israel a land of abundance, where they would experience no lack. This land of milk and honey was His will for the Old Testament people of God. Today His will remains to bless His New Testament people, the church. Wherever the people of God now live, that land is blessed because God is there in the midst of His people. He directed them there, helped them to get there and established them in it. More particularly the 'land' in modern Christian terms may be defined as our sphere of endeavor: your own business or the job you hold.

For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; ..."

Deuteronomy 8:7-9

God wants to daily bless us and load us up with benefits. He is not out to get us, but to give to us. The Father's nature is to give to His children all things that we need for life and godliness. He is by nature a giver, not a taker. He so loved us that He gave His son Jesus, so that His blessing would rest upon us on a daily basis.

*"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits,
The God of our salvation."*

Psalm 68:19

He delights to see His children do well. Why? First of all, He loves us, and secondly our prosperity is a witness and testimony to His goodness. We bring Him glory when we do well. As we favor or play our part in advancing God's kingdom, we can shout for joy knowing that God is for us, not against us!

*"Let them shout for joy and be glad,
Who favor my righteous cause;
And let them say continually,
"Let the LORD be magnified,
Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant." Psalm 35:27*

What a generous and caring heavenly Father we have! He loves us and entered a covenant with us through Jesus, in such a way that even our material needs are taken care of. We are instructed to say continually that the Lord is to be magnified, and that His pleasure or delight is in our prosperity.

Faith finds its first expression in **saying** the will of God. Faith does not speak out what the current circumstances are; rather it boldly declares God's will or intent: our prosperity. We can also see from the above verse that we are to favor His righteous cause. The spreading of the gospel of salvation in Christ is God's righteous cause. When we play our part in supporting the work of the gospel we favor what God is trying to do on the earth, and continues to pour His blessing on us. There is a continual flow of blessing from God to us to others in need. The Christian who does not want to be blessed is damming up the flow. Scripture encourages us to be generous and large hearted toward the needy. Why tighten up, and with a false humility rooted in ignorance, refuse to receive the blessings of God, which can be passed on to others in a spirit of giving?

Be sure to watch what you say about God's will concerning prosperity. Do not be bound by some religious mumbo jumbo that has no scriptural foundation. Glorify God in both word and deed. Say continually that God delights in your prosperity.

Promised Prosperity

God has promised to provide for you

God provides for us by means of His promises. When we know, understand, believe and declare His promises in our lives, we 'access' or receive God's supply. Consider the promise made to the Philippians who had participated in the spreading of the gospel.

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19

They had played their part in practically supporting Paul's ministry. In return, they could then claim the promise of God's provision: He would meet their needs according to His riches.

There is always a divine exchange with God. When we interact with Him in furthering His purposes through ministry, we can expect to enjoy the benefit of His promises. When we release what is in our hand, God has promised to release what is in His hand: His riches.

Consider the example of the promises God made to the children of Israel. He laid out His promises before the Israelites entered their land. A promise always comes before the fact. That's where faith starts. Promises are given with responsibilities to fulfill. The promises were conditional. All promises are! If you do this then you enjoy that! It really is that simple in God's economy.

"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.

And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:"

Deuteronomy 28:1-2

God goes on to describe in vs. 3-13 all the promised **material** blessings that result from obedience. The blessings cover all aspects of life: where you live, what you do, protection, even the animals will be blessed. There will be so much that there will be enough to lend to other nations.

Some have argued that God blessed the Old Testament Israelites with material blessings but today He blesses New Testament believers with spiritual blessings. Scripture teaches that both Old and New Testament believers were blessed in all spheres of life: spiritual and physical or material. The Old Testament believers had the covenant of forgiveness, were called as a holy nation of priests to God Himself. They were blessed spiritually above all nations as a witness to the world of God's covenant favor. Yet they were also blessed materially in their obedience.

Coming on over to the New Testament it is clear that we who are now in Christ Jesus, are blessed with all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3.) However, the word goes on to reveal that God has also provided for our material well being (2 Corinthians 8:9). Jesus was made to be 'poor', so that we

might enjoy a 'full supply' or be made 'rich'. Check it out for yourself. The context of this passage concerns material matters. Jesus was able to amply supply his close disciples and a whole lot more for three years of largely traveling ministry. He did it through the faithful support of people who gave generously into His ministry.

God is the God of more than enough. His children ought to reflect His nature, yet many Christians are not in a position to lend to others? Many are standing in line for handouts themselves! This should not be so.

Could it be that by and large Christians are either ignorant of, or disobedient to God's commandments concerning prosperity? Prosperity is promised in the word, but to walk in the benefits, we have the responsibility to obey and walk in God's ways. Let us now look at God's ways concerning prosperity.

One of the spiritual laws that unlock God's promised provision is the 'law of sowing and reaping.' The law states that whatever a person sows, that will he reap.

*"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked;
For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."*

Galatians 6:7

*"While the earth remains,
Seedtime and harvest,
Cold and heat,
Winter and summer,
And day and night
Shall not cease."*

Genesis 8:22

In order to reap a harvest you have to sow to that field. Ask any farmer whether sitting on His porch watching an empty field will bring him a rich harvest. No, he has to get out there with seed and plant the crop. He then has to tend to that crop, water or irrigate it. Then, and then only, can he expect a harvest. He even has to know how to reap the harvest. There is no use in the farmer praying for a harvest, or even fasting for a harvest. He must sow in order to reap.

In the area of material provision the same applies. We cannot expect God to bless us materially without sowing 'seed.' That means playing our part in giving to the gospel through tithes and also offerings.

God has promised to give to the one who sows both 'bread' to eat and also 'seed' to sow. In the modern context, seed is represented in finances or money. We need both money to live on, (bread to eat) and money to sow. If we purpose to obey God and sow, He will see to it that we have 'seed' to sow beyond our need to eat.

"Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,"

2 Corinthians 9:10

When we play our part and sow seed, God then plays His part and multiplies the seed and causes increase. Notice that both the spiritual and material realms are geared up for increase. God is the God of increase. The crop that is reaped from sowing seed is always far, far greater than the actual seed sown. One bag of seed can produce a harvest way beyond that bag's original content.

The fuel for increase is sowing. Wishful thinking about God's goodness is not going to produce a harvest. Sowing is. Sure, we should say that God delights in our prosperity. But it is sowing seed that produces a harvest.

Personally, we have experienced financial increase when we have sown 'seed' money into other people's lives and ministries whilst believing God's promise to increase our own fruits. We 'released' our faith as we sowed by declaring out loud in prayer what we expected from God on the basis of His promised blessing.

Finances from unusual and surprising sources have been released to us on many occasions. The seed we sowed was multiplied back to us! Some may say this is a mercenary approach to giving. We prefer to think of it as obedience to God's ways. He says to do it, we obey and the means by which our loving heavenly Father God blesses us is then opened up.

Why Prosper?

God Blesses You Because He Loves You, and That You Can Be a Channel of Blessing

In a world dominated by fear and greed, it is encouraging to know that God is not reactionary. His will has always been for His chosen people to be conduits of blessing to those in need. His people become His instruments of righteousness. When Abraham was called to be a nation builder, God laid the foundation: He would bless all the families of the earth through him. Put simply: Abraham was to be blessed in order to be a blessing to others. Not to consume the blessing on himself, but be a channel of grace to others.

*I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you and make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

Genesis 12:2-3

Today through Christ, Abraham's 'Seed,' we become the channel of blessing to the world in both word and deed. Generosity is a virtue and characteristic of God. We accurately portray that character of God when we give and bless. When we are reluctant to give and withhold more than we should, we devalue God in the eyes of the world. Our goal is to lift up His name, not trample it through stinginess born from ignorance, fear or greed.

Let's not be confused. Jesus came to alleviate ills. He lived, died and rose again so that we could be free from sin, sickness and lack. As His representatives, we are to play our part in extending God's grace to people in need. How can we do this if we ourselves are bound by sin, sickness and lack? We have to be blessed in order to be a blessing.

If wealth and abundance draws you away from the things of God, then you have a heart problem, not a money problem. If you establish your heart in God, and learn to be content whether you have or have not, then God can trust you with His abundance. You can become a vessel through which He can pour out His blessings to others. The key issue is whether you see your wealth glorifying God or self. If Jesus is Lord over your finances, then there should be no problem. Your will have been submitted to His.

Receive Your Prosperity

God has given us His word to bless us. If we respond and obey His principles we will enjoy His promised provision that caters to the needs of our whole being: spirit, soul and body. Prosperity is a gift given by God, but we must receive it by faith.

As we learn to avoid evil and delight in God's law as a lifestyle, we are compared to a tree planted by rivers of water. God will honor our obedience and faithfulness with prosperity.

*"Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper."*

Psalm 1:1-3

Of course we have to play our part by doing what we do with our whole heart, mind and strength. God blesses the work of our hands, not the seat of our pants. As we go about our business or life's work, we are to expect God to bless us. Faith expects God to live up to His promises, and as we ask God for good things, our expectation becomes His invitation to bless us!

"If you then, being 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!"

Matthew 7:11

God's grace is accessed by faith. Faith asks for what God has promised in His covenant. Asking is neither presumptuous nor even arrogant. Rather, it is **required** by God. That is the way of doing things in His kingdom. You have not because you ask not!

When you ask be sure to do so in faith, and declare out loud what you believe. Base it on a firm promise. Study the Word, know the promises, and then ask in faith.

"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." **Mark 11:23-24**

Notice that in order to receive you have to actively ask God in prayer for the things you know He wants to give you. Your faith begins where you know the will of God personally. You cannot pray in faith when you are guessing that God wants to bless you.

You can only approach God on the basis of what you know is His will, and we have seen that it is His will to bless us so that we can be a blessing to others.

Be sure to match your faith requests to God with corresponding obedience and action. Faith is proactive, not passive, and in order to reap we must keep on sowing.

"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

Luke 6:38

Another wonderful passage underlines this truth so clearly.

*"There is one who scatters, yet increases more;
And there is one who withholds more than is right,
But it leads to poverty.
The generous soul will be made rich,
And he who waters will also be watered himself.
The people will curse him who withholds grain,
But blessing will be on the head of him who sells it."*

Proverbs 11:24-26

Another key principle in giving is the measure and intent of our giving. Our giving must be planned, not haphazard or without definite intent or purpose. We must also be cheerful and generous in your giving.

"Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation. But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."

2 Corinthians 9:5-7

Giving is a matter of the heart, and not because someone puts the squeeze on you through emotion or clever pressure tactics. God loves a cheerful giver, not a tearful one who gives reluctantly!

Pitfalls to Avoid

Our loving Father Warns Us of the Pitfalls

The most important thing in life is an unhindered relationship with God. If material possessions or their pursuit hinders our relationship with God, then we need to be honest about our motives. God gives us His word to help us be honest. It separates out our true motives from self-deception, which is a condition quite common to unrenewed human nature.

We are instructed to not let the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word or hinder our relationship with God.

“Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

Mark 4:18-19

Notice that ordinary cares of this world are in themselves not sinful. Only when they distract us from a vital relationship with God, do they then choke the word already in our hearts. It is a matter of priority. When we worry about how to solve the cares of life, we are tempted to turn our attention to setting things straight ourselves. We work harder and the cares start to dominate our time and emotional energy. Slowly the life begins to drain out of our relationship with God as we struggle on our own.

On the other hand, when things are going well and we now have a little more time and money to spare, a natural tendency is to be deceived into thinking that our efforts and struggle needs to be rewarded with time off! We relax and if we are not careful we do not press into the things of God because the ‘things’ of this world now captures our attention.

Let me illustrate. There was a guy who was struggling to make ends meet, who decided to go to his pastor for prayer, counsel and support. His relationship with God had suffered as he struggled to deal with the cares he was facing. After seeing the pastor, he made an effort to get back into fellowship with God and his fellow churchgoers. Things began to turn around. He was now praying and worshipping God regularly and the Lord blessed His efforts and things freed up so much that he was able to get a boat and spend quality family time doing fun stuff out on the lake on weekends. The only problem was that the family started to skip Sundays to enjoy even more quality time together. Then the boat had to be cleaned, repaired, painted and new equipment installed. Slowly the time he had left for God got less and less, and the cares of keeping things up started to choke his relationship with God again. Soon he was back to square one with all the problems that had crept in maintaining matters at this new level.

God knows us better than we know ourselves and warns us that we are not to forget Him when things go well. Success is probably more difficult to handle than failure.

“When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today...”

Deuteronomy 8:10-11

Later on in this passage, we are instructed to remember God as the source of blessing and that His blessing is for the purpose of establishing His covenant. If we settle these matters in our heart we will not be drawn away by success and prosperity but honor God with it.

“And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”

Deuteronomy 8:18

Life is lived from the heart, so be sure to take time to examine your motives. You can't fool God so don't waste time fooling yourself or others. Be sure to keep your motives pure. Impure motives have a habit of being exposed. If we lust after pleasure, problems will arise. If we hunger and seek after God and have our priorities right, then pleasure will find its proper place. God will be our source and supplier. We will avoid covetousness and strife and honor Him with our prosperity.

“Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

James 4:1-3

Be Practical

God has always looked for people who respond to Him in faith. His sovereignty is accessed by faith. It does not operate in a vacuum. It is by grace through faith that we are saved. God initiates, we respond in faith, and the transaction becomes complete.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Ephesians 2:8-10

His grace is attached to His purposes. He has good works for each one of us to fulfill and we need an abundance of supply for every good work. This supply is received by faith. If things just fell in our lap because God willed it, how come so many Christians are sitting waiting with empty laps? Faith is a force that must be used to connect earth and heaven.

God’s promises are appropriated by faith. God made a covenant with us through Jesus, and in Him all the promises are ‘yes and amen’. In fact, heaven is full of promises waiting for us to claim by faith.

We ‘possess the promises’ by what we say and do! Faith has a voice and the redeemed must say so!

“Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!

For His mercy endures forever.

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,”

Psalms 107:2

When we praise God for what He has already done for us through Jesus, and boldly declare that we are redeemed from sin sickness and poverty, God has promised to watch over His word to perform it in our lives. He is bound by His word to do what He has promised. He has promised to supply our every need and even to give us the desires of our hearts. When we speak His word over our lives things are set in motion in the spirit realm that eventually play out in the natural affairs of life.

Faith must be exercised in every area of life. God cares about our work, and wants to favor us in what we put our hands to.

His favor is attached to His wisdom. As we value and ask for wisdom, listen to His voice; He will guide us in the affairs of daily life.

Know that God can and does bless you by a variety of means. Be open to any and all of them. Some examples are:

- Your own labor: jobs and better jobs.
- Gifts given by others

- Raises and bonuses
- New opportunities...
- Estates and inheritances...
- Debt cancellation.

These are all ways in which God's favor can be manifest as we walk by faith and expect Him to honor His promises to bless us.

It is important to obey God in the area of tithes and offerings. A tithe is 10% of all income, and offerings are anything over and above that. The tithe belongs to God and He leaves us to live on the remaining 90% which He blesses.

When the tithe is given to God, His word teaches that the 'windows of heaven' are opened up above us. In Bible days this referred to the blessings of ample rain for the crops to grow. When the rain fell and the crops grew, the people of God enjoyed abundance. In times of drought there were obvious problems.

Today in our modern context, we still ultimately rely on God's provision in this way, but for the city dweller, the blessing and favor of God comes through such areas as jobs, sales and commissions, contracts, raises and bonuses.

When you give your tithe to God, pray over it and ask God to open up opportunities of increase in your daily life.

*"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it."*

Malachi 3:10

In summary, be practical! Declare God's promises of prosperity out loud, put your hand to something practical, and be sure to willingly give God the tithe. He will honor your consistent and committed obedience.

How to Deal With Debt

Debt Hinders You From Being Able to Give

To be financially indebted to individuals and institutions that charge exorbitant interest is not God's best. Sure, some may be able to juggle their debt in such a way to set up and maintain a certain acceptable lifestyle, but many cannot. They are, as the Bible puts it, 'enslaved' to debt.

*"The rich rules over the poor,
And the borrower is servant to the lender."*

Proverbs 22:7

The Bible also teaches that God alone is to be our ruler. When another man rules us through financial means, we resent that situation. Resentment is not good. It drains us of our life. We should be free to enjoy the earth and its resources, and not be in a continual state of bondage, whether it be mental, emotional or financial. We are supposed to serve one another with love, not be in bondage to one another through finances.

The world system of borrowing and lending at high interest is designed to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. If you are rich that may seem fine, but the overall mix of things is not pleasing to God, who has placed us in a world that has enough to go around if there were no greed and usury (excessive interest). In God's economy it is not a good thing for one man to get rich at another's expense. Christians should be living their lives in such a way that they please God and bless mankind.

God wants us to come into a land of 'more than enough' where our needs, and even our sanctified desires, are met. This 'land' is a place of financial freedom where we lift our heads up from the proverbial grindstone and see the needs of others less fortunate than ourselves. We are able to give to those in need. We even have time to not only give them 'a fish', but teach them 'how to fish' for themselves or make their own way in life. We should engage with them in such a way as to give them the wisdom of God for their situation. This state of blessedness moves us from self to serving, and furthers the kingdom of God among men.

It remains more blessed to give than to receive.

"And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Acts 20:35

Steps In the Journey To Freedom from Debt

- ❑ Soberly evaluate your lifestyle and spending habits in the light of the Word.
- ❑ Say no to unnecessary spending. Hard as it may be, saying no to things that bring temporary meaning and satisfaction sets us free to enjoy things that really count. Set a spending budget.
- ❑ Seek specific financial counsel on strategic steps to take to get out of debt. Diligence and planning produce plenty.

*“The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty,
But those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.”*

Proverbs 21:5

- ❑ Establish a ‘giving’ account and plan your giving with specific, measurable giving goals according to the principles of God’s Word outlined here. This usually goes against the natural tendency to hold onto what you’ve got because it’s needed. For the supernatural favor of God to flow into your life, you have to keep on giving as a lifestyle.
- ❑ Pay back debt with the ‘extra’ funds now available. Start with the smaller debts. When these are paid off, they will provide you with ‘momentum’ to tackle the larger ones. Be wise with any debt consolidation schemes, which often simply stretch out the payments over a longer time. They are often based on the equity of your home if you own one, and you should always protect your home.

Realize that through faith, patience and diligent obedient application of the Word, debt can be broken. Give God enough time to help you make more and spend less as debt is reduced. Keep your relationship with God your central focus, seek His kingdom first and watch how He takes care of the matters you have been so worried about. Cast your cares upon Him, do the word, attend church, get involved, serve others, pray, worship, witness and be at peace.

God's Financial Program

Prospering Involves Both 'Doing' and 'Saying'

Prosperity has a process. It is not magical - that 'poof' something out of nowhere happens and we are suddenly prosperous. There are no 'get rich quick' schemes in the word of God. God has instructed us to understand and follow His ways through His word. God will supply the grace, something which only He can do. We, in response to His grace, must supply the faith, something which only we can do. God does not need faith. We do. Faith responds with corresponding actions. If we are convinced that God delights in our prosperity, then we must put 'feet' to or faith and follow through with God's program or process. The underlying principle in the following financial program is 'seedtime and harvest.' You sow seeds and you reap a harvest.

God's Financial Program

- As we noted earlier, give your tithes (a tenth of income, our first fruits) to the local 'storehouse' or church where you are 'planted' or in relationship. Be sure to be obedient to God's plan of regular fellowship and involvement in the local church.

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
Malachi 3:8

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD."
Leviticus 27: 30-33

*"Honor the LORD with your possessions,
And with the firstfruits of all your increase;
So your barns will be filled with plenty,
And your vats will overflow with new wine."*
Proverbs 3:9-10

- Give offerings (over and above the tithe) to both the local church and other ministries as the Lord directs.
"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."
Luke 6:38

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.”

Acts 4:32-37

- Minister in whatever way you can to the poor as the Lord directs. Find someone less fortunate than you. Be open and sensitive to the promptings and opportunities that arise. Give clothing, goods, food, and cash even. Be a blessing, even when they do not deserve it. All of us never deserved to be saved anyway, so what's new. Be gracious, like God!

*“He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD,
And He will pay back what he has given.”*

Proverbs 19:17

- Support traveling and other missionaries that minister to people who reach out to parts of the world you cannot go to. Once again this support should come after your local church tithe.

“Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:15-16

Paul was a traveling minister that received His financial support from willing saints who gave to his ministry over and above their local commitments. He certainly wasn't financed by the local mafia, but by people who identified with God's greater purposes in the universal body of Christ. Today there are ministries that travel worldwide in areas that you and I may not be able to directly reach, but through these other ministries we can reach them indirectly. God will put these good works to our shared account. Be sure to invest your resources into ministries you trust and identify with. Sow into good soil!

- Give to your brothers in Christ that are in need. Resist the temptation to think of yourself as the only one in need. There are other Christians in need. Be open to give to them, and see how God will take care of you. This is His way of doing things. He wants to create a 'flow of blessing' in the body of Christ. From me to you, to another and so on - like a flowing river!

“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.”

Acts 2:44-45

Open your heart to your brothers in need. Let the love of God flow out of your heart in real and practical ways, not merely in word only.

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

1 John 3:16-18

When you look at all the above avenues for giving, it should motivate us to trust God and order our lives and spending in such a way that we break out beyond simple survival from one pay check to the next. God wants us to prosper to establish His covenant, not to consume it all on month-to-month spending and selfish pursuits. It is my conviction that when someone sees by faith the eternal value of reaching people with their prosperity, they will pay the price and give sacrificially, as well as from their abundance.

It is wonderful and blessed to receive but is more so to give! Jesus said so.

Possess Your Prosperity

To review, when you walk in obedience to God's principles and practices (are doers of the Word), you can confidently claim His promised provision with a thankful and worshipful heart.

*“Let them **say** continually, let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.” Psalm 35:27 (Emphasis added.)*

The first 'act' of faith is saying what God says about you. It is your responsibility to state the terms of the covenant. Faith requires an active response to the promises of God. It is not passively wishing in your mind that God would move, but boldly declaring that He is already moving on your behalf to establish His covenant in your life.

The following affirmations or confessions of faith will chart your course towards God's will for your life concerning material well-being or prosperity.

Speak your faith by making these scripture based affirmations regularly - say them out loud, meaning it from a heart yielded to the integrity of God's word. You might even want to say them over and over again till the meaning and significance really settles down into your heart. Your faith is fed as you hear the word of God spoken, not only by others as they preach and teach, but by your own mouth!

- *“Lord, I come before you with a thankful and grateful heart for your heart of generous provision. You take pleasure in my prosperity and well - being: spirit soul and body. You supply all my needs according to your wonderful riches in glory.*
- *“My delight is in You, and Your purposes for my life. I set my affections on things above and avoid covetousness. I chose to establish Your Kingdom by obeying Your Word concerning a lifestyle of giving. I give cheerfully and generously of my tithes and offerings, whilst supporting those in need (my brothers and the poor). Your grace (or ability in my life) enables me to have abundance for every good work.*
- *“I know and believe that You have promised to open up the ‘windows of heaven’ or practical opportunities to me, so that I might prosper. I am diligent at my work and plan my financial affairs with Your wisdom. In faith I declare that the work of my hands is prospering.*
- *“My heart is to worship and honor You not only in spirit and in truth but with my substance too.”*

Of course back up your words with corresponding actions! Be sure to be a doer of the word by setting in motion the financial program outlined in the previous chapter. You can only expect God to do His part when you do yours.

Ready References

Use the following scripture references and short outlines as a ready reference for you, your friends and family.

What is the tithe?

- The tithe is the first tenth (10%) of all your increase **Exodus 23:19**

Why should I tithe?

- God commands it: tithing is not an optional extra. **Malachi 3:10**
- Tithes support the ministers who equip you. **Leviticus 27:30**
- Tithing the first and best protect the rest (90%) **Proverbs 3:9**

Where should I tithe?

- Bring your tithe to your 'storehouse' – the local church. **Malachi 3:10**
(Any support to TV evangelists / traveling ministers etc is considered offerings).

What is an offering?

Anything above & beyond the tithe.

- OT pattern: offerings were given for buildings:
 Tabernacles, temples, wall construction etc. **Exodus 35:21**
- NT pattern: the early church supported the following:
 Their own needy **Acts 2:40-47**
 General ministry **Acts 4:32-37**
 Famine relief **Acts 11:27-30**
 Missionary work **Philip. 4:19**

Isn't it my money anyway?

- God is the owner and giver of all things. **Psalm 24:1**
- We are the receivers and stewards of all things God gives us. **Psalm 115:16**
Matt. 25:14-30

(Life, time, talents, possessions, and finances).

Why some struggle with giving their Tithes and Offerings?

- ❑ Ignorance: not adequately taught on the subject.
- ❑ Lack of faith: don't really believe God rewards obedience.
- ❑ Disobedience: a consequence of the above.

Hosea 4:6
Hebrews 11:6
Deut. 28:15

Does God promise to bless me when I give?

- ❑ Our obedience opens the door to God's blessings.
- ❑ Giving opens the door for God to bless you more.
- ❑ Give in faith that God will reward your diligence.

Deut. 28:1
Luke 6:38
Hebrews 11:6

How do I give?

- ❑ Speak faith over your giving.
- ❑ Give systematically and regularly.
- ❑ Give according to your ability.
- ❑ Be generous and give cheerfully.
- ❑ Give with an attitude of praise.
- ❑ Give with an attitude of worship.
- ❑ Remember God enables you.

Deut 26:5-10
1 Cor 16:1-4
2 Cor 8:3,13
2 Cor 9:6-7
Psalms 66:5-7
1 Chron 16:29
Deut 8:18

If you have never accepted Jesus as your Lord

God has made it possible for you to get into right relationship with Him.

He sent His Son Jesus into the world to live, die and rise again from the dead so that you could be forgiven of your sins, live a life that pleases Him, and joined to Him forever in heaven when you die.

God expects you to **acknowledge** your need for His forgiveness, **believe** that He raised Jesus from the dead, and be prepared to **confess** Jesus as Lord before witnesses in the world you live in.

Accept His free gift of eternal life today. Turn away from your sinful past; wholeheartedly put your trust in Him today. Pray this prayer out loud from your heart, you will be giving your life back to him, and He will love, protect and provide for you all the days of your life.

Dear God in heaven,

I accept that I need your forgiveness for my sin.

I repent and acknowledge that I cannot save myself.

I believe that you raised your only begotten son Jesus from the dead.

I ask you to come into my heart right now and be my Lord.

I confess you Jesus as the Lord (master) of my life.

I promise to serve you all my days.

Thank you for saving me. I am now your child, accepted into your family.

In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Friend,

Now that you have prayed this prayer, get into a good Bible believing church that focuses on Jesus and His word, read your Bible starting with the gospel of John in the New Testament, and tell someone that you have accepted Jesus as Your Lord. Pray to your new heavenly Father every day, and look to God to help you in every area of your life.

God bless you.