Biblical Keys to Financial Prosperity



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Introduction

One of the most difficult tasks in ministering to folks is getting them to understand the truth that God wants them to prosper and do well in life. In fact, God wants them to prosper more than *they* want to! Many good Christian people have never entered into the dimension of prosperity that God intended for them, and one reason they haven't is a lack of understanding in this area.

If you want to *walk* in the perfect will of God and experience His richest and best for your life, you've got to *do* the perfect will of God. That requires honoring and obeying God and His Word.

But in order to honor and obey the Word, a person must first find out what the Word has to say. The Word of God has a great deal to say about prosperity for the believer.

Many Christians are not prospering today because they are not willing *and* obedient to the call of God on their lives or to some specific direction God has given them. Others simply need to get their thinking straightened out so they can think, talk, and act in line with God's Word concerning prosperity.

Still others give financially with wrong motives—just to *get* something in return. Or they give motivated by guilt or fear instead of by faith and love. And some Christians dishonor God and His Word, not only by failing to tithe and give offerings, but in the way they conduct their business affairs.

But this doesn't have to be the case in your life. God *wants* you to prosper financially!

I remember what my life was like before I learned this truth about prosperity from the Bible. My family and I struggled greatly in this area, just barely

making it financially for many years. We weren't scraping the bottom of the barrel; we were *underneath* the barrel and the barrel was on top of us! But praise God, the Word works! Prosperity came to us as we learned to act on the Word of God in that area.

Success in God doesn't come overnight. And if you're not prospering in life right now, your prosperity in God won't appear overnight either. But if you'll continually honor and obey God and His Word, it *will* come.

It is my prayer that the teachings in this book will bring God's blessings to your life so you can *be* a blessing to the Kingdom of God and the work of God on the earth.

Chapter 1

Poverty: A Blessing Or a Curse?

CHRIST HATH REDEEMED US from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

—Galatians 3:13

Christ hath redeemed us!

If we stop reading right there, we'd know Jesus redeemed us.

But what did He redeem us from? The rest of the verse says, "…*FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"* (Gal. 3:13).

GALATIANS 3:14

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

I couldn't do justice to a study on prosperity without explaining the great Bible truth of redemption. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law! The curse of the Law includes spiritual death, sickness, and poverty.

The first curse that God said would come upon man for breaking His Law is found in Genesis 2:17. God said to Adam in Genesis 2:17, "… *in the day that thou eat-est thereof* [of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] *thou shalt surely die."*

Adam and Eve were permitted to eat fruit from all the trees in the Garden of Eden except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The curse of spiritual death was to come upon them if they disobeyed God.

Genesis 3:22-24 tells us that man did disobey God, was driven from the

Garden, and could eat no longer of the tree of life. Man became the slave of sin and death.

Death has always been a mystery to man. It was not a part of the creation or part of God's original plan. The Bible tells us that physical death is an enemy of God and man. First Corinthians 15:26 tells us that physical death is the last enemy that shall be put underfoot.

When you die physically, your spirit and soul leave your body and go to your eternal home (Luke 16:19-24).

Although several kinds of death are spoken of in the Bible, there are three kinds we should familiarize ourselves with: 1) spiritual death; 2) physical death; and 3) eternal death or the Second Death, which means being cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8).

Spiritual death is that which lays hold of one's spirit rather than his body. Physical death is a *manifestation* of spiritual death.

Eternal death or the Second Death is the ultimate finality of death or the home of the spiritually dead.

Spiritual death came to earth first and then manifested itself in the physical body by destroying it. Physical death is a manifestation of the law that is at work within. Paul called it "the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2).

When God said to Adam, *"… in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"* (Gen. 2:17), He was not referring to physical death but to spiritual death. If man never had died spiritually, he would not have died physically.

What is spiritual death? Spiritual death means *separation from God.*

The moment Adam sinned, he was separated from God.

When God came down in the cool of the day, as was His custom, to walk and talk with Adam, He called, *"… Adam … Where art thou?"* (Gen. 3:9). Adam answered, *"… I hid myself."* He was separated from God.

When Adam and Eve listened to the devil, it resulted in spiritual death. Spiritual death immediately began to manifest itself in the human family. Eventually, Adam and Eve's firstborn son murdered the second-born son (Gen. 4:8).

Man had become an outcast, an outlaw, driven from the Garden with no legal ground to approach God.

Man in his fallen state could not respond to the call of God without a sacrifice. Man was hindered in his response to God because he was more than a transgressor; he was more than a lawbreaker and sinner.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, *'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"* (John 8:44).

The Pharisees were very religious. They did a lot of good things. They went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. They prayed. They paid their tithes. They fasted. They did a lot of other fine things. But they lied about Christ and murdered Him.

They had the characteristics of the devil.

This explains why man cannot be saved by his conduct or good works; he must be born again. If man were not a child of the devil, he could just act right and he'd be all right. But since he's a child of the devil, even if he tries to act right, he'll still go to hell when he dies—to the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the Second Death.

Why? Because man as he is cannot stand in the Presence of God. Man had to be saved by Someone paying the penalty for man's sins and giving man the New Birth.

You might take a flop-eared old mule and try to make him into a racehorse, but it won't work. You could dress that mule up by filing his teeth or polishing his hooves. You could feed him the finest food, run him around the track every day, and house him in the finest stable. But on the day of the race when the gun sounds, all he'll do is lope off down the track, because he's a mule. It's just not in him to be a racehorse. In order for the old mule to become a racehorse, he'd have to be reborn as a racehorse, which is impossible.

Man, however, through the New Birth can be reborn!

Through regeneration, he can be changed! He can become a new creature in Christ Jesus!

It doesn't matter how much money a man has, how well-educated or religious he is, mere man cannot stand in the Presence of God, because his nature is wrong.

Man is lost today not because of what he *does,* but because of what he *is.* (What he does is the result of what he is.) An unregenerate man needs life from God because he is spiritually dead. But thanks be to God, *Christ has redeemed us from spiritual death!*

JOHN 5:26

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to

have life in himself.

Jesus Christ had no death in Him. He was not born as we are born. He didn't have spiritual death in Him (John 14:30). Yet Hebrews 2:9 says he tasted death for every man. He took upon Himself our condition of spiritual death. Notice Hebrews 9:26 says He "… *put away SIN* [not sins] *by the sacrifice of himself."*

How did He do that? Well, I don't know, but because the Bible says He did it, I believe it.

Now why did Jesus take death that we might have life?

I was born and raised Southern Baptist. Afterward, I was filled with the Holy Spirit and came over among the Pentecostals. I heard for years among the Baptists that Jesus became what we were that we might become what He was.

Now that doesn't mean He became a sinner (that's what we were—sinners!). It simply means He took our place as our Substitute when our sin was laid on Him. That doesn't mean He had in His spirit the personal nature of the devil. It just means that our sin was *laid* on Him.

Remember what Jesus said along this line in John's Gospel.

JOHN 10:10

10 The thief [He's talking about the devil, not about God; God is not a thief.] cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

JOHN 5:24

24 Verily, verily, I [Jesus] say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life [or eternal life], and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from DEATH unto LIFE.

Now in John 5:24, Jesus is not talking about physical death.

He is talking again about spiritual death. In other words, Jesus came to redeem us from spiritual death and its consequence of eternal separation from God.

EPHESIANS 2:1

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins [spiritual death].

Verses 8 and 9 of Ephesians chapter 2 tell us how that redemption came about in our own lives.

EPHESIANS 2:8,9

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

It is not by works that a person is saved. Now certainly, we believe in good works, because the Bible said we are "… *created in Christ Jesus UNTO GOOD WORKS…" (Eph.* 2:10).

Yet right on the other hand, we couldn't save ourselves through good works.

No, our good works are a result of the fact that we've been born again and have become new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17). Our spiritual nature has been changed!

In other words, without Jesus, we're just simply helpless and hopeless. And without Him, we're nothing. But thanks be unto God, He comes into our lives, if we accept Him, and makes us new creatures—sons—in Him!

ROMANS 8:14-16

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the SONS of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself [or a better translation would be Himself] beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

Have you passed from spiritual death unto spiritual life? If you have, then God is your Father. Can you look up to Him and say, "Father God"? That's what "Abba, Father" means.

Is God's Spirit within your spirit, bearing witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? Do you have the Holy Spirit in your spirit crying, "Abba, Father?" If you do, you're born again!

If you don't, thank God, you can accept Christ this moment.

And when you do, then the Holy Spirit comes in to dwell in you.

In Christ, we have passed from death unto life. How do we know it? We've got the witness in our spirits that Romans 8:14-16 talks about. Our spirit bears witness that we are the children of God. And John said something else about it.

1 JOHN 3:14

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we LOVE the brethren….

And Galatians also has something to say about love and the recreated human spirit.

GALATIANS 5:22

22 But the [first] fruit of the Spirit [that is, the fruit of the recreated human spirit] is LOVE….

If you've been born again, then you've been made a new creature in Christ. The Bible says you've been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light (Col. 1:13).

You've been redeemed from spiritual death. Our text says you've been redeemed from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13).

The Curse of the Law Also Includes Sickness and Poverty

The curse of the Law, which is the penalty for breaking God's Law, includes *spiritual death, sickness and disease,* and *poverty.*

A lot of folks understand that in Christ, they've been redeemed from spiritual death and sickness and disease. But they don't realize that they've been redeemed from poverty.

Notice our text again.

GALATIANS 3:13,14,29

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14 That the BLESSING OF ABRAHAM might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith….

29 And if ye be Christ's [are you His?], then ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED, and HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE.

Again, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law."

But what exactly is the curse of the Law? There is one way to find out, and that's to go back to the Law.

The Law refers to the first five Books of the Bible called the Pentateuch. And the first curse that God mentioned was in Genesis: "… *in the day that thou eat-est thereof* [of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] *thou shalt surely DIE"* (Gen. 2:17).

Well, Adam didn't die that day physically when he and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was more than 900 years before he died physically. But Adam *did* die *spiritually.*

So when we say Adam "died," we do not mean that he ceased to exist. We just simply mean that he became separated from God.

In other words, Adam was once alive unto God, but then Adam became spiritually dead. He broke that relationship and fellowship with God through his sin.

So then as we go back to these five Books of the Bible, first we find in Genesis that spiritual death is a curse of the Law. And we find in Galatians that we're redeemed from spiritual death right now in Christ (v. 13). We've passed from death unto life if we're in Him.

We also learn that physical death will be put underfoot, too, when Jesus comes again (1 Cor. 15:26).

We also find in Deuteronomy 28 that sickness and poverty are curses of the Law. Now in connection with sickness, we read that sickness is a curse for breaking God's Law.

DEUTERONOMY 28:58-61

58 IF THOU WILT NOT OBSERVE TO DO ALL THE WORDS

OF THIS LAW that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; 59 Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

60 Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.

61 Also EVERY SICKNESS, and EVERY PLAGUE, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

And we can also read in Deuteronomy 28 that poverty is a curse of the Law.

DEUTERONOMY 28:15

15 But it shall come to pass, IF THOU WILT NOT HEARKEN UNTO THE VOICE OF THE LORD THY GOD, TO OBSERVE TO DO ALL HIS COMMANDMENTS AND HIS STATUTES which I command thee this day; that ALL THESE CURSES SHALT COME UPON THEE, and overtake thee.

Well, what are the curses that are referred to in that verse of Scripture?

DEUTERONOMY 28:16-19,38-40

16 CURSED shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.

17 CURSED shall be thy basket and thy store.

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

19 CURSED shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out….

38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it.

39 Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them.

40 Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit.

Poverty Is a Curse; Prosperity Is a Blessing Now those verses are certainly talking about poverty. But notice what it says in the first part of Deuteronomy 28 about the *blessings* for *keeping* God's Law.

DEUTERONOMY 28:1-14

1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: 2 And all these BLESSINGS shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.

3 BLESSED shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

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

5 BLESSED shall be thy basket and thy store.

6 BLESSED shalt thou be when thou comest in, and BLESSED shalt thou be when thou goest out.

7 The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and

flee before thee seven ways.

8 The Lord shall command the BLESSING upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall BLESS thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

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

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

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

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

13 And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: 14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Those are the blessings for keeping God's Law!

The Blessings Are for Us Today

A lot of people argue, "Well, the Lord just said that to Israel.

The blessings for obeying God's laws and commandments don't apply to us."

But while we're on the subject of the Law, turn to Romans and Galatians.

Remember God said, *"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and KEEP ALL MY COMMANDMENTS always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"* (Deut. 5:29).

Yes, that was written to Israel under the Old Covenant. But notice what the New Covenant says about fulfilling or obeying God's laws and commandments.

ROMANS 13:8

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath FULFILLED THE LAW.

GALATIANS 5:14

14 For all THE LAW IS FULFILLED in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Mark that down and don't let it get away from you. Israel had to keep God's commandments in order to prosper, and under the New Covenant we have a commandment to keep, too, in order to prosper. It's the commandment or law of love.

Notice Paul was writing that to Gentile Christians, not to Hebrew Christians, so we know he's not talking just to the Israelites. So if *we're* walking in love, we've fulfilled the Law.

Let's continue reading in Romans 13.

ROMANS 13:9,10

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other COMMANDMENT, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW.

Now go back to Galatians 3:13 and 14 again and you'll see why we're not under the curse of the Law.

GALATIANS 3:13,14,29

13 CHRIST HATH REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14 That the BLESSING OF ABRAHAM might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith….

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the PROMISE.

Well, what is Abraham's promise? What was it that God promised him?

Abraham's promise was threefold in nature. It was first a spiritual blessing. Second, it was a physical blessing. And third, it was a financial and material blessing.

So if the Israelites under the Old Covenant could receive God's blessings by

keeping the Law, then if we under the New Covenant would walk in love, *we* would fulfill all the Law too.

And the blessings should come on us also.

Notice Paul said, *"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ …"* (Gal. 3:14).

Now when I first got hold of this, not only was I scraping the bottom of the barrel, I was *under* the barrel, and the *barrel* was on *top* of me!

But I believed the Word, praise God, and I kept believing it and preaching it, and I eventually got out from under the barrel, where I could at least start on the bottom! And I've been rising to the top ever since!

Don't think that it is just going to happen overnight, because it isn't. I ran up and down the hills and hollows of east Texas preaching prosperity when I didn't have a dime in my pocket. I had a car that was worn out with four bald tires and no spare at all. I looked like everything in the world *except* prosperous. But I just kept preaching prosperity because I knew it was so. I mean, if the Bible said it, it's so whether I've got it or not!

But, you see, God doesn't always settle up every Saturday night. For example, on the negative side, a lot of people think they're getting by with wrongdoing, because God doesn't always settle up every Saturday night.

And God doesn't always settle up the first of every month either. And He doesn't even always settle up the first of every year. But sooner or later, payday is coming. And, boy, you'd sure like to be around when payday comes if you've sown the right seed!

Now if you're sowing the *wrong* seed, you *don't* want to be around when payday comes. When you can see that you have sown the wrong seed, you'd better repent of it quickly and get it all under the blood. Then God will forgive you and forget it, and you can pick up and go on.

As I said, some people argue, "That prosperity business is all Old Testament though." But we've got ample Scripture that proves that the blessing of Abraham—including prosperity—is ours, too, under the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, according to Deuteronomy, poverty was to come upon God's people if they disobeyed Him. It was the curse that was to come upon them because they'd failed to do all of God's commandments and His statutes.

The Word of God teaches us that we've all sinned; we've all come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, the curse of the Law should also fall on us.

But, thank God, Galatians 3:13 said, *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us…."*

Notice it said, *"Christ…* [was] *made a CURSE for US…." It* didn't say, "Christ was made a curse for *Himself."*

No! He was made a curse for *us!* He became our Substitute.

The curse fell on Him instead of upon us, and He bore it for us so that we could be free.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Jesus Christ was rich. Yet for our sakes, He became poor, that we through His poverty, might be rich.

"Well," some people said, "that just means *spiritually* rich."

But, no. The only way Christ became poor was from the material standpoint. He didn't become poor spiritually, because the spiritually poor couldn't raise the dead! If they could, everybody would be doing that.

The spiritually poor could not turn water into wine. No, Jesus certainly wasn't poor spiritually.

Also, the spiritually poor couldn't have fed five thousand people with a little boy's lunch. But Jesus did. The spiritually poor could not have wrought the healings and the miracles that Jesus did.

God Wants His People To Have Abundant Provision

Jesus became poor *materially* for us. He was our Substitute.

And the Scripture says God will meet our needs according to His riches in glory *by* Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19). Paul said that writing to the Church at Philippi, but it applies to believers everywhere.

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

19 But my God shall supply ALL YOUR NEED according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

You see, this is talking about supplying *all* your need, including your financial and material needs as well as other needs. In fact, in this particular chapter in Philippians, Paul is talking about financial and material things, because in the previous verses, it says that these people had given of their material substance.

Let me say this. In Second Corinthians 8:9, it says, *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that YE through his poverty might be RICH."*

People misinterpret that word "rich." Someone said, "You mean God is going to make all of us millionaires?"

I didn't say that. The word "rich" according to the dictionary means *a full supply.*

In other words, it means *abundant provision.* Well, isn't that what Philippians 4:19 says, *"But my God shall supply ALL your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus"?*

It didn't say, "But my God shall supply *half* of your need…."

No, it says *all* of them. It promises a full supply.

Jesus Himself said in Matthew 6:33, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

Again, this verse didn't say, "… and all these things shall be *subtracted* from you."

No! These things shall be *added* unto you. Now what are

"these things"? They are material things—something to eat, something to wear, and so on. In other words, "these things" is talking about the material things of life.

So many people think it is a mark of spirituality to go through life with the top of your hat out, the soles of your shoes worn out, the seat of your pants worn out, and just barely getting along.

But that isn't what Jesus said. He said, "… *all these things shall be ADDED unto you,"* not taken away from you.

Understanding the Law of Giving

In Luke 6:38 when Jesus said, "Give and it shall be given unto you," He was talking about more than one area. He was also talking from a financial standpoint.

The rest of that verse says, "… *good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."* I believe Jesus spoke the truth.

Notice Jesus said, "… *shall MEN give into your bosom.. . .* "

Now God is behind it, of course, but *men* will give unto your bosom.

I remember one time I was holding a meeting in Dallas, Texas. A friend of mine lived there. He came to my meeting, and I took him to his house after one of the services. He handed me a $100 bill. You've got to realize, back then a $100 bill looked like $2,000 today.

This man taught the older men's Bible class in quite a large church in that town. He said, "Brother Hagin, you know I pay my tithes and give offerings at my church. This money that I'm giving you is beyond tithes and offerings. I want you to know that."

My friend continued, "We had a fellow in our church—an evangelist—who preached a meeting for us. The very first night he preached on Luke 6:38. Then he didn't preach on that, but he read the same text every night for two weeks before he preached.

"When we came to the close of the meeting, he said, 'Now the pastor does not know that I'm going to do this, but I want to take up an offering for this church to purchase a new air-conditioning system.'"

This was many years ago when money was money. I mean, it was more than forty years ago. The church's air-conditioning system had gone out, and they needed to buy a new one. The previous system was so old and outdated, they were also going to have to put in some more air ducts. It was going to cost them about $10,000.

My friend continued, "This evangelist just said, 'I'm going to lay my Bible right here on the altar. I'm going to open it to Luke 6:38. I don't want anybody to give anything that he can afford to give. I want you to give what you *can't* afford to give and come and lay it on that verse. Believe it. Then say, "Lord, I'm acting on that verse. With what measure I mete, it shall be measured to me again.'"""

Well, giving something you *can't* afford to give is a bigger measure than giving something you *can* afford to give. You remember in Mark 12:42 and Luke 21:2, Jesus stood where the people were casting in their money, and that poor widow woman came by and put in two mites.

Jesus said, "She gave more than all of them" (Mark 12:43; Luke 21:3). Why? Because she gave everything she had.

So my friend who taught the men's Sunday school class said, "Three businessmen had talked to me and asked me to pray.

They talked to me at the close of Sunday school as we were going into the main auditorium for morning worship.

"Their businesses were just in disarray. In fact, bankers and financial advisors

told two of them to take bankruptcy. The other man's business was not quite that far gone."

My friend said, "I knew if those men gave anything, it would be something they couldn't afford to give because they didn't have anything to give!

"But one of the businessmen told me afterward that he marched down there to that altar and put his last three hundred dollars on the Bible. Another one of the businessmen who was in trouble financially gave five hundred dollars. And the other man who was just on the verge of bankruptcy gave two hundred dollars."

The Sunday school teacher said, "I am a witness to the fact that in thirty days' time, every one of them was out of the red and in the black in their businesses."

They honored God, and God honored them!

Now they didn't give just to get. That would be selfish. They wanted to see the work of God go forward.

Keep things in the right perspective. In other words, keep your attitudes and motives right.

Yet, on the other hand, when you give, you still have a right to believe God for a return on your giving.

Honor God With Your Faith, Your Giving, And Right Motives

For instance, in one church I pastored, one of my deacons said to me, "You know, Brother Hagin, I've been saved thirteen years. I have paid my tithes all these years, but if anything has ever happened to me extraordinarily in the way of finances, I don't know it."

This deacon had a good job in the oil field with one of the oil companies, and he made good money. Of course, he still had his good job, so that was a blessing. And when the company gave raises, he got one. But nothing *extraordinary* in the way of finances had ever happened to him.

He told me, "I'll be honest with you, Brother Hagin. I never have heard anybody really teach on the subject of tithing and giving offerings. They just said you're supposed to do so, so I just did it."

Well, again, his motive was all wrong. This man just did something because somebody else told him to do it. It wasn't that he even believed it! In fact, he told me, "Really, I was afraid *not* to tithe and give offerings."

You see, he was giving out of fear and not out of faith, so naturally it didn't work.

I said to him, “First of all, if you’ll repent, the Lord will forgive you for not having the right motive.

“And, second, from now on when you put in your tithes on Sunday morning, you thank the Lord, first of all for your salvation—that you are a child of God.

“Keep your motive right. Say, ‘Lord, I’m giving because I love You, not because I’m afraid of You. And I’m not paying my tithes just because somebody told me to do it or just because somebody preached it. I may not understand it, but I see that it is in the Word.

“‘So I’m paying my tithes because I love You. And I love the church, and I want to see it go forward and succeed. That’s why I’m paying tithes and giving offerings. And I expect You to honor Your Word, and I thank You for doing it. You said, “Them that honor Me, I’ll honor.”’”

When God said that in the Old Testament, He was talking about bringing in the firstfruits. Proverbs 3:9 says, *“Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.”* He said, “Them that honor Me, I’ll honor” (1 Sam. 2:30).

Then I told the deacon to say, “Lord, You said, ‘Give and it shall be given unto you.’ So I’m putting this in the offering by faith.”

Then I told the man to come back and tell me what happened.

It wasn’t thirty days before he came back, just grinning. “It’s working!” he said.

For years his paying tithes and giving offerings had not worked. Now why? *Because he didn’t do it in faith.* His motives and his attitude were all wrong. But when he got his motives and attitude right, he got blessed.

Don’t Be Robbed of Your New Testament Blessing!

The Bible said in Hebrews 7:8, *“And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.”*

Now almost any time you get something good from the Scriptures, people will say, “Well, that’s just for the Jews. That’s not for us nowadays.” But the Book of Hebrews is in the New Testament, and the writer of Hebrews was writing to Hebrews under the New Covenant. And he said, “*… here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.”* That’s talking about Jesus!

From the natural standpoint, it looks like “men that die” receive tithes, but actually *“… he* [Jesus] *receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that HE LIVETH.”* Well, Jesus said, *“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I*

am alive for evermore … ” (Rev. 1:18)!

So you see, Abraham’s blessing—the blessing for keeping God’s commands, His Word—is ours because of Jesus Christ!

He is the One who lives and is alive forevermore! Abraham’s blessing includes financial prosperity, and it’s for us today.

GALATIANS 3:14,29

14 That the blessing of Abraham MIGHT COME ON THE GENTILES THROUGH JESUS CHRIST; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith….

29 And if ye be Christ’s, then ARE YE ABRAHAM’S SEED, AND HEIRS according to the promise.

Abraham’s blessing is ours! But we need to understand exactly what was Abraham’s blessing. Well, we know it was a threefold blessing. First, God promised Abraham that He was going to make him rich (Gen. 12:2,3; 13:2).

Someone said, “You mean, God said He is going to make all of us rich?”

Yes, that’s what I mean.

“Well, do you mean He’s going to make all of us *millionaires?”*

No. Again, that word “rich” according to the dictionary means *a full supply.* I believe there is a full supply spiritually, physically, and in every way in Christ Jesus. Thank God for abundant provision through Christ Jesus!

I held a meeting in 1954 for Brother A. A. Swift in New Jersey, just across the river from New York. He was an Assemblies of God minister and an executive presbyter of the Assemblies of God denomination.

I stayed in the home of Brother Swift. He was about seventy at the time, and I was thirty-six. He had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost in 1908 and had gone out as a missionary to China in 1911 with his wife and two children.

There was no missionary organization in Pentecostal circles at that time, so Brother Swift had no support from those circles.

There was a mission in London, England, that supported him, however. The only problem was, that organization didn’t believe in speaking in tongues.

Brother Swift told me that as he would go to his place of prayer, God kept dealing with him that really he was receiving money under false pretenses. He couldn’t preach the baptism in the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues to the people because the organization supporting him didn’t believe in it. Privately, however, he got several people in that country filled with the Spirit.

He said, “Lord, what am I going to do?”

The Lord said, “Just send in your resignation to the organization.”

That organization paid him $103 a month. That meant $1,236 for the year. He said, “Lord, what am I going to do?

Nobody else is going to support me and my wife and two children here in China!”

The Lord said, “Turn the church over to one of the organization’s other missionaries. Go over to another city and start a new work.”

Just think about it! He was supposed to start a new work in China in 1912! It was tough enough to start a new work in *America* in 1912. It’s still tough enough today. You’ve got to do it by faith.

So Brother Swift said, “I did what the Lord said, but I still questioned the Lord, What are we going to do? We don’t have any support.’

“The Lord spoke to my heart and said, ‘Didn’t you know I promised to make you rich?’”

I’d received revelation along this line myself, but Brother Swift just confirmed it. I hadn’t preached it yet. I wanted to prove it out first.

I’d seen that truth in 1950 when the Lord showed it to me.

And it was working fine for me personally. As I just began to suggest some things to Brother Swift about it, he said, “I see God has been talking to you. Now let me tell you what God said to me in 1911 when I resigned from that missionary organization.

“God said, ‘Didn’t I promise to make you rich?’” (Really, there were some areas I didn’t see until Brother Swift filled me in on them.)

Brother Swift answered the Lord, “No, I didn’t know You promised to make me rich. If You did, I’d sure be glad to know it. Where is that found?”

The Spirit of God showed him where it was written in the Bible.

GALATIANS 3:13,14

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

So Brother Swift told me, “I turned in my resignation and went over and

started this other church. And for the first six months of 1912, it looked like my wife and I and our two children were going to starve to death in China. It looked like it wasn't going to work."

You see, you can't always go by what it looks like. There always comes a test to your faith. The trial of your faith, the Bible said, is more precious than gold.

Like I said, God doesn't settle up the first of the year or the first of the month or even every six months.

But Brother Swift said to me, "Before 1912 was out, I checked up on it, and God had given me $3,750 in American dollars."

Now $3,750 in 1912 was a lot of money! Brother Swift *had* been getting $1,236, so the amount the Lord gave him was three times as much as he had received from the mission that had supported him.

You know, dear friends, Brother Swift was glad to find out that God promised to make him rich. Did God make him a millionaire? No, but Brother Swift and his family were abundantly provided for. They had a full supply.

Some folks have thought it was a sin to have money. But, you know, most people are not poor because they've *honored* God. Rather, they're poor because they've dishonored Him.

Some folks have said to me, "Brother Hagin, I'm afraid of money, because don't you know the Bible said, 'Money is the root of all evil'?"

No, the Bible didn't say that. The Bible said, *"For the LOVE of money is the root of all evil …"* (1 Tim. 6:10).

The *love* of money is the root of all evil. It is not wrong to have money; it is wrong for *money* to have you. It is wrong for money to be your master.

God wants His people to have their needs met and to have a full supply. So believe His Word that says we are redeemed from the curse of poverty. Exercise your faith and keep your motives and attitudes right in your giving. As you do, you'll get blessed because Abraham's blessing belongs to you!

Chapter 2

Qualifications for Walking in Prosperity

God wants to prosper His children. He is concerned about us and wants us to have good things in life. He said in His Word, *"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land"* (Isa. 1:19).

But God doesn't want us to put "eating the good of the land" first.

Moses was an example of someone who didn't put those things first. For example, Moses, who was raised by an Egyptian, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter when he grew up.

HEBREWS 11:24-26

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Think about what Moses refused! He was the son of Pharaoh's daughter—and he was in line for the throne! Moses had prestige, honor, and wealth. He had all the things the world had to offer. Yet Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ as greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Moses saw a difference between the people of God and the people of the world.

Some people are more interested in making a dollar than they are in serving God. But spiritual things must come first if you are going to be spiritual. You must esteem the things of God—spiritual things—more than earthly things.

One qualification for prospering is to esteem earthly things lightly. You cannot put earthly things above spiritual things and expect to prosper as God desires you to.

No, it's not wrong to have money. It's wrong for *money* to have *you.* It's wrong for money to be your ruler or master or for you to consume finances on your own lusts.

God *wants* you to prosper financially! But your prosperity depends on your putting first things first. There are qualifications involved.

In the Old Testament, God told the Israelites to keep His statutes and walk in His commandments (Deuteronomy 28).

Well, that's spiritual prosperity to put God's Word first and to walk in the truth. God desires the same today.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John writes, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2). In the next two verses, John goes on to say that he had no greater joy than to hear that God's people are indeed walking in the truth of God's Word.

God told the Israelites, "Walk in My statutes and keep My commandments. Do that which is right in My sight, and I'll take sickness away from the midst

of you, and the number of your days I will fulfill" (Exod. 15:26; 23:26). That's *physical* prosperity or divine healing and health.

The Lord also talked to the Israelites about their "basket and store" being blessed, their barns being filled, and about them being the head and not the tail (Deut. 28:1-14; Prov. 3:10).

That's *material* prosperity. But notice their *physical* and *material* prosperity depended upon their *spiritual* prosperity.

3 JOHN 2

2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest PROSPER and BE IN HEALTH, EVEN AS thy SOUL PROSPERETH.

John is talking about financial or material prosperity, physical prosperity, and spiritual prosperity. Notice that material and physical prosperity are dependent upon spiritual prosperity.

Put First Things First

The first Psalm is so beautiful and further confirms that God wants His people to prosper.

PSALM 1:1-3

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

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

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

So you see, God wants us to prosper. However, our need is to evaluate things as they should be evaluated—to esteem earthly things lightly and to put first things first.

Everyone thinks the preacher ought to be that way. For example, if a pastor happened to take the pastorate of a church where he makes more money, many people would think, *He just took that church so he'd be better paid.* Yet they themselves would think nothing in the world about taking a better job! They would probably even think nothing about moving off to another location where there wasn't a good church—only one in which they'd all backslide!

Years ago back in the Depression days, I was in a particular town on business and ran into a certain fellow on the street. He had a good job making good money, but he'd been offered a job in another town making $50 more a

month. That was a lot of money back then. I knew many men with families who didn't even make $50 a month. But this gentleman was already making a good salary and had the chance to make an even better one.

He told me, "Did you know I was moving?"

He was a member of a Full Gospel church, and I happened to know that there wasn't a Full Gospel church in the town where he was moving.

I said to him, "What kind of church is there in that town?"

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Is there a Full Gospel church there?" I asked him.

He answered, "I don't know; I never thought about it."

I said, "No, you were only interested in the extra fifty dollars a month. But wait a minute.

"I knew you before you came into Pentecost. I happen to know that you'd spent all of your money on medical bills for your wife. Doctors thought she had cancer of the stomach.

"But when she received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, without anybody even praying for her, she was healed.

"I also happen to know that you had spent thousands of dollars on one of your sons who had a physical ailment. But since you began attending a church where divine healing is taught, your boy has been in good health."

"Yes," the man said.

"Well," I said, "I also happen to know that there's not a Full Gospel church in that town." (It would have been different if he had been to going to that town to start a Full Gospel church, but he wasn't. He wasn't capable of starting a church.) The man said, "You know, I never thought about that."

I said, "You'd be taking your family out of a good Full Gospel church, where the Gospel is being preached and where you've been blessed immeasurably, all for fifty dollars more a month. I won't tell you not to do it, but I will tell you to pray about it."

The next time I saw this fellow, he said to me, "I'm not going; I don't believe it's worth it."

Another man and his wife came to a meeting I was holding in Dallas. The woman's mother, who had gone to be with the Lord, was a member of a church I'd pastored years before. She had been a wonderful Christian and a great blessing to my wife and me.

I knew that this wife hadn't always been a Christian. Years before when she would visit her mother, her mother told me she wasn't saved. But she had later gotten saved, received the Holy Spirit, and attended a fine Full Gospel church.

But when I saw this woman with her husband at my meeting and asked, "Where do you attend church now?" the woman said, "Oh, we don't go anywhere."

"What do you mean? I thought you were a member at such-and-such church."

"Oh, there's not even a church there anymore," she answered. "It was closed down for a while until another pastor came and took over it. Then the pastor backslid and quit preaching. We just go here and there to church every so often.

While you're in town, we're coming to your meetings."

I asked: "Well, where do you pay your tithes?"

"We don't pay our tithes," she answered. "We used to pay them, but we quit. We used to pay our tithes to the pastor, but he backslid."

"Well," I said, "you don't have to backslide just because he did."

I didn't know whether they appreciated me telling them that or not, but I continued: "You need to get in a church somewhere and work for God and worship the Lord. You need to get hooked up instead of going from church to church. A rolling stone never gathers any moss.

"Besides that, we need each other. We need the fellowship of one another."

Someone said, "I can stay home and be as good a Christian as anybody."

You can't do it. The Bible says, *"Not forsaking the assembling o f ourselves together, as the manner o f some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"* (Heb. 10:25).

We see that day approaching—the coming of the Lord. We need one another. No, we don't go to church because we're in love with the pastor or the pastor's wife or the Sunday school teacher. We should go to church because we love God and want to worship Him.

Some people lose their children to the devil because the parents don't put first things first. The children grow up physically and get away from God because the wrong example was set for them.

But you can't just tell children what to do. The Bible says, *"TRAIN up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Prov. 22:6). You have to set the right example. You have to be a person of faith

yourself. To do that, you have to put first things first.

F. F. Bosworth said, “Some people wonder why they can’t have faith for healing. They feed their body three hot meals a day, and their spirit one cold snack a week.”

Folks could have faith for healing or for anything the Word of God promises —prosperity, a healthy, happy family, long life—if they would just put first things first.

Determine in your heart to put spiritual things first and to esteem earthly things lightly. Put God first, even before your own self. You’ll be blessed spiritually, physically, and in every way—you and your family as well.

ISAIAH 1:19

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.

I left my last church in 1949 and went out into what we call field ministry. I went from church to church holding revival meetings. I’d been out there for a year, and I got hold of the verse that said, *“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land”* (Isa. 1:19). But, boy, I sure wasn’t eating the good of the land!

I had worn my car out. I had to sell it for junk. I had three notes at three different banks, and I got just enough from the sale of the car to pay the interest on the notes, renew them, and buy the kids a few clothes.

I had all of this written down, and I went to the Lord in prayer about my financial situation. I was away from home holding a meeting. I was fasting, and every day I talked to the Lord about my situation.

I said, “Lord, You see that I obeyed You when You told me to leave that church I was pastoring and to go out on the field. I did what You said to do. And You said, ‘If you’ll be willing and obedient, you’ll eat the good of the land.’

“Now, Lord, here’s what my church paid me, *plus* they furnished the parsonage—the best parsonage we’d ever lived in.

All the utilities were paid, and probably half of what we ate was paid for because people just constantly brought food to the parsonage for us.”

And then I said to the Lord, “They also sent us to every convention we needed to attend. The church paid our way there and back, and a lot of times, they’d buy me a new suit and my wife a new dress.” They wanted us to go to those conventions looking good because we were representing them.

I showed the Lord the figures I had written down. “But now, Lord,” I

continued, “here is my gross income for *this* year. This is every penny I received this year.” It was $1,200 *less* in actual cash than what I received the previous year.

Besides that, now I had to pay traveling expenses, my own rent, and utilities just from the money I received holding meetings in the field. Besides *that,* I had to pay my own way to the conventions that were necessary for me to attend.

So, you see, all that took a big chunk out of my salary—about half of it.

I added, “Lord, see how much better off I would have been if I’d stayed where I was? And they wanted me to stay. The church board said, ‘Brother Hagin, if you’ll stay with us, we’ll just vote you in as pastor indefinitely. Just stay here till Jesus comes.’”

Actually, I would have liked to have done that because we were the most comfortable we’d ever been in all of our years of pastoral work.

We were living in the best parsonage. We were getting the most salary we’d ever received. The church was doing well. But the Lord said, “Go,” so I went.

I said, “Now, Lord, I obeyed You. If You hadn’t spoken to me, I was perfectly satisfied from the natural standpoint to stay where I was.” (I said from a *natural* standpoint, not from a *spiritual* standpoint, because when we’re spiritual, we want to obey God. But the flesh is not always willing.) I told the Lord, “I obeyed You. But now we’re living in a three-room apartment. My children are not adequately housed.

They’re not adequately clothed. They’re not adequately fed.

We’re *sure* not eating the good of the land.”

You Must Be Willing *and* Obedient I was telling this to the Lord and quoting Isaiah 1:19. And about the third day, the Lord said to me in just the same way He talks to other believers—we call it the still, small voice. He said, “The reason you’re not eating the good of the land is that you don’t *qualify.”*

I said, “What do You mean, *I don’t qualify?* I obeyed You.

That scripture said if you would be willing and obedient…”

“That’s what it says,” the Lord answered. “You qualify on the *obedient* side, but you don’t qualify on the *willing* side. So you don’t qualify.”

I don’t mind telling you ahead of time, God’s Word is always true! The Bible said, “*.. yea, let God be true, but every man a liar … ”* (Rom. 3:4). And if *you’re* not eating the good of the land, it may be because you don’t qualify.

So the Lord told me, "Yes, you obeyed Me, all right, in leaving that church, but you weren't *willing."*

Now don't tell me it takes a long time to get willing. I know better! When the Lord said that to me, I got willing in ten seconds! I just made a little adjustment in my spirit. Then I said, "Lord, now I'm ready. I'm ready to eat the good of the land. I'm willing. *I* know I'm willing. *You* know I'm willing. And *the devil* knows I'm willing."

Of course, a part of being willing and obedient is keeping your motives pure. God sees the heart of man, and He knows what attitudes are motivating him (1 Sam. 16:7). If a person's motive is not right, he needs to repent and make the necessary adjustments. God is not going to bless someone whose motives are impure. No, that person has to be willing and obedient and have the right motives.

I got the willing and obedient part settled. And I knew I had the right motive. But on the other hand, if I was going to eat the good of the land, the Lord still had to change my thinking. My thinking had to get straightened out and come in line with what the Word says on the subject of prosperity.

These are some of the reasons why people are not eating the good of the land. And it could simply be because they're not abiding in the Book that tells them how to do it!

Learn To Think in Line With God's Word

You see, a lot of times, our thinking is wrong. It's not in line with the Bible. And if our *thinking* is wrong, then our *believing* is going to be wrong. And if our *believing* is wrong, then our *talking* is going to be wrong.

You've got to get all three of them—your thinking, your believing, and your speaking—synchronized with the Word of God.

God has given us His Word to get our thinking straightened out. In my case, God knew my thinking was wrong because, you see, in the denomination I'd been brought up in, we were taught that it was wrong to have anything. I began my ministry in this particular denomination, and they were great about praying for the pastor: "Lord, You keep him humble, and we'll keep him poor." And they thought they were doing God a favor!

Then in 1937 I was baptized in the Holy Ghost and spoke with other tongues. I got the left foot of fellowship from my denomination and came over among the Pentecostals.

They were *doubly* that way about praying for the pastor. In other words, they doubled up on their praying: "Lord, You keep him humble, and we'll keep

him poor!"

And you always heard preachers say, "I don't want any of this world's goods," because they thought there was something wrong with this world's goods.

But turn to Psalm 50, and I'll show you why it's not wrong to have this world's goods.

PSALM 50:10,12

10 For every beast of the forest IS MINE, and the cattle upon a thousand hills….

12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for THE WORLD IS MINE, and the fulness thereof [that means that everything that's in the world is God's].

Mark those verses in your Bible. Meditate on those verses and confess them.

The Lord showed me these verses because He had to get my thinking straightened out. I thought it was wrong to have anything. I thought a person ought to go through life with the seat of his britches worn out, the top of his hat worn out, the soles of his shoes worn out, and live on Barely-Get-Along Street way down at the end of the block right next to Grumble Alley!

That's the kind of thinking many people in the church world have today. But they're not thinking in line with God's Word.

Chapter 3

Our Authority in the Area of Finances

As I continued to wait before the Lord about my finances, spending time in the Word with prayer and fasting, He said to me, "Go back to the Book of beginnings."

Now that I was willing and obedient, He was showing me how to get my thinking straightened out. I knew what He was talking about when He said the Book of beginnings—He meant the Book of Genesis.

The Lord went on to tell me that He made the world and the fullness thereof. He created it. He said to me, "Then I created My man, Adam." And the Lord saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so He created Eve.

The Lord said to them, "I give you dominion over all the works of My hands" (Gen. 1:26, 28). Over how much? Over *all* the works of His hands!

GENESIS 1:1,26-30

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth….

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them HAVE DOMINION over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and OVER EVERY CREEPING THING THAT CREEPETH UPON THE EARTH.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and HAVE DOMINION over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and OVER EVERY LIVING THING THAT MOVETH UPON THE EARTH.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

After the Lord showed me these scriptures in Psalm 50:10-12 and Genesis chapter 1, He said, "There's another scripture that says, *'The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts'"* (Haggai 2:8). He then said, "They're all Mine, not because they're in My possession, but because I created them.

"But who do you think I created the cattle upon a thousand hills for? Who do you think I created the silver and the gold for?

"Who do you think I created the world and the fullness thereof for? For the devil and *his* crowd? No. I made them for My man Adam.

"But," the Lord continued, "My people have wrong thinking."

You see, the devil can run a night club, and he and his crowd don't mind spending thousands of dollars to put up an electric sign to let everyone know what it is. But if somebody puts up a nice sign for the church, there are people who will object to that.

The devil's got them hoodwinked.

How come the devil and his crowd have most of the silver and gold since the Lord made it for Adam? Did you ever wonder about that?

The Lord said, "The silver and gold are not all here for the devil and his crowd. I made it all for My man Adam, but then he committed high treason against Me."

Adam sold out! Adam committed treason. He surrendered it all to Satan.

LUKE 4:5-8

5 And the devil, taking him [Jesus] up into an high mountain, shewed unto him ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power [authority] will I give thee, and the glory of them: FOR THAT IS DELIVERED UNTO ME; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

When the Lord created Adam, Adam was *in one sense* the god of this world because God created the world and the fullness thereof and turned it over to him (Gen. 1:26,28).

But we read in Second Corinthians 4:4 that *Satan* is the god of this world. Well, Satan wasn't the god of this world to begin with. So how did he *become* the god of this world? *Because Adam committed treason and sold out to him.* Now Adam didn't have a *moral* right to disobey God and sell out to Satan, but he had a *legal* right to do it.

Notice Luke 4:6 and 7. We know Adam turned his dominion over to Satan because Satan said to Jesus, *"… All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: FOR THAT IS DELIVERED UNTO ME; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine."*

Some folks said, "Well, that wasn't even Satan's to give."

But if it wasn't Satan's to give, then it wouldn't have been any temptation to Jesus. And if it wasn't a temptation, then why does the Bible say He was *tempted* (Luke 4:2)?

It's ridiculous to think Jesus wasn't actually tempted by the devil. Although we know that Jesus is deity, we must also realize that in His humanity, He was tempted (Heb. 4:15). Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and said to Him, "All this authority will I give Thee and the glory of it, for *it is delivered unto me."* Who delivered it to him? *Adam did!*

The Lord told me all this and related it to faith for finances.

As I was praying and waiting before Him, He said to me by the Holy Spirit: "The money you need is down there. It isn't up here in Heaven. I don't have

any American dollars up here. I'm not going to rain any money down from Heaven because if I did, it would be counterfeit. And I'm not a counterfeiter."

Afterward, I remembered what Jesus said in Luke 6.

LUKE 6:38

38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall MEN give into your bosom….

You see, when men give unto you, God's behind it, all right, but that verse says, "… *shall MEN give into your bosom.. . .* "

That's why the Lord said, "The money you need is down there.

I'm not going to rain any money down from Heaven. I don't have any money up here. If I did rain money out of Heaven, it would be counterfeit. And I'm not a counterfeiter."

After the Lord showed me this, He said, "Whatever you need, you just claim it."

We Have Been Given Authority in Christ

The reason we have a right to claim our needs met is, Jesus came to the earth and defeated Satan. We're *in* the world but we're not of the world (John 15:19), yet we still have to live in this world. So we must use our God-given authority to enforce Satan's defeat and enjoy the blessings of God that we have in Christ, including financial prosperity.

COLOSSIANS 1:12

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet [or able] TO BE PARTAKERS OF THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT.

That's something that belongs to us in *this* life!

Now notice the next verse. *Here* is the inheritance of the saints in light that the Father gives as a result of Jesus' defeating Satan.

COLOSSIANS 1:13

13 Who [the Father] HATH DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS, and HATH TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON.

Notice this scripture says, "… *HATH delivered us….* " In other words, Jesus is not *going* to deliver us; He already *has* delivered us.

The rest of that verse says, "… *from the POWER of darkness, and hath*

translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Notice that word "power" again. There are several different Greek words that are translated "power" in the New Testament. This one in Colossians 1:13 means *authority.*

In other words, God hath delivered us from the *authority* or *dominion* of darkness. Well, what's the authority or dominion of darkness? That's Satan's kingdom. Remember what Jesus said through the apostle John in First John 5:19: "… *the whole world lieth in wickedness."* He's talking about spiritual darkness and spiritual death.

We're *in* the world, all right. But we're not *of* the world. The whole world lieth in darkness, but God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13)! That's our inheritance!

Now turn to Colossians chapter 2.

COLOSSIANS 2:13-15

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened [or made alive] together with him [Christ], having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled [put to nought or reduced to nothing] principalities and powers [the evil forces of the enemy], he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Hallelujah! *We* are the triumphant ones because of what Jesus did. He didn't do it for Himself; He didn't need it. What Jesus did, He did for *me.* He did it for *you.* He did it for *us!* He became our Substitute. He took our place. And when He defeated the enemy, praise God, it was written down to our credit that *we* defeated the enemy in Him. Therefore, we have the authority to tell Satan to take his hands off what belongs to us—including our finances.

Yet some folk are going around talking about the "warring"

Church. They don't know that Jesus has already whipped Satan!

"Yes," someone said, "but don't you know Paul told Timothy to be a good soldier [2 Tim. 2:3]. Therefore, we're soldiers, and we're in the army."

Yes, but it's an *occupation* army! In other words, we just come in "mopping up" behind what Jesus has already won!

Hallelujah! It's a *triumphant* Church, not a *warring* Church!

You see, Jesus made a show of principalities and powers openly. That is, He

made a show of them before three worlds—Heaven, earth, and hell—*triumphing* over these powers through the Cross (Col. 2:15)!

I wish I could get that over to Charismatics. Too many Charismatics are like young mockingbirds that have just been hatched. They don't even have their eyes open yet, but their mouths are wide open. Anybody can just poke anything in the world down them!

And like little birds, those Christians will believe almost everything they hear and swallow it. But, no. Close your mouths and open your eyes, and measure what you hear by the Word of God! The Word declares we are more than conquerors and that we have overcome the world through Jesus Christ. The Word declares that we are redeemed from the curse of the Law—from poverty, sickness, and spiritual death.

The Word also says we have been given authority over the devil in Jesus' Name and that we can use that authority and claim our financial needs met. So learn to think and speak in line with what the Word says. You can have what the Word says you can have, and you are who the Word says you are. You are born of God!

1 JOHN 4:4

4 YE ARE OF GOD, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Now in the Old Testament, there are long pages of genealogy—and it was necessary for the Israelites to have their genealogy recorded. There were pages and pages of "So-and-so begat So-and-so" (all those names you can hardly pronounce!).

After a while, you can get tired of reading all those names, and you just want to skip over them and start reading something else!

But in the New Testament, we can write our genealogy in four little words: "I-am-of-God." Hallelujah! If you have been born again, say this out loud: "I am of God!" (1 John 4:4).

I was watching a so-called Christian television program some time ago. It was one of those talk shows, and there was a woman on the show as a guest. She sang, and then the host talked to her. She said that she had to leave her husband and divorce him because she had to find out who she was. I thought, *She ought to get saved so she'd* know *who she is!*

"I don't know who I am" or "I've got to find out who I am."

Unsaved people talk like that, because we who are saved *know* who we are! We are of God! We have been born again. We are new creatures in Christ

Jesus!

Look in First John again in the third chapter.

1 JOHN 3:1

1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the SONS OF GOD: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

That's who we are! We know *exactly* who we are. According to the Word, we are "of God"! We are sons of God. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus. His Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16).

When I heard that woman say, "I've got to find out who I am," I turned that program off to see if I could find a good western to watch. I mean, I thought a good western would be more edifying!

Praise God, *"Ye are of God, little children … "* (1 John 4:4). *That's* our genealogy!

Those Born of God Are Overcomers!

Now look at that next statement in First John 4:4: *"… and have overcome them.. . . "* Overcome who? All those demons and evil spirits that John talked about in verses 1 through 3. He said, "You've overcome them."

"Well," someone asked, "if I've overcome them, how come I'm having so many problems with them?" Because you don't *know* it! You don't *know* you overcame them! And because you don't know it, you don't act on it!

Notice it didn't say you were *going* to overcome them. This verse clearly says, that we *have* overcome them. That's past tense: "… [ye] *HAVE overcome them … "* (1 John 4:4). How can that be? Because of the rest of that verse: You've overcome them because greater is He that's in you than he that's in the world!

1 JOHN 4:4

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: BECAUSE GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN YOU, THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD.

Paul wrote to the Church at Colossae and said it's *"…Christ in you, the hope o f glory"* (Col. 1:27).

COLOSSIANS 1:27

27 To whom God would make known what is the RICHES OF THE

GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY among the Gentiles; which is Christ IN you, the hope of glory.

This is the mystery: Through the Holy Ghost, Christ indwells us, and we are the Body of Christ. He is the Head, and we are the Body.

Now, can your head have one experience and your body another experience? No, it's impossible. In the same way, the Lord Jesus' victory is *our* victory. When He overcame demons and evil spirits and put them to nought, that's all marked down to our credit. Notice it says, *" YE … have overcome them …"* (1 John 4:4).

Why do folks have so much trouble with evil spirits then?

Because of folks' wrong thinking! They don't know that in Christ, they've overcome demons and evil spirits. And because they don't know it, they don't act on it. But believers do have authority over Satan. They just need to believe and exercise that authority in every area of their lives, including the area of finances.

Jesus Defeated the Works of the Devil—Including Poverty and Lack

There's another passage of Scripture that would help us in our thinking along this line.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:4-6

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect [mature]: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, THAT COME TO NOUGHT.

Remember what we read in Colossians 2:15: *"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."*

Jesus spoiled principalities and powers! If you look in the margin of a good reference Bible, it will tell you, "He put to *nought* principalities and powers." He reduced them to nothing.

In other words, He reduced them to nothing as far as their being able to dominate us. Therefore, they can't dominate us financially either.

Since these principalities and powers are dethroned, why then are they still ruling in the world? *Because the world doesn't know that they're dethroned.*

They don’t know about it, and, therefore, they can’t act upon it!

That’s the reason Jesus said He was anointed by the Spirit (and so are we) to *preach deliverance!*

Someone asked, “What do you mean, *preach deliverance?”*

Preach to the captives, “You’re delivered! Jesus delivered you! These powers have come to nought! They’re dethroned powers!”

1 JOHN 4:4

4 Ye are of God, little children, and HAVE OVERCOME THEM: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

“Well, I’m *trying* to overcome them,” someone said.

No, you don’t *try.* You just accept by faith what Jesus did.

What He did, He did for you! Christ’s victory is your victory.

Glory to God!

Exercising Our Authority

That’s why when the Lord told me to claim the money I needed, I understood what He meant. He was telling me to believe and exercise my spiritual authority in the area of finances.

The Lord had said to me, “The money that you need is not up here in Heaven. I don’t have any money up here. The money that you need is down there. It’s Satan who’s keeping it from coming, not Me.

“Satan is going to stay there till Adam’s lease runs out.”

(Then, thank God, Satan is going to be put in the bottomless pit for a little while, and finally cast into the lake of fire.) The Lord said to me, “Don’t pray about money like you have been. Whatever you need, claim it in Jesus’ Name. And then you say, ‘Satan, take your hands off my money.’ And then say, ‘Go, ministering spirits, and cause the money to come.’”

This was way back in 1950. And from that day to this, I’ve not prayed about money. I’m talking about for me individually—

personally. Now when it comes to RHEMA Bible Training Center, that’s a different thing. We present the needs of the training center to people to help us, because that’s not just *my* responsibility.

It’s the same way with the local church. It’s not just one person’s responsibility. We *all* should believe God, not just the pastor.

And yet, right on the other hand, the pastor has a responsibility, too, because

he's in authority. He has to do certain things and make certain decisions in the church. And that's a great responsibility.

Angels Are Ministering Spirits

In 1950 when I began to see how faith worked in the area of finances, it was all new to me.

In fact, I said to the Lord, "What do You *mean?* I can understand the part about how we can exercise authority over the enemy, claim the finances we need, and tell Satan, 'Take your hands off my money' But, what do You mean about the part, 'Go, ministering spirits, and cause the money to come'?"

The Lord said, "Didn't you ever read in My Word where it says that angels are ministering spirits sent to minister *for* those who are heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14).

Because I thought it said "minister *to* us," I had to get my Bible and read it. Isn't it strange how we can read Scripture for years and years, and read right over things and not get what the Word said?

HEBREWS 1:13,14

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister FOR them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Notice verse 13 says, *"But to which o f the ANGELS…."* So He's talking about angels. Now look at verse 14: *"Are they not all ministering spirits… ?"*

Now notice what it said. *"Are they not ALL* [How many of them? *All* of them.] *ministering spirits… ?"* They are spirit beings. They are "… *ministering spirits, sent forth to minister FOR them who shall be HEIRS OF SALVATION"* (Heb. 1:14).

Well, that's us! These angels are ministering spirits that are sent forth to minister *for* us. "For" us means they were sent to do something *for* us!

Now over in Satan's kingdom, we could say that Satan is the chief. And, you see, all these demons and other spirits are doing *his* work. You hear folks say sometimes, "Satan influenced me to do that." Well, he might not have been there present at the time, but one of his ambassadors were. These demons and evil spirits influence people. They'll even influence Christians, if Christians will let them.

Well, just as demon spirits influence people, good spirits or ministering spirits can influence people too.

I Put Into Practice What I Received

After the Lord showed me this, I went to the church where I was holding the meeting and stood there on the platform. I'll be honest with you, since this was a new revelation to me, my knees were shaking.

I was trembling, not because I was afraid like someone would be afraid of a rattlesnake or a bad storm. I'm talking about a holy, reverential fear. Remember the Apostle Paul said, *"And I was with you in … fear, and in much trembling"* (1 Cor. 2:3).

What I experienced was a different thing entirely from tormenting fear. It was a holy fear.

You see, what the Lord had shown me was new to me, and my head was telling me, "That's not going to work." I just stood on the platform, and I said privately, "Well, now, let's see. It takes one hundred and fifty dollars a week to meet my budget."

(That doesn't sound big now, but that was big then.) I was supposed to be at that church one week. So I said, "In Jesus' Name, I claim one hundred and fifty dollars this week."

And then I said, "Satan, take your hands off my money in Jesus' Name." Then I also said, "Go, ministering spirits, and cause the money to come." That's it—that's all I did.

Then I said to the pastor, "Now, Brother, don't make any special pull for money. When you get ready to take up my offering, just say as little about it as you can. Don't say a lot about it."

"Well," the pastor said to me, "you know our custom. We take up an offering on Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday nights for the evangelist. We're accustomed to taking up pledge offerings.

If I just say, 'This is Brother Hagin's offering' and pass the plate, you won't get over a dime."

I said, "If I just get a dime, you won't hear me say a word."

I had preached in that same church a year before. This was a different pastor this time, and the only other difference in the church was they had two more church members this year than the year before. The church was about the same size. They hadn't gotten anybody saved.

The last year when I preached at this church, they paid me $57.15 a week for two weeks. That's $114.30 total. And when they gave me that offering, they thought they'd hung the moon!

The pastor who was there then had taken up to thirty or forty minutes for that offering, saying, “Who’ll give another dollar? …” (Don’t misunderstand me. That’s all right to do if the Lord leads you to do that. In fact, I have been anointed at times to take up such an offering.)

But now that I’d seen how faith worked for finances, I said to this pastor, “Don’t take up any pledge offering.”

“Well, uh … If that’s the way you want it,” the pastor said.

“That’s the way I want it.”

The meeting started and was going well, and the pastor asked me: “Could you stay longer?”

I said, “I’ve got another meeting coming up, but I was going to take a little time off between meetings to go home.”

But in the process of time, he persuaded me to stay on through Wednesday night of the following week, which gave us about a ten-day meeting.

So I changed the amount I had claimed—the amount I needed to meet my budget. Instead of $150, now I was claiming $200. I didn’t pray about it. I claimed what I needed in Jesus’ Name, and said, “Satan, take your hands off of my finances.”

Then I said, “Go, ministering spirits; cause the money to come.”

When the ten-day meeting ended, I had the $200 plus $40-odd dollars over that amount!

The pastor said, “That beats anything I’ve ever seen in my life!”

You remember, this church thought $50 a week was *big.*

They would have thought $75 a week was wonderful, and $100 a week—they would have thought that was a miracle!

The Word Works!

I left for home that Wednesday night after the service. I was down in east Texas, and we lived up in north Texas. I left home the following Saturday and drove down to Alabama for my next meeting.

I had been behind on my house rent for four months, so I paid up as far as I could, left money for my wife, and had just enough money to buy gas to get down to Alabama.

When I arrived in Alabama, I was tired. I would have stopped overnight along the way, but I didn’t have any money to rent a motel room. I didn’t have a dime in my pocket.

It was after midnight when I got there, so I went to the parsonage to see the pastor. He took me to the home of one of the deacons. The pastor wanted me to preach the next morning, but I said, “Oh, no. No, I’ve driven for about fifteen to sixteen hours on little two-lane roads, going through just about every little ole town. I’m too tired to preach.”

We got up the next morning and went to church, and he introduced me to the congregation.

They had seventy-two in Sunday school and seventy in the congregation for the morning service. I mean, they counted anything that moved!

I was sitting there on the platform, and I don’t know to this day what that pastor preached—I was having such a battle between my head and my heart. My head said, “Boy, you played whaley.”

Do you know what that means? It just means that you’ve played the fool, so to speak, just like Jonah did who found himself in the *whale’s* belly!

My head was telling me, “You came down here, and you won’t even get enough money to get back home. Why, look at that little bunch of people sitting out there. You shouldn’t have come down here. You won’t get enough money to get back home.”

It took me awhile to get my head quiet. You see, you can get quiet physically, but it’s more difficult to get quiet mentally than it is to get quiet physically. Have you found that out yet?

I was quiet physically—I was sitting there not moving a muscle. But I finally got my head quiet, and I sat there and very quietly said, “I claim one hundred and fifty dollars a week in Jesus’ Name. Satan, take your hands off my money. Go, ministering spirits, and cause the money to come.” I didn’t even say it out loud. I sort of whispered it because the preacher was preaching.

After the service, I said the same thing to this pastor: “Don’t make any pull for money. Just pass the plate and say, ‘This is Brother Hagin’s offering.’”

“Brother Hagin, you won’t get a quarter,” this pastor said.

“Well,” I said, “if I don’t, I won’t say anything about it.

You’ll never hear me gripe or say a word about it.”

The meeting got to running real well, and we ran it three weeks. Three weeks times $150 a week would be $450. But I wound up with $965. Hallelujah! I also received a new set of tires on top of that! The car I had recently bought was used, and the tires were already bald. But I got a new set of tires.

I was putting into practice the revelation the Lord had given me. Anytime you

get a revelation from God, don't just run out and preach it. Even though the Lord showed me that revelation in 1950, I didn't start preaching it till four years later in 1954.

Prove All Things

If you get any revelation from God, friends, check it in line with the Word, and then put it into practice for yourself before you start preaching it. If it won't work for you, it won't work for anybody else.

Then not only that, but share your revelation with those who are over you and who are older than you in the ministry. Like I said, I got that revelation and practiced it, but I never said a word about it—I never Preached it to anybody. I'd just talk about it a little bit to some fellow pastors.

But as I already mentioned, I shared this revelation with Brother A. A. Swift, who was about seventy at the time. I was only thirty-six when I held a meeting for him. This man was a pioneer of the Pentecostal Movement and was recognized as a leading Bible teacher.

He got out his notes and gave them to me. And that's where I got most of my material for the book *Redeemed From the Curse of Poverty, Sickness, and Spiritual Death.*

He told me, "You go ahead and use these notes. Just go ahead and preach it everywhere you go."

So that's when I started preaching what the Lord had shown me four years before. And I've been preaching it ever since. But I had a leading teacher in the Pentecostal Movement—a man twice as old as I was—to judge it. Also, I proved it out over a four-year period before I taught it to others.

Some people think if they've got a revelation, they have to "run off" with it. They want to tell it. They also want everybody to agree with them.

If folks don't agree with them, they get mad and get in the flesh. And they think that's the Spirit of God. Oh, bless their darling hearts.

The Lord had given me the same revelation this Pentecostal preacher had received years before. The Bible says, "Are they not all ministering spirits?" (Heb. 1:14). Say out loud: "Thank God for the ministering spirits."

After I received the revelation from the Lord about faith for finances, I would *purposely* go to small churches—to country churches and out-of-the-way places—to prove it out. And I'd say the same thing to the pastor: "Don't make any pulls for money."

Did you ever notice that our ministry never makes any great pulls for money? For example, did you ever notice that in *The Word of Faith* magazine, we

never say anything about money or ask you to contribute anything to *The Word o f Faith?*

We do send out a letter about four times a year letting folks know the ministry's needs. We just let you know what we're doing and give you an opportunity to get in on it if you want to.

But we don't put any pressure on people.

Put Pressure on the Word, Not on People

Some folks have told us that the way we do things won't work. It's sort of like the science that says the bumblebee can't fly. According to science, bumblebees can't fly. But the bee doesn't know that, so it just goes ahead and flies!

Our ministry is not in trouble financially. We're not bragging on ourselves; we're bragging on the Lord. Our ministry has never been in trouble financially. We may have had some lean periods, but we were never really in trouble. There's a difference.

The RHEMA Bible Training Center campus sits on more than ninety-five acres of property. We've been building ever since we moved to our present location. We have twelve buildings on campus, a multi-building storage facility, plus a complex of ninety-six apartments that we've turned into student housing.

In recent years, a fellow from up north visited us. Although my wife and I had known him for some time, he'd never been to Broken Arrow. We took him and his wife around the RHEMA campus on a golf cart. As we were riding around, suddenly, he got to laughing. He got to laughing so hard, he nearly fell out of the golf cart!

Finally, he regained his composure. I said, "What's the matter with you?" I thought he was laughing at me!

He said, "Folks up in my part of the country have said, 'Faith doesn't work.' I just got to thinking, Brother Hagin, that if you could ever get it to work, there's no telling what you could do!"

Bless their hearts. I feel so sorry for people who say faith doesn't work. I could weep about it, really.

Faith in God and His Word that is acted upon will bring results every time. I could tell you story after story of how the Word worked for me even in the midst of dire circumstances.

Yet there is a man-ward side and a God-ward side to receiving the blessings of God. You remember we read Isaiah 1:19: *"If ye be willing and obedient, ye*

shall eat the good of the land."

Before you can effectively exercise your faith for finances or *any* of God's blessings, you must be willing and obedient.

Then you must think and believe in line with His Word and walk in the light of it. When you do, your faith will bring into manifestation what God has provided for you in His great plan of redemption.

Chapter 4

The Bible Way to Release Your Faith

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.—Mark 11:23

Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.—Proverbs 6:2

The Bible says that it is God's will that His children Prosper (3 John 2). And God has made provision for every one of us to have our needs met and to walk in prosperity.

But there are *keys* to appropriating the divine promises. In 1949, after I left the last church I pastored to go into field ministry, the Lord gave me the revelation of faith for finances. I had been seeking Him because our needs weren't being met.

Isaiah 1:19 says, "*If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land."* But we sure weren't eating the good of the land!

I argued with the Lord that I *had* been obedient to do what He had told me to do. He said, "You qualify on the *obedient* side, but you don't qualify on the *willing* side. So you don't qualify."

I made the necessary adjustment in my spirit immediately.

Then I knew I was willing *and* obedient.

You Must Renew Your Mind With God's Word

After I became willing, the Lord still had to get my thinking straightened out. You see, in my denomination, we had always believed it was God's will that we be poor and not have anything. So I had to get my mind renewed to think in line with what God's Word said about prosperity.

Then the Lord told me not to pray about finances the way I had been praying. Before, when a need arose, we'd always get by somehow. But we struggled

financially.

The Lord said I was to claim whatever it was I needed in Jesus' name, to command Satan to take his hands off my money, and to send out ministering spirits to cause the money to come.

This was the revelation I received from the Lord about faith for finances.

You see, faith operates the same way in every area. I had used faith to get saved. And I was raised up from the deathbed by believing and acting upon Mark 11:23 and 24. But until I received the revelation of faith for finances and learned how to release my faith in that area, I didn't know how to appropriate getting my needs met.

The 'Saying' Part of Faith

Mark 11:23 says, "… *whosoever shall SAY… and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he SAITH shall come to pass; he shall HAVE whatsoever he SAITH."* What shall he have? Whatsoever he saith!

Now notice Proverbs 6:2. In the margin of my Bible, that verse reads, "Thou art *taken captive* with the words of thy mouth." In other words, you said the wrong thing, and as a result, you were taken captive.

What you say will either set you free or keep you bound. It's important what you say.

Years ago God showed me something from the Word about the saying part of faith. In 1951, I was holding a four-week meeting in a little town called Graham, Texas.

One day after a morning session, I just stayed in church and prayed. I decided I would read the Book of Mark on my knees at the altar, so I did.

I'd been on my knees quite a bit praying, too, as I was reading, so I got tired. Finally, I just sat down between the altar bench and the platform and finished reading the Book of Mark.

As I was sitting there meditating on the Great Commission in Mark 16, I began to really feel tired, so I just lay down on my back. As I was lying there with my hands under my head, just sort of staring at the ceiling, my mind got quiet.

Suddenly, on the inside of me—in my spirit—I heard these words: "Did you notice in Mark 11:23 that the word 'say' in relation to the believer is in that verse in some form *three times,* and the word 'believe' is in there only *once?"*

I rose up to a seated position and said, "No. No, I didn't notice that." And I

had preached from that verse and had quoted it many, many times.

So I just turned the pages of my Bible back to Mark chapter 11 and read Mark 11:23.

MARK 11:23

23 For verily I say [you don't count the first "say" because that's Jesus talking]… That whosoever shall SAY unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he SAITH shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he SAITH.

I counted them off on my fingers, and I counted "believe" one time and "say" in some form three times—"say," "saith," and "saith."

I said out loud to the Lord, "That's right! I never noticed that before." Then on the inside of me, in my spirit, I heard these words: "My people primarily are not missing it in their believing. They have been taught to believe and have faith.

Where they're missing it is in what they are *saying*. And you'll have to do three times as much preaching and teaching about the *saying* part of faith as you do about the *believing* part in order to get people to see it."

And I've found that to be the case. The Word of God has a lot to say about what you say.

ROMANS 10:8

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even IN THY MOUTH, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.

Believing *and* Confessing Get the Job Done

You see, for the Word to work for you, it's got to be both in your mouth *and* in your heart. It can't just be in your mouth.

Folks can say things, but if they don't really mean them—if their heart doesn't agree with what they're saying—it won't work.

Or they can believe something in their heart, but if they don't vocalize it—if they don't say it—it won't come to pass. Faith that receives the promises of God only work by believing *and* saying.

The Scripture also said, *"We HAVING the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I BELIEVED, and therefore have I SPOKEN; we also BELIEVE, and therefore SPEAK"* (2 Cor. 4:13).

Notice it says, *"We HAVING …,"* not, "We're *trying to get it."* And it's not,

"We're *praying for it."* No, we already have faith. If you're saved, you already *have* that spirit of faith.

Since we *have* that spirit of faith, we ought to *speak* the things we believe. Never talk failure. I don't know about you, but I don't believe in failure. Never talk defeat. I don't know about you, but I don't believe in defeat. I believe in victory, praise God.

You talk about your trials, you talk about your difficulties, you talk about your lack of faith, you talk about your lack of money, and your faith will just absolutely shrivel.

But if you'll talk about your wonderful Heavenly Father—if you'll talk about the Word of God, then your faith will grow in leaps and bounds. Praise God forevermore!

If you talk about sickness, it will develop sickness in your system. If you talk about your doubts, your doubts will become stronger, and they will destroy your faith.

If you talk about your lack of finances, it will stop the money from coming in. Folks need to learn that. But if they'll believe in their heart what the Word of God said and confess it with their mouth, they'll get results.

As I said, in the early days of my ministry, I hadn't been getting any results in the area of finances. I understood faith for healing, but at that time, I didn't understand that faith worked the same way for finances too.

But, thank God, He showed me how to appropriate what belongs to me in Christ. He gave me the understanding of how faith for finances works and told me to claim what I needed.

We're talking about claiming what the Word says is yours.

We're not talking about claiming something that's off the wall.

Somebody may say, "Well, I'm going to claim ten million oil wells!" God didn't promise you ten million oil wells. You can only believe and confess in line with God's Word. Don't get off in left field.

We're talking about claiming what the Word says is yours. Is it wrong to claim the New Birth? Is it wrong to claim the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Is it wrong to claim an answer to prayer if God promised to answer you? No, because the Word says, *"my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 4:19). When we believe and confess in line with God's Word, we can appropriate what belongs to us in Christ.

I was holding another meeting in west Texas about a year after I received this

revelation on faith for finances. The meeting was just before Christmas. After Christmas, I was scheduled to go to Vernon, Texas, to minister. I was staying in the parsonage in west Texas, and I was traveling alone. Oretha was at home because the kids were in school.

Ordinarily, the minute my head hit the pillow at night, I was asleep. But I couldn't sleep that night. The Lord was dealing with me about going somewhere else—about not going to Vernon to minister.

I put off obeying the Lord. I said, "Lord, I couldn't cancel with that pastor at this late date. I'm already scheduled to go there. The meeting here is over, and I'm going to take off one week for Christmas and start with the church in Vernon the next Sunday."

The next night I had the same problem falling asleep. And the same thing happened the third night. Finally, to get some rest I said, "All right, Lord. I'll call the pastor in Vernon tomorrow. If he lets me off the hook, fine. If he doesn't, I'm going to go, because my word's out, and I'll never change my word.

"You said in Your Word in Psalm 15 that one of the characteristics of a spiritual pilgrim is that he sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not. So if that pastor doesn't let me off the hook, I won't change, because You— *Your Word*— told me not to."

PSALM 15:4,5 4

… a vile person is contemned [scorned]; but he [the Lord] honoureth them that fear the Lord. HE THAT SWEARETH TO HIS OWN HURT, AND CHANGETH NOT.

5 He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

So the next day, just as I started to pick up the phone to call this pastor, the phone rang. I answered it and the operator said, "I have a long-distance telephone call for Reverend Kenneth Hagin." I said, "This is he." Then that pastor in Vernon came on the line!

"Brother Hagin?"

I said, "Yes. I was just about to call you. I started to pick up the phone when it rang just now."

He said, "What were you going to call me about?"

I said, "You go ahead and tell me what you're calling about because you got to me first! Then I'll tell you why I was going to call."

“Well,” he said, “you’re scheduled to come to my church after you go home for Christmas.”

“Yes. That’s what I planned to do. But why did you call?”

“Well,” he said, “I’ll be here the first Sunday night, but an emergency has arisen, and I have to go to Kansas City. I’ll be gone the first week of your meeting. I trust that’s all right with you. I’ll be back the following Sunday night.”

I said, “Fine.”

“Now,” he said, “what were you going to call me about?”

I said, “Well, the last three nights, God has been talking to me,” and I told this pastor that the Lord was dealing with me about postponing the meeting and going somewhere else to minister. Then I told him, “But I didn’t want to put you off.”

“Oh, Brother Hagin,” he said, “I didn’t want to put *you* off.”

Then the pastor said, “I can understand why the Lord has been talking to you. Because of this emergency that’s come up, we’ve been on the phone back and forth with someone in Kansas City for the last two or three days. And I actually need to be there *two* weeks. So that’s fine. That’s perfectly all right. You go right on somewhere else to minister. But you will come back to my church, won’t you?”

“Yes,” I said, “when the Lord leads me to, I’ll come back to your church. We’ll not cancel the meeting; we’ll just postpone it.” (I got back to his church two years later!)

“Now then,” I said to the Lord after I hung up the phone, “we’ve got that settled. You know I’m going to be off at Christmastime, and I’ll be spending a little extra money at Christmas for gifts. I’m sure You want me to go to Brother Johnson’s church because he’s talked to me personally, inviting me to come. He’s written me a letter, phoned me, and sent me a telegram.

“He has just built a new sanctuary that will seat eight hundred people comfortably. He told me, ‘I can put a thousand in it easily enough, and I promise you a full house every night.’

(We didn’t have very many of those big churches back then.) Lord, I’m sure that’s where You want me to go because I’ll be to spending extra money for Christmas, and they’ve got a lot of people.”

“No, I don’t want you to go there.”

“Where do You want me to go?”

“To Brother Robinson’s church way down in the upper part of the big thicket of east Texas.”

I tell you, you could get back in those woods where Brother Robinson’s church was and think you’d come to the “jumping off” place! Brother Robinson had a country church that ran sixty to seventy people in Sunday school. That included kids, babies, and anything that moved!

I said, “Lord, surely You don’t want me to go down there—not me. I’m going to these big churches now. Surely You don’t want…”

“Yes, that’s where I want you to go.”

The Word Works in Any Situation Or Circumstance

“Well, now,” I said to the Lord, “this is wintertime, and that’s country down there. Whatever crops they had, they’re all gone.” I continued, “It takes one hundred and fifty dollars a week to meet my budget, and I expect my budget to be met there just like it is anywhere else.”

The Lord said, “You do the going, and I’ll do the doing.

That’s where I want you to go.”

I contacted Brother Robinson and told him I’d come immediately after the Christmas holidays.

I stayed at home for the holidays as long as I could because I was gone so much of the time. I got to Brother Robinson’s church on a Sunday afternoon just before church time. There was a little parsonage right next to the church. Brother Robinson and I were standing in the kitchen of the parsonage talking.

He said, “Brother Hagin, I started to call you. I know you’ve got a family, and it’s wintertime, and you’ve been off for Christmas.

“But, you see,” he continued, “we have two main crops here in east Texas. We have a tomato crop that is harvested in the latter part of May and in June. But the hail got the tomato crop, and we had a tomato-crop failure.”

Then he said, “Our other crop is cotton. It’s harvested in the fall. But the boll weevils got the cotton, and we had a cotton-crop failure too.

“We can’t promise you a dime, Brother Hagin. I started to phone you and let you know that you’d better not come because we can’t promise you a dime.”

I said, “I didn’t ask you for a dime. I never said anything to anybody about money, did I?”

“No, no,” he said. “You didn’t.”

“But,” I said, “as long as you brought up the subject, may I say something?”

(I never said anything to folks to correct them unless they brought the subject up themselves.) I said, “Don’t make any pull for money. Just simply take up the offering.”

He said, “Well, we take up an offering on Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday nights for the evangelist.”

I said, “Okay, but say as little as you can about my offering.

“And while I’m at it, don’t talk about the negative side of things. You see, you were talking about the lack. Talking about lack of finances keeps finances from coming in. Don’t get up there and say, ‘Well, we had a tomato-crop failure, and we had a cotton-crop failure. When you do that, you’re telling the people they’re not able to give.”

What You Say Defeats You or Puts You Over

I told this pastor, "If you're going to say anything when you take up the offering, say this: 'The world and the fullness thereof are the Lord's. The cattle on a thousand hills are the Lord's. The silver and the gold are the Lord's. And what belongs to the Lord, belongs to us, so we're all able to give. Now we're going to receive an offering for Brother Hagin.'"

He did that. I had claimed $150 a week. I had planned to stay one week, but I stayed ten days. So then I claimed $200 for the ten days. And I got $240 some-odd dollars!

At first I didn't know why the Lord wanted me to go to that church, but when the meeting was over, I saw why He'd sent me down there. We had thirty-two people come to the altar to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Out of the thirty-two who came to be filled with the Holy Ghost, thirteen were grown men. And of the thirteen grown men, twelve were heads of families.

When I laid hands on them, they were instantly filled with the Holy Ghost. And in ten days, that pastor got twelve brand-new families in his church! Hallelujah!

Not only that, but we were meeting out in the country in a one-room church building. They ran seventy in Sunday school and had all those different Sunday school classes in one room on Sunday morning! You could hardly hear what was going on.

And they only had one wood stove in the middle of the room to heat the whole building.

Then over in the parsonage they had a wood stove in what we'd call the living room. And they had a kerosene cookstove that they couldn't get parts for. It didn't burn right, and everything the dear pastor's wife cooked tasted like kerosene!

I said, "Brother Robinson, why don't you get a butane system? You could put four small heaters in the church and really warm the thing up. And then you could get a cookstove in the parsonage."

"We were going to do that," the pastor answered. "Mr. So-and-so over in Crockett, Texas, owns a butane-appliance store.

He's a good Baptist deacon, and so I talked to him about it. He said, 'Brother Robinson, I'll install the system, furnish the stoves for the church and the parsonage for just exactly the amount I've got invested in them. Then I'll give you ten percent myself, out of my own pocket.'"

I said, "Why in the world didn't you do that?"

“Well, we had the cotton-crop failure and the tomato-crop failure,” he replied.

So at the next church service, I simply got up on the platform and said to the congregation, “Folks, listen. I’ve been staying over there in the parsonage, and that stove over there is worn out. You can’t get parts for it. It’s old, and I don’t mean this as an insinuation about Sister Robinson because she’s a good cook, but everything she cooks tastes like kerosene.”

Then I told them what the man said who owned the butane business. “Not only that, but after he installs the system, he’ll put a big tank out there behind the church, install the heaters in the church and in the parsonage, *plus* furnish the butane for the church and the parsonage thereafter—forever—free of charge!

“Glory to God!” I continued. “Let’s do that. I’ll give such-and-such amount of money on it.”

And I’ll tell you, I hadn’t intended on taking up a pledge offering, but as fast as you could snap your fingers, people began jumping up all over the building, saying, “I’ll give this.”

“I’ll give that.” And in just a few seconds’ time, we had the whole amount we needed!

Yet they had a tomato-crop failure and a cotton-crop failure!

You see, you can’t keep talking about the negative circumstances and do anything for God.

After that, I began to talk to pastors about the revelation on faith for finances that I’d received from the Lord. “Well, now,” many pastors said, “that’ll work for you, because you’re out there on the field. But that wouldn’t work in pastoring.”

Well, I hadn’t received the revelation while I was still pastoring. I was out in the field ministry when I received that understanding. So I said to the Lord, “Lord, I know You told me that the last church I pastored would be the last church I’d ever pastor. But if You could arrange it some way or another so that I could temporarily pastor, I’d like to, because I want to prove out this revelation.”

I was holding a seven-week meeting in Dallas in 1953. The pastor said to me, “Brother Hagin, I’m going to be gone all summer on a leave of absence. Would you stay here and pastor the church? The associate pastor will do the visitation and the other work. All you’ve got to do is preach Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Tuesday and Friday nights. An evangelist is going to be here two weeks out of the summer. But for the rest of the time, you’d preach.”

“Well,” I said, “I’ll pray about it.” I prayed about it, and the Lord said, “This is your opportunity. You’ve got three months here to pastor.” So I said, “All right. And I’ll also run teaching services on faith every Monday through Friday morning all summer.”

(Incidentally, I was at that church teaching every morning for twenty-three weeks altogether—we took Saturdays off—and I never did run out of things to say on the subject of faith! You can’t exhaust the subject of faith.)

My family and I arrived the last Sunday of May, the Sunday before the pastor left. The pastor encouraged the people to be faithful and to pay their tithes. I was sitting on the platform and just very quietly, I exercised my faith for finances for the church.

I said, “When the pastor comes back at the end of summer, I claim that every bill will be paid, and we’ll be in the black, not in the red. Satan, take your hands off of our money. Go, ministering spirits and cause the money to come.”

All summer I didn’t have to pray any more about finances—I just said it that one time. I put into practice what the Lord had taught me about faith for finances.

And in your own life, just say it once. And whenever you think about it, just praise God for the answer.

That pastor also had a daily radio program that ran every day, including Saturday. It wasn’t the church’s radio program; it was his.

But so often, people out there in the listening audience think that because the program is being broadcast live from a church, that means the church is sponsoring the program. Therefore, this pastor hadn’t received a good response of people sending in money, so he had gotten behind financially.

It doesn’t sound big now, but forty years ago, $3,750 was big money. That’s how much the pastor was behind paying his radio bills.

So the radio station said, “You have to pay, or we’re going to cancel your radio program. You’ve got to pay every week for that week’s broadcast. You can’t go in the red anymore.”

Because I had held a revival earlier in this church that lasted seven weeks, I knew the church’s policy and practice for collecting the radio offering. The church board had said, “We’ll make Tuesday night radio night whether we’re in revival or not.”

During that seven-week revival, I noticed they Would never take less than forty-five minutes and up to an hour and a half on Tuesday nights raising

money for the radio program! Then I had to preach after that!

And on the radio show, the pastor and his staff were always talking about the trouble they were in. “We may not be on next week,” they’d say. “So send your money in.” But who’d want to send their money in to a radio program that won’t be on next week! So I claimed the whole amount he needed to pay the radio bill.

The following Tuesday night after the pastor left, the associate pastor got up on the platform and took an hour or so on the radio offering. (I hadn’t had a chance to talk with him yet.) He said things like, “We don’t want the pastor to come back and find that we’ve lost his program.” Finally, he got enough to pay for that week’s broadcast plus $10 toward the $3,750 that they were behind.

So later I said to him, “Now, dear Brother, don’t do that anymore.” I’d been left in charge of the operation of the church, so I said, “And don’t say on the radio, We’re going off the air.’

Just act like we’ve got plenty of money.”

“But if I do that, people won’t give anything,” he answered.

I said, “If they don’t, I’ll pay it myself.” Actually, I didn’t have enough money to buy an old set of hens and chickens!

“Well, okay. I’ll do it. You’re in charge,” the associate pastor said.

I said, “Okay. Next Tuesday night, you just take as little time as you can on the offering. Just say, ‘Now you remember, Tuesday night is radio night. This offering goes toward the pastor’s radio program. We’re going to pass the plates now.’

“And when you get on the radio, don’t say, ‘We’re going off the air.’ Just act like we’re going to stay on forever. Encourage folks to give because they should give. They need to be blessed.

Encourage them to help us by sending in money to support the program.”

This church had what they called a radio pastor or minister. I don’t know why they called him that; he didn’t preach. He just answered the mail. Anyhow, he came to me and said, “Brother Hagin, this beats anything I’ve ever seen. The mail has doubled; the offerings have *doubled.”*

When the pastor got back at the end of the summer, we had a business meeting with the board, the secretary, the treasurer, and so forth. Someone read the report and said we’d gotten the radio program out of the red. It was all paid. Anybody in the ministry will tell you that support usually *drops o f f* in the summertime.

Then not only that, but the church secretary and treasurer also read in the report: “Every bill is paid, and we have twelve cents left over.”

They didn’t know a thing about how I had prayed. I simply smiled- and said, “Well, all I claimed was that we’d be in the black. And we’re in the black—we’ve got twelve cents!”

The pastor said, “You don’t understand. Brother Hagin, this is a miracle. Ask any board member. This is the first time we’ve ever operated in the black in the summertime. We’ve got an expense fund that we have to dip into *every summer!* I’ve been here eight years, and never in the history of the church have we operated in the black in the summertime.”

I just said it one time. I just claimed once that we’d be in the black. Then I didn’t pray about finances the rest of the summer. I just had a high-heeled time in the Lord!

Get Convinced in Your Heart

Someone said, “Boy, I wish I could get that to work for me.”

It doesn’t work by wishing. If it did, everybody would be there. It works by getting convinced in your heart first. It won’t work just by saying, “Well, I’m going to try that. Brother Hagin said to do this, so I’m doing it because Brother Hagin said so.”

It won’t work that way. No, get the Word in your heart. Get the revelation of it in your spirit. Be convinced in your own heart; *then* say it. And it will work!

God’s Word works! Say out loud: “God’s Word works for *me.* And I am a doer of the Word, not just a hearer.”

But, you see, it will not do you any good just to say the Word unless you absolutely believe it from your heart. And you’ll only believe it from your heart as a result of meditating in the Word until it becomes a reality on the inside of you. Then you can exercise faith for finances. You can say with your mouth what you believe in your heart, and results will be forthcoming.

Chapter 5

Honor Your Pastor And Receive God’s Blessings

Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not

steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and i f there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling o f the law.

—Romans 13:7-10

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy o f DOUBLE HONOUR, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

—1 Timothy 5:17,18

Through the years there has been great debate about what or who is an "elder." If you'll rightly divide the word of truth (2

Tim. 2:15), you can see that as the early Church grew and developed, elders were no longer just older men. Elders were pastors, called and equipped by God to have oversight of the flock.

The word "pastor" is only used one time in the New Testament: *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, PASTORS and teachers"* (Eph. 4:11).

But even though that's the only place the word "pastor" is used, we can see the same ministry gift of the pastor called by other names.

The same Greek word that's translated *pastor* is also translated *shepherd.* The Word of God talks about Jesus being the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).

Also, Paul says in First Timothy 3:1, "… *If a man desire the office of a BISHOP, he desireth a good work.* The word "bishop"

is also translated *overseer.* But the word "bishop" is also used in association with the office of pastor.

1 PETER 2:25

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the SHEPHERD and BISHOP of your souls.

So then "pastor," "shepherd," "overseer," and "bishop" are the same offices called by different names.

In the New Testament, both Jesus and Paul used the example of a flock of sheep to refer to a church or a body of believers.

Well, who has the oversight of a flock of sheep? The shepherd does.

Notice in Acts 20:28, Paul said something in his farewell message to the "elders" of the church at Ephesus.

ACTS 20:28

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all THE FLOCK, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you OVERSEERS, to feed THE CHURCH OF GOD, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Paul was talking to the elders of the church at Ephesus. He said, "The Holy Ghost made you overseers." Who are

"overseers"? They're *shepherds.* Who is a shepherd? He's a pastor, so Paul was talking to *pastors.*

Notice the last part of Acts 20:28: "*.. to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD… . "* Therefore, these people were preachers and teachers, not just some businessmen that somebody appointed to be "elders" in the church.

Businessmen don't have any anointing to serve in the office of a pastor. When we say elder, shepherd, overseer, or bishop, we're talking about a *pastor.*

Let's look again at our text.

1 TIMOTHY 5:17

17 Let the ELDERS that rule well be counted worthy of DOUBLE HONOUR, especially THEY WHO LABOUR IN THE WORD AND DOCTRINE.

Remember our other text: *"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR"* (Rom. 13:7).

Pastors Are Laborers in the Word and Doctrine

Look at First Timothy 5:17 again: *"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."*

Notice that according to the last phrase, we are to render to everyone his due, "especially those who preach and teach the Word."

First Timothy 5:18 says, *"For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, THE LABOURER IS WORTHY OF HIS REWARD."*

You see, Paul is talking about the pastor—the shepherd.

LUKE 10:7

7 … for the labourer is worthy of his hire….

Now let's look at First Thessalonians 5.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:12,13

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to ESTEEM THEM VERY HIGHLY in love for their work's sake….

We should esteem very highly the office of the pastor and those who labor in the Word and doctrine, and we should consider them "worthy of their hire."

1 CORINTHIANS 9:7-14

7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who FEEDETH A FLOCK, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, THOU SHALT NOT MUZZLE THE MOUTH OF THE OX THAT TREADETH OUT THE CORN. Doth God take care for oxen?

10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

12 If others be partakers of this power [or authority] over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power [authority]; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that THEY WHICH PREACH THE GOSPEL SHOULD LIVE OF THE GOSPEL.

Now notice Galatians 6:6.

GALATIANS 6:6

6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate UNTO HIM THAT TEACHETH in all good things.

That's a little bit blind to us. But *The Amplified Bible* says, "Let him who

receives instruction in the Word [of God] share all good things with his teacher—contributing to his support."

The Living Bible says, "Those who are taught the Word of God should help their teachers by paying them." Another translation says, "… by sharing with him all good things."

Honoring the Pastoral Office

We read Galatians 6:6, *"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."* I just read that one verse to establish something I'm going to say to you about honoring the office of the pastor.

But more specifically, I want to talk to you about honoring *your* pastor, not necessarily honoring him as a man, but honoring the office that he holds. You should have respect and reverence for that office. This is an important scriptural key to financial prosperity in your own life.

We have an example in the New Testament of someone who reverenced the office of the high priest. Do you remember on one occasion in the Acts of the Apostles, Paul had a hearing before the Sanhedrin council, and the high priest commanded that Paul be smitten? In other words, someone slapped Paul. The high priest wasn't dressed as a priest at that time, so Paul didn't know he was a high priest.

When Paul was slapped, he said, ".. *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?"* (Acts 23:3).

When he said that, some who stood by said, *"… Revilest thou God's high priest?"* (Acts 23:4).

Immediately, because Paul honored that office (not the man—the *man* had done wrong), Paul apologized! He said, " … I *wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil o f the ruler o f thy people"* (Acts 23:5).

In other words, Paul was saying in effect, "If I had known that he was the high priest, I wouldn't have said that." Why?

Because Paul reverenced that *office.*

How God Regards Ministry Offices

You can understand something about God's nature and His mind by looking at Old Testament types and shadows. In the Old Testament, the Levites stood in the office of the priest, and they carried on all the priestly work. And certain Levites were high priests who served a longer period of time than the others who were just what we'd call regular priests.

The Levitical priests ministered and served for only twenty years—from thirty to fifty years of age. They retired at age fifty.

And God made a plan so that when they retired at age fifty, they were financially secure. The other people brought tithes unto the Levites and paid them.

And, of course, the Levites had cattle and lands and so forth.

So when they retired, they had plenty to support them.

There's Blessing in Honoring What God Honors

I've been in the ministry since 1934. Let me tell you something that I have learned about honoring those God has placed in the office of pastor. This is not something I *think.* It's not something somebody told me. It's something I *know!* The reason you should honor the office of the pastor and honor the man who stands in that office is that those who do will prosper in life!

The Apostle Paul talks about the laborer being worthy of his hire (1 Tim. 5:18). In other words, we are to see to it first of all that the pastor is amply taken care of financially.

We read in Galatians 6:6, *"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."*

But notice verse 7: *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"* A lot of times, folks take that scripture out of context. You've heard, for example, an evangelist take that scripture and preach it to sinners.

However, that scripture was written to the Church! Paul wrote this letter to be read throughout the churches in Galatia.

He's saying to Christian people, "Don't be deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Sowing and reaping is in connection with verse 6 that says we should communicate or give to him who teaches the Word.

I notice those churches that give to ministers always prosper.

They prosper because they're sowing the right kind of seed.

Churches and Church Members Reap What They Sow

I also notice what happens to those churches that muzzle the ox and put God's servant on such a low wage that he can hardly get by.

Churches that muzzle God's servant never prosper. Spiritual blessings are

withheld from them and financial blessings are withheld from them because they're in violation of God's Word.

You see, the *church* sows seed just as individual church members sow seed.

Many years ago, I knew of one local church that was very prosperous. It was a large church for the day. It doesn't sound too big today, but back then, 40 or 50 years ago, if you ran 2,000 people on Sunday night, that was tremendous for a Full Gospel church.

Most of us would run maybe 100 or 200 people on a Sunday night. But during revivals on weeknights, this church would run 800 to 1,000 people. So this was a big church.

One young man, who was the associate pastor at that church, was a good friend of mine. Once when he and I went to a convention together, he was greatly troubled about something.

He told me: "Our church will have a guest minister in to speak.

And we always give him the Sunday night offering. Weeknight offerings go to meet the expenses." (They put the guest minister up in a motel or hotel and fed him while he was there, plus they paid for advertising and utilities.)

This young pastor continued, "The offering on Sunday nights runs between three hundred and three hundred and fifty dollars."

Remember, this was forty or fifty years ago. We didn't have all the money we have now; we're more affluent today. That amount doesn't sound big now, but that was a lot of money back then.

He said, "I knew what the offering ran on Sunday nights, and when we invited a preacher to speak, that whole amount was supposed to be given to the guest minister. But the church board said, 'That's too much. Let's just give him one hundred and fifty and put the rest in the church treasury.'"

Well, you might as well take your gun, hold up a fellow, and rob a filling station as do something like that! That's robbery!

You see, the Bible said, "Don't be deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever you sow, you're going to reap" (Gal. 6:7).

Churches reap what they sow too.

After that, the church just went downhill to almost nothing.

In fact, one of the associate pastors told me several years later, "There hasn't been anybody baptized in the Holy Ghost in this church in three and a half years." Think about that!

A church congregation is going to reap what they sow. And many churches wonder why they're not prospering.

"I don't understand why God doesn't bless us," somebody will say. "We ought to get a different pastor."

But what are you doing with the pastor you *have?* Folks in authority in the church ought to see to it that the pastor is supported before anything else is supported. And I'll guarantee you that if they do, God will bless them.

I remember holding a meeting in a certain church down in Texas where I had held a number of meetings before. The pastor of that church said to me, "It was suggested to the church board that they set up a parsonage fund."

Now this was many years ago. A pastor usually had a parsonage furnished him with all utilities paid, and then he also received about $150 a month income.

But somebody suggested that because the pastor entertained so many people, a fund should be set up to help him with some of the expenses. This particular pastor was in a larger city, and preachers often came by to see him. You could be out a lot of money entertaining that many people.

So it was suggested to the board, "Let's set up a parsonage fund for the pastor to use to entertain people who visit him, to buy wedding gifts, and so forth. That way, he doesn't have to buy them out of his own pocket."

The fund was also to be used for furniture for the parsonage and to buy an automobile because the pastor had been making calls in his own automobile. He would still have his personal automobile, but this other automobile would be used for church work, because he was constantly on the run, visiting people.

Well, the board sort of hesitated, so someone suggested, "I'll tell you what you could do. Just try it for a year." This person knew that whatever a church sows they're going to reap! That goes for individual members too. So the board set a certain portion of the church income aside for this parsonage fund.

One of the men later told me, "I'll tell you, when we made the decision to start a parsonage fund, almost overnight, our church income doubled."

They held a business meeting the next year, and this man said, "Let's *up* that amount. We've been giving the pastor a certain percentage. Let's give a *bigger* percentage to the parsonage fund this year."

They did that, and God just kept blessing them. And one of the men told me that they met the following year and upped the percentage *again* for the parsonage fund.

He said, “We weren’t running that many more people in church, but God just kept blessing us.”

The board members said, “The more we put in the parsonage fund and bless the pastor, the more God blesses us.” They caught on to something, praise God!

You see, they were giving honor to whom honor was due according to the Bible.

Honor God by Esteeming, Honoring, And Obeying His Word

In the Old Testament God said, “… *them that honour me I will honour*… ” (1 Sam. 2:30).

Well, how are you going to honor God? You’re going to honor God by doing His Word. That’s one way to honor Him.

And He’ll honor you individually for honoring Him. He’ll also honor a church for honoring Him.

That’s why I want to encourage you to see to it that your pastor and those who have the oversight over you are well cared for.

One way you can do that is to always remember your pastor and his wife at Christmas. And find out when their birthdays are.

I realize that many people have small churches, and sometimes they can’t do as much as others. But you can do *something.*

You folks who are in authority in a local church, take note of this and attend to it. The pastor is not going to tell you these things because you might think, *He’s just saying this for his own benefit.*

But you know I’m not saying it for my benefit because I’m not going to get anything out of it! I’m just telling you to support and honor your local pastor because I want *you* to be blessed.

You can honor your pastor by giving him a gift at Christmastime. Also, send your pastor and his wife to conventions every so often. For example, we hold our own Campmeeting and Winter Bible Seminar every year. Send them to events like these. Put back a certain amount of money especially for conventions, or take up special offerings to send them.

I pastored for nearly twelve years, and there were certain conventions I needed to attend. One was a state convention our denomination held every year.

My church would take up a special love offering the Sunday beforehand to send me and my wife to the convention, pay our motel bill, and buy our meals

while we were there. And many times they'd buy me a new suit and my wife a new dress to wear to the convention.

Now why did they buy us a new set of clothes? Because we were going to that convention representing them. So when you send your pastor and his wife to a convention or special meeting, buy him a new suit and his wife a new dress.

Why? Because they're going to that meeting as your representatives, representing *you!*

If folks look at your pastors and they look bedraggled, those folks are going to say, "What kind of a bunch are they pastoring anyway?" And they're going to judge you.

No, you should want your pastor and his wife to look good, because they *want you* to look good!

I'm not teaching this just to be teaching. I'm telling you some very important facts. Those of you who are in the place of authority in your church, if you'll see that these things happen, I'll guarantee you that the blessings of God will rest upon you and your congregation in a greater way than they ever have before.

I received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and spoke with other tongues as a young Baptist boy preacher, and got the left foot of fellowship from among the Baptists. That's when I came over among the Pentecostals.

I can remember that in those days our churches were small.

They didn't promise you anything by way of a salary. You *had to* use your faith for your salary and for the operational expenses of the church.

Then, of course, you had to encourage the people to believe God too. But the Sunday morning tithes and offerings more or less belonged to the pastor. Sunday night's offering was usually a church offering, and Wednesday night's offering was for whatever expenses we had. The church operated on this kind of a financial plan. The leaders of that denomination didn't "muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn."

You 'Muzzle the Ox' by Robbing God's Ministers

I noticed in the early days when I was pastoring, one of the Full Gospel denominations nationwide was establishing one brand-new church every day, and two on Sunday! In fact, they expanded over a ten-year period, averaging seven new churches every single week.

Then the higher-ups in the denomination decided that they needed to put all the pastors on salary and that $100 a week was enough.

I remember one of the district superintendents of that denomination went to preach in a certain church that was quite large.

They'd run about 2,000 people on Sunday night. The congregation on Sunday mornings wasn't as big, maybe 1,500 to 1,800 people.

The pastor of that church didn't take the Sunday morning tithes and offerings for himself. They'd take up Sunday morning tithes and offerings for their two associate pastors. But the senior pastor just simply said to the people, "I'm going to be standing at the front door shaking hands with people as they go.

I'm just trusting God. If you want to leave anything in my hand, that'll be fine. If you don't, that'll be fine too."

So people would just hand him something—whatever they wanted. And probably, he received several thousand dollars a year.

But then along came this district superintendent who preached in this pastor's church. He took the pastor out to eat and said, "You ought to put yourself on a salary. Now be humble and set a good example. Put yourself on a salary of $100 a week.

That's big enough. Nobody usually got more than that back then.

"No," this pastor said, "I'm not going to do that. Did you notice I have the biggest church in the state? We get more people saved, more people filled with the Holy Ghost, and more people healed than practically anywhere in the state. We have more people in attendance. And I don't set myself on any salary."

The pastor continued, "Before I started preaching, I was a business man. I've had any number of offers from businesses to work for them. They'd offer me $19,000 to $24,000 a year to manage their businesses." (Now you understand, we're talking about late Depression days.)

The pastor said, "If I'm worth $19,000 a year to the world, I'm worth $19,000 a year to God."

Well, I'm not saying whether or not I agree with what the senior pastor did, and people did talk about it. They were against it. But I noticed that every single one of those churches who muzzled the ox that treadeth out the corn began to go down in number and in spiritual things. They didn't move so much in the manifestation of the power of God and the Holy Ghost.

The Practical Side to Faith for Finances

You see, there's a practical side to walking in the blessings of God for your life individually as well as corporately—as a church. And I'm presenting to

you that Practical side.

Sometimes people get the wrong idea when you begin to teach and preach faith. They think that if a minister is walking by faith, then they don't need to bless him.

For example, I remember once I went to teach at a convention for some people. I was just one of the speakers there.

I spoke every day for several days, about four or five days total.

When we were all getting ready to leave because the meetings were over, the people who were sponsoring the meeting told all the special speakers to go to a certain place where they would be reimbursed for their traveling expenses.

My wife and I had traveled at our own expense to get to that meeting. We were going on to another meeting, and I'll be honest with you, I didn't have enough money to get to my next meeting.

Well, we went along with the rest of them to get reimbursed for our traveling expenses.

When the people who sponsored that meeting came to me, they said, "Well, you preach faith—you're a faith preacher, so just go ahead and believe God." And they didn't give me a thing.

I was left stranded. You see, the Bible teaches faith, all right, but what they did was not faith because it wasn't in line with the Word. For instance, what about the scripture that says, "*Render therefore to all their dues…* " (Rom. 13:7)?

I remember thinking, I *don't know what I'm going to tell my wife, because I don't have enough money to get to the next meeting.* I didn't have any credit cards in those days. I didn't even have enough gasoline to get to the meeting I was scheduled to hold. I'd used all my money just to get to this special convention. And I'd had a long way to travel to get there!

The sponsors of that convention told me to just go ahead and walk by faith, so they didn't reimburse me. But, actually, in this case, there was some obligation involved on the part of the people who had invited me to speak at the convention. If it hadn't been for one of the businessmen attending the meeting, I would have been stranded. But he walked close enough to God that God could speak to him.

This businessman didn't know what had happened, and I didn't tell him. (I didn't tell a soul, actually.) He said, "Brother Hagin, the Lord told me to give you this one-hundred-dollar bill."

I said, "I believe it. Thank you." And that $100 got me to the place where I

was going.

Then later some of the higher-ups in the organization that sponsored the convention asked me, “Brother Hagin, did they give you anything for preaching there?”

I said, “Well, I don’t want to rat on somebody.”

They said, “But we want to know.”

I said, “Well, no, they didn’t give me anything. They said, You’re a faith teacher—just go ahead and live by faith.’”

“Who said that?”

I told them, and they said, “Well, we’ll take care of that.”

And in a little while I got a check from that group for several hundred dollars.

You see, those people at that convention ought to have given it to me to begin with. They “muzzled the ox that treadeth out the corn.”

Yet right on the other hand, any of us—even the preacher—can be in the wrong in the area of finances and rob people if he doesn’t render what is proper. He, too, could muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.

When the Ox Is Muzzled, The People Are Robbed Too

When I started preaching, I was just seventeen years old. I learned much better and faster after I got filled with the Holy Ghost (even though a person does have the Holy Ghost and the witness of the Spirit in the New Birth).

I started pastoring my first church at eighteen. It was a country church about eight and three-quarters miles from the courthouse square.

The first year I preached out at that country church, I wore out four pairs of shoes because I walked so much to get to the church.

Now you understand, they weren’t real expensive shoes.

Those were Depression days. J. C. Penney’s had three grades of shoes. You could buy one grade for 98 cents, another grade for $1.98, and the third grade of shoe for $2.98, and that was the best shoe they had.

I tried to get in the middle and buy the $1.98 pair. But I wore out four pairs in one year and didn’t get enough money to buy even one new pair.

You see, I never did take up any offerings. We didn’t even have an offering plate. I pastored there nearly three years and never received one single offering because I thought, *Oh, I’m going to live by faith. I’m a faith preacher and teacher.* I didn’t know I was living by ignorance!

There’s a vast difference between faith and ignorance! Faith is based on the knowledge of God’s Word!

I did, however, have enough sense to know that if I invited somebody to come and hold a revival, I was obligated to give him an offering. So we’d just take some man’s hat and pass it in order to give the visiting minister an offering. Otherwise, we never received an offering in church. I just never said a word about it.

I remember one day I needed $3 the very next day. That doesn’t sound big now, but to me that $3 looked like $3,000 today!

As I was walking to church that evening, I prayed about that $3 because I had to have it. But we didn’t take up offerings in our church because I was living by “faith.” As I said, I was actually living by ignorance!

At that time, we had a little red-headed lady who played the piano in the church. And right in the middle of a song that evening (she didn’t even wait till the end of the song), she just stopped playing, jumped up, and said, “I’m going to take up Brother Hagin an offering if it hairlips the devil!” I’d never heard anybody make a statement like that in my life! But that’s what she said right in Sunday night church!

Then she said, “The Lord told me Brother Hagin needs three dollars.” Boy, she was right on!

Since we didn’t have an offering plate or bucket or anything, she got some man’s hat and passed it around. We didn’t even have any music because she was the only pianist we had. She just passed the hat around.

Almost all of the offering was change because those were Depression days, and nobody had any folding money. I counted it out and came up with three dollars and a dime!

I don’t remember hitting the ground going home! I floated all the way home, I was so thrilled! That was the only offering I received in three years.

Then I got the baptism of the Holy Ghost and spoke with other tongues. I was already *born* of the Spirit, but then I got *filled* with the Spirit. Then I began pastoring a little Full Gospel church.

I pastored this small Full Gospel church for about six or eight months until I was called to a larger Full Gospel church. I pastored this larger Full Gospel church for about two years. So it had been more than two years since I’d left that small church.

The Lord began to deal with me because I hadn’t taught the people at that smaller church about tithing and giving. You see, I’d never said a word to

them about money.

The Lord said to me, “You robbed those people. You did them wrong.”

I had to ask the Lord to forgive me. Then He said, “I want you to go back and ask that congregation to forgive you, and I want you to acknowledge that you were wrong. Then I want you to teach them on the subject of tithing and giving.”

“Now, Lord,” I said, “I’m not going to contact that pastor.

I’ve been gone about two years. If I contact him and tell him, ‘The Lord wants me to come back there and preach,’ he may think, *Why, he’s trying to get back in here and take this church over!”*

I said to the Lord, “That pastor has the same Holy Ghost I have. *You* talk to him.”

We make a mistake sometimes by thinking that when the Lord tells us something, nobody else knows anything about it.

But why be so stupid? We aren’t the only ones who have the Holy Ghost. The same Holy Ghost is in all of us who are born again.

About two weeks later, I got a letter from that pastor. Since those were late Depression days, we didn’t have a telephone.

And even if we’d had one, we wouldn’t make a long-distance call on it because that would run up the bill.

So this pastor wrote me a letter. As I said, it was about two weeks after I’d prayed and repented before God, saying, “Give me an opportunity, and I’ll go back and ask the church to forgive me.”

In his letter, this pastor said, “Brother Hagin, I could be wrong, but it seems to me the Lord’s been dealing with me about your coming back here and preaching. Maybe you could hold a revival or something. If you feel led to come, contact me.”

I wrote him a letter and said, “Yes, I can come.” I *didn’t* tell him, “Yes, I’m anointed to come and speak to your church, and God already talked to me about it.” I simply said, “Yes, I can come to your church.”

He contacted me again and gave me a date to come to his church, and I accepted.

When I went back to that church, the first thing I did when I got up before the congregation was tell them exactly what the Lord had said to me. I said, “I have to repent. I had to repent before God because I failed Him. My unwillingness to teach on the subject of tithing and giving wasn’t anything in

the world but an ego trip, and I called it faith.

"No," I continued, "I thought I was living by faith, but I missed God when I didn't teach you to tithe and give; therefore, I robbed you. God wanted to bless you, but He couldn't because you hadn't invested anything."

Give God Something To Work With

The Bible says, "*… whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"* (Gal. 6:7). In other words, if he sows nothing, he's going to reap nothing. That church sowed nothing, so they reaped nothing.

So I said, "I want you to forgive me. I ask your forgiveness.

I've already repented before the Lord, and thank God, He forgave me. Now I want you as a congregation to forgive me. I did you an injustice. I did you wrong!"

Then I said, "I'm going to teach you now what I should have taught you while I was here."

Isn't that a different way to start a revival meeting—to teach on the subject of tithes and offerings? But I did it!

Thank God for the Word—for *all* of the Word of God. The Word of God teaches us to tithe and to give offerings. But it also teaches us give honor to whom honor is due.

The Word of God is God speaking to us. And when we come in line with God's principles for success and prosperity, including honoring our pastor and the office he stands in, we will reap a sure harvest of blessings!

Chapter 6

Sowing and Reaping and The School of Obedience

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.—2 Corinthians 9:6

There is a law of sowing and reaping both in the natural and the spiritual realms. And it's a law that works! Yet many believers have not realized and understood the importance of this biblical principle, especially in the area of finances.

We know we can receive our needs met by faith in God's Word just as we can receive healing or any other blessing found in God's Word by faith.

But right on the other hand, you could be blessed materially through a manifestation of the Holy Ghost, too, like the widow woman in the Old Testament. God spoke to her through the prophet Elijah, and although there

was a famine in the land, her oil cruse just kept pouring out oil and the meal barrel just kept giving her meal (1 Kings 17:16). That was just as good as money.

Well, that was a supernatural manifestation. And there are supernatural manifestations for us very often in the area of finances when we faithfully obey God and sow seed.

The manifestations of the Holy Spirit are as *He* wills; we can't *make* them happen. But whether there is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit or not, we always have the Word to act upon.

Yet there's another side to faith in God's Word for finances.

In other words, you can't reap a crop naturally or supernaturally without *sowing seed.* You can't just go out into the backyard and say, "I'm going to pick some tomatoes" if you haven't *planted* any tomatoes! Or you can't say, "I'm going out into the field to pick cotton tomorrow" and expect to pick any cotton if the ground hasn't been prepared and the seed sown. If cotton hasn't been *planted,* you're not going to pick any cotton!

I think that folks often miss it in this area when it comes to faith for finances. They want God to bless them, all right, and it's amazing how He'll have mercy on them and help them sometimes. But oftentimes, they're trying to exercise faith principles to reap a crop when nothing has been planted!

From my experience throughout my many years of preaching faith, I think more people fail when it comes to faith for finances than anything else. The reason is that they're trying to exercise faith for finances, but they haven't planted any seed.

LUKE 6:38

38 GIVE, and IT SHALL BE GIVEN UNTO YOU; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For WITH THE SAME MEASURE THAT YE METE WITHAL IT SHALL BE MEASURED TO YOU AGAIN.

You see, the Bible plainly said, "Give, and it will be given unto you. With the same measure with which you sow, it shall be measured back unto you." Jesus Himself said it.

Let's look again at our text.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6

6 … He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

If you want a bountiful crop, you've got to sow bountifully.

It Pays To Obey God's Unchanging Word

If a person will just obey the Bible, he will reap many wonderful results. For example, God plainly said to Israel, *".. if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that… all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee… "* (Deut. 28:1,2).

And God is the same today; He hasn't changed. We don't have a different God in the New Testament than they had in the Old Testament. For example, if God didn't want people to tell lies in the Old Testament, He doesn't want people to lie in the New Testament.

Somebody said, "Oh, prosperity is just for the Old Testament." But not telling a lie is not just for the Old Testament, and not stealing is not just for the Old Testament!

MALACHI 3:10

10 BRING YE ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE, that there may be meat in mine house, AND PROVE ME NOW HEREWITH, saith the Lord of hosts, IF I WILL NOT OPEN YOU THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN, AND POUR YOU OUT A BLESSING, THAT THERE SHALL NOT BE ROOM ENOUGH TO RECEIVE IT.

I personally have come to the conclusion that there are spiritual laws, just like there are natural laws. And when one follows those laws and puts them into practice or action, they work no matter who the person is.

We all know that in the natural there are natural laws.

There's the law of gravity, for instance. And the law of gravity will work for everybody.

Suppose somebody wanted to demonstrate that the law of gravity doesn't work. He climbs up on top of a building and says, "The law of gravity is no longer in force, and I'm going to jump off this building to prove it."

Well, he'd better jump where there's some grass, and he might make it! If he hits concrete or asphalt, it's going to be tough on him because when he jumps, he's going to go *down* whether he's saved or unsaved!

Whether you're saved or unsaved, pretty or ugly, a man or a woman, or a boy or a girl, the law of gravity is going to work for you!

I'm thoroughly convinced that in the spirit realm there are laws too. And when you come in contact with those laws, they're going to work for you no

matter who you are.

Now don't misunderstand me. How much more do those laws belong to those who are God's children! They're God's laws, and how much more will His laws work for those who have more light concerning their operation!

Spiritual Laws Will Work for Anyone

One thing that got me started thinking along these lines happened in the last church I pastored.

There was a man who came to church with his wife and three children. He was not a Christian, but she was saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, and was a Sunday school teacher in the church.

Her husband told her, "I'll go to church with you and the children, and I'll go with you to Sunday school *until* somebody says something to me personally about being saved. Then I'm quitting."

I taught an auditorium Bible class, and this man never missed my class. He never missed a Sunday morning, Sunday night, or Wednesday night service. When we were in revival, he never missed a revival service.

Usually the Sunday night service was an evangelistic service. Back then, you had a bigger crowd on Sunday night than you did on Sunday morning. And when we'd give the invitation during the Sunday night service, often those with soul-winning hearts would leave their seat and go minister to someone they felt under conviction, but resisting. They were real soul-winners.

I didn't know this man had said, "As soon as somebody says something to me about being saved, I'm quitting." But I was led by the Holy Spirit to get this group of soul-winners together, and I said to them, "Don't any of you ever talk to So-and-so about being saved."

"Why not?" they asked.

"Because you'll run him off."

You see, the Holy Ghost can tell you things. I don't mean He told me that in words; I just had an inward intuition that it was so.

Some of the folks in that group really didn't know when God was leading them or when He wasn't leading them, and they were overly zealous.

So I had to just practically forbid them to say anything to that man about being saved.

"But what if the Lord leads me?" one of them asked.

"If He leads you, I'll know it."

Wouldn't that be strange if God Almighty, full of wisdom, would set a pastor over a congregation and then start doing something in the crowd and never tell the pastor about it?

It would be strange if God put him there as overseer and then start working among the people and doing things without telling the overseer what He's doing.

So no one spoke to this man about being saved. His wife came by the parsonage one day and said, "Brother Hagin, you know my husband is not a Christian. He wanted me to talk to you. He feels a little uneasy around you."

Her husband was a contractor, and he and another man were partners in business. They were building a building downtown. I don't know if they had underbid on that building or not, but their business was in danger, and the banker told them the only thing they could do was to take bankruptcy.

The woman continued, "My husband and his partner are not Christians. But I'm saved, and I go to this church. My husband's partner is married, and his wife is saved and goes to such-and-such a church.

"My husband said, 'I told my partner that I believe if we'll start paying our tithes and giving offerings, God will prosper us.'"

His partner had said, "Yes, but I'm not a Christian."

This woman's husband said, "I'm not either, but my wife is, and your wife is. I'll put in my tithes and offerings at my wife's church, and you put in your tithes and offerings at your wife's church."

His partner agreed, so the woman asked me, "Brother Hagin, would that be all right with you?"

Well, of course, we would like to have the extra money for the church, but I'll be honest with you, I was still very immature.

(I'm learning and growing all the time, aren't you?) And at that time, I really doubted that it would work since he was not born again.

But I didn't tell his wife that because I didn't want to discourage her. You don't want to discourage folks. If you can't *help* them, please don't *hinder* them.

So I simply said to her, "Yes, we will accept his tithes and offerings."

I'm a witness to the fact that in thirty days' time, their business turned around, and they were out of the red and in the black!

This woman's husband was still unsaved, but he got to where he would talk to me some. He had bought out his partner a few months after they turned the

business around.

The man said to me, “I got all of our employees together and testified to them how God blessed the business when I started paying tithes. I encouraged them to pay their tithes too. Of course, I can’t fire them if they don’t, but I encouraged them to pay tithes.”

Some of them asked him, “What’s tithes?”

He told them, “That’s ten cents out of every dollar that belongs to God.” And then he’d testify to them about how God brought his business out of ruin by his paying his tithes.

He even tried to get sinners that he hired to pay their tithes!

Not only that, he even got one of my deacons to start paying his tithes faithfully!

Again, don’t get me wrong. I’m not saying that a spiritual law will benefit a sinner indefinitely.

God won’t honor that. A person can’t continue to violate the Word in one area and expect it to continue to work for him in another area.

God will honor His Word. And He’ll honor the person who endeavors to walk in all the light that he has at the moment.

About a year later, this businessman got saved. One night in church, he just came to the altar, got saved, and was filled with the Holy Ghost.

About nine months before this man got saved, I looked at the books where we kept records of the giving in the church. I saw that in that particular month, sixty percent of the church income came from this man and through church members who worked for him. God made him a blessing to us even before he got saved!

But God saved him, and the man is saved to this day. He still puts his tithes in his home church, but he also supports this ministry. He has for years and probably will continue to do so till he dies and goes to Heaven.

I tried to figure that out—how a sinner could be blessed by giving tithes and offerings! This man who paid his tithes to our church was a sinner when he first started paying his tithes and giving offerings. And God blessed him because he found a spiritual law that works.

I just finally had to come to the conclusion that there’s a law of sowing and reaping. Somehow this man got in contact with that law, began practicing it, and it worked for him and his family.

Cooperate With God’s Laws and Prosper!

So in your own life, just go ahead and obey the Bible in the area of finances. Pay your tithes and give offerings. Act on God's Word in faith, and God will bless you because He's faithful and true to His Word.

Then beyond cooperating with God's laws concerning tithing and giving offerings, be open to receive further light from God's Word concerning giving to others. Also, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit who will very often direct you specifically to give.

Now don't do something just because somebody else did.

Don't operate on the other fellow's experience. Operate on what you know the Bible said, and operate on what the Holy Ghost is saying to *you.*

At RHEMA Bible Training Center, we've had guest ministers come and speak to the student body. One minister told about an experience he had way back in the beginning of his ministry when he didn't have a very good automobile. He gave it away, and God gave him a new one.

Some of the RHEMA students, bless their hearts, thought they'd get new cars, too, so they gave their cars away and walked the rest of the school year!

Somebody said, "But *that minister* did it and it worked."

"Yes," I said, "but God *told* him to do it. Did God tell you to do it?"

"Well, no. I just thought I'd get a new car."

It doesn't work that way.

The School of Obedience

Somebody else talked about the fact that he gave a house away. He gave a $40,000 house away, and God gave him a $250,000 home.

Somebody said, "Boy, bless God! I'm going to give mine away too. I'm going to get me a new house!" He gave his house away and then he and his family were out in the cold. I know of that actually happening. There they were without a thing.

"Why didn't that work?" they came to me bawling.

"Well, did God tell you to give it?"

"No, but So-and-so said *he* did it."

Don't you do something just because So-and-so did it. Be sure the Spirit of God is telling you to do it.

It's *Always* Right and Timely To Practice the Word!

On the other hand, you've got the Bible. If you know what it says, you don't

have to have any leading to pay tithes and to give offerings. You know you're supposed to do that. The Bible tells you to do that. You don't have to have any leading to give. Jesus said, *"Give, and it shall be given unto you … "* (Luke 6:38).

You don't have to have any leading to sow because the Bible said, *".. He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully"* (2 Cor. 9:6). The Bible says that, so just do it. But when you get out beyond *that,* it's when you obey the Spirit of God that things happen.

For many years in the ministry, God had never told me to give a car or anything like that away. But I gave offerings and sowed seed, and I prospered financially.

As my wife and I moved to different places over the years, God has given us a number of different homes. I could tell you some miraculous things that have happened in that area.

For instance, once I was looking at a house and didn't have the money at all. But I was convinced the Spirit of God was moving, and by faith, I told a man I'd take the place. I needed $1,000 for a down payment, and back then, $1,000 was $1,000!

It was miraculous how God brought that down payment in.

Several years ago, God did finally say something to both me and my wife (I didn't just act apart from her) about giving something away. I knew when He quickened it on the inside of me. He said to give one of my automobiles away. So we just gave it away—a brand-new automobile.

When I first told Oretha what the Lord had quickened to me, she said, "I got the same thing in my spirit."

Then later the Lord also led me to give our ministry airplane away. And about four months after that, a fellow I didn't even know wrote a letter to the ministry and said, "We feel led of the Spirit to send your ministry this check for $500,000." Glory to God!

I'm well satisfied that if I hadn't obeyed God, that wouldn't have happened. Yet I didn't have that in mind when I gave away the airplane to another ministry. I really didn't expect to get anything. I just knew I was obeying God.

"Well," somebody said, "I wish I could get something like that to happen to me."

I'll tell you where you've got to start. You've got to start by obeying the Lord

and His Word with your nickels, dimes, and quarters.

Practice Faithfulness Where You Are

I remember one particular incident that took place in 1940 at Christmastime. There was a fellow, a young evangelist, in town from off the field. He was older than I was in age but younger in ministry. In other words, I'd been preaching longer than he had.

In fact, he was just starting out, and he and his wife had five children.

Some of his folks and his wife's folks were members of my church. So while he was off at Christmastime, he attended our church. I tried to get him to preach, and I would have given him an offering for preaching.

You realize those were Depression days. And you'd give $5 to a fellow who preached for you on a Sunday night.

Somebody said, "That beats anything I've ever seen! Only $5!"

But let me tell you what finances were like in Depression days. For example, I remember one fellow who worked for the railroad company whose monthly salary was only $37.50 *a month.* He had three children, so there were five of them in the family. He paid house rent, fed his family, and drove an automobile on $37.50 a month!

So, you see, $5 for an evening's preaching was nice by comparison! And I would have given this young evangelist an offering, but he wouldn't preach. He said, "Brother Hagin, I'm just sort of embarrassed to preach here in front of my kinfolks."

So I went ahead and preached that night. Then I was shaking hands with folks when the service was over, and the Lord said to me, "I want you to give him $10."

"Dear Lord," I said, "I can't give him $10. Don't You know this is Christmastime?"

I could go back and show you my books. I still have them.

You see, I only averaged $43.15 a month myself. Well, $10 was about a week's pay!

"Lord, I can't give him $10," I continued. "I won't have anything left for Christmas. I haven't even bought my wife a Christmas present yet."

"I want you to give him $10."

There I was shaking hands with people and smiling, and all the while I was having an argument between my head and my heart! (You just don't know

what's going on inside a fellow sometimes!) I was shaking hands with people, talking to them, smiling and greeting them, and my head and heart were having a fight.

The Lord was talking to me in my heart, but my head was saying, *No, that won't work. Don't do that. Man, what are you going to do? You haven't bought your wife a Christmas present yet!*

Finally, I just got that $10 together, and everybody was gone by then. The young evangelist was standing outside talking to somebody. I just shook hands with him and left it in his hands. I didn't even have a $10 bill—just dollar bills and some change.

It wasn't very long afterwards that I heard his mother-in-law tell somebody, "You know, my son-in-law was off at Christmastime. He has five children, and he just had enough money to pay his rent and his utilities. He didn't have a dime left—not a dime—to buy his kids anything for Christmas. He couldn't buy Christmas dinner. And somebody gave him $10."

(Whether you realize it or not, $10 would go a long way back then.)

I didn't jump up and down and holler, "That was me! I did it!"

No, I just stayed quiet and said to myself, *Thank God. I'm so glad I obeyed God.*

In the process of time, I was shaking hands with folks at church before an evening service. Our church was right on the highway. In those days all the highways went right through town; we didn't have any freeways.

A Greyhound bus pulled up and stopped right in front of our church, and I saw a fellow get off the bus, get a suitcase, and begin walking toward the church. I recognized him as a minister.

I had never really officially met him, but I knew who he was because I had seen him at conventions.

I wondered, *What's he getting off here for?* It was about time to start church, so I greeted him, and he told me who he was.

I said, "Yes, I know who you are."

He said, "I've never officially met you, but I knew who you were too."

I said, "Well, since you're going to be with us tonight, why don't you preach for us."

He said, "Okay. But I need to go over to the parsonage, change my shirt, and freshen up."

“Go ahead,” I said. “We’ll be singing. Just come on over and preach.”

We were going to give him $5 out of the church treasury.

That was the custom. But while he was preaching, the Lord said to me, “I want you to give him $12.50 out of your own pocket.”

That doesn’t sound big now, but that was more than a week’s pay back then. Actually $12.50 a week for pay would be about $50 a month. I only averaged $43.15 a month, so that was a little bit more than a week’s pay.

You may make $500 a week now, but to me that $12.50 was just as big then as $500 would be to you now.

I have a good memory, but I don’t know to this day what that fellow preached on because I was having an argument between my head and my heart.

“I can’t give him $12.50,” I told the Lord. “I just can’t do it. I can’t afford to.” I didn’t have any bank account, not even a checking account.

I never did settle it during the service. We went back over to the parsonage after the meeting, and I was still having a fight between my head and my heart.

The minister was getting ready for bed, and I began counting out $12.50. Most of it was in change (nickels, dimes, and even pennies—that’s how we got it in those days!).

So I was counting that out and getting it ready for him. My wife was in the kitchen fixing us a bite to eat when the Lord said to me, “Now the reason this minister got off the bus here is that he’s run out of money, and this is as far as he could go.”

The Lord said to me on the inside, just as plainly as anything: “He’s going down to Winnsboro next Sunday to preach and try out for a certain church there. They’re going to elect him as pastor over there.” This minister came back into the room where we were, and I told him, “Hold out your hands,” and I gave him the $12.50.

He put it in his coat pocket, and we began talking about something else. And the devil said to my mind, “Now you’ve played whaley” (that’s just a good Texas-Oklahoma colloquial expression that means you’ve goofed). The devil said to my mind, “You’ve missed it and made a fool of yourself.” After all, I had given away my week’s pay. And the devil said, “You gave it away, and now you’re just out the $12.50.”

Just to confirm what the Lord had said, I asked the minister, “Where are you going after this?”

“Brother Hagin,” he said, “my wife and two children are down at her parents’ house in Winnsboro. I went to the bus station in the last town I was in and said, ‘This is how much money I have. How far will it take me?’ I thought I’d take the bus that far and hitchhike the rest of the way.”

He continued: “The bus brought me right here to your town.

I asked the bus driver to let me off in front of the church here. I didn’t have a dime left—that was as far as I could go. I planned on hitchhiking to Winnsboro, but with this money, I can buy a ticket.”

Then he said, “Next Sunday I’m supposed to preach over at a certain church to try out to be their pastor.”

I said, “Brother, that’s all you have to say. Now I want to tell you something. You’re the next pastor over there.” And sure enough, he was!

Now pay attention to something here. About two years after that happened, my wife and I went to minister to a lady on her deathbed. Her husband had taken her by ambulance to three clinics across north-central Texas. Doctors at each one of these clinics had said the same thing: “We can’t do anything for her.

She’s too far gone. Among other things, she has an incurable blood disease in the last stages. She’s dying; she’ll be dead in a few days.”

To *Obey* the Voice of God, You Must *Know* the Voice of God

My wife and I went to minister to that dear lady. We didn’t know her. One of our church members knew her. And as we went into her room to pray for her, we knelt by the bed, and the same Voice that spoke to my heart and told me to give that one minister $10 and the other minister $12.50 said to me, “Get up.

Don’t pray. Just stand up and say to her, ‘The Lord told me to tell you that you’re healed. Get up!’”

I did, she did, and God did! Hallelujah! That was on a Thursday, and she was in our church on Sunday, dancing and shouting the victory.

On our way back home from ministering to that woman on Thursday, my wife and I were rejoicing that God used us to raise up a woman from the deathbed. Just about that time, just like somebody was sitting in the back seat, the Lord said to me, “I couldn’t have used you here if you hadn’t obeyed Me on that $10 and the $12.50.”

I’d forgotten all about that. It had been about two years since I’d given that money to those two ministers. I had to stop and think, “What do You mean, that $10 and the $12.50?”

The Lord brought it back to my remembrance, and I said, “Yeah, I remember that.”

He said to me, “If you hadn’t obeyed Me on that, I couldn’t have used you here.”

We all want God to use us. Wouldn’t you like God to use you to raise up somebody from a deathbed? Well, friends, how are you going to know the Voice of God when He tells you how to get people off a deathbed if you don’t know His Voice when He tells you to give away $1 or $5?

You see, that’s the way you start learning God’s Voice. But if He can’t trust you with $5 or $10, how’s He going to trust you to raise somebody from a deathbed? You could very easily call learning to hear God’s Voice in giving *the school o f the Holy Ghost* or the school of obedience because it all works together!

There is a law of sowing and reaping that many believers have yet to tap into, and as a result, they have not prospered like God wants them to. But there is another principle of obedience to the Voice of the Holy Spirit that will also bring rich rewards if you practice it.

Start where you are. Be faithful to obey the Word by paying your tithes and giving offerings. And be obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit to direct you specifically to give. You can’t out-give God. If you sow seeds bountifully in faith and obedience, you will reap a bountiful harvest of blessings!

Chapter 7

Godliness is Profitable in All Things

But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

For bodily exercise profiteth little [or as the margin says, bodily exercise profiteth for a little time]: BUT GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come….

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. —1 Timothy 4:7,8,15

The Bible says godliness is profitable in all things. That’s talking about prosperity for the whole man—spirit, soul, and body. The Bible also says that the profit godliness brings is for this life *and* the life to come. And the profit that godliness brings in this life is more than just finances and material profit. There’s more to it than that, but financial prosperity is certainly a part of it.

Notice particularly verse 8: *“For BODILY EXERCISE PROFITETH LITTLE: but GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE UNTO ALL THINGS, having promise of*

the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

The reason bodily exercise only "profiteth little" is that it only profits in one area. Bodily exercise does profit, but it only "profiteth little." It is wrong to take the physical and put it on the same level with the spiritual. That is where many folks miss it.

Keep the physical in its place and it's right and blessed.

But godliness is profitable. That simply means it pays off.

Anything that is profitable pays off.

In 1944, I was preaching down in east Texas, where one of the pastors there had a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old son. The son was a little short fellow and sort of stooped-shouldered with a hollow-looking chest.

The pastor's son asked me, "Is it wrong to take up physical fitness and exercise?" You see, he wanted to build up his chest and his biceps.

Some of the old-time Pentecostals thought just about everything was wrong. Some even thought it was wrong to wear deodorant. *I* always thought it was wrong *not* to!

When the pastor's son asked me if it was wrong to take up physical fitness, I told him, "Why, certainly not."

He said, "I picked up a book at a newsstand, a magazine on physical fitness, that told how to order certain equipment."

I went back to that town, about fifteen months later, to hold a meeting. I was staying in the parsonage with these same folks.

This pastor's son pulled off his shirt to show us he had expanded six inches around his chest! He'd also developed his biceps.

This young man could have developed other parts of his body, but he was just interested in developing his chest and the upper part of his body. He stood up straight instead of stooped because he'd built up certain muscles.

However, although that exercise paid off for him by building him up physically, it didn't build him up spiritually or mentally.

That is the reason that bodily exercise profiteth little.

But godliness is profitable *unto all things!* It pays off in everything "*.. having promise of the life that now is, and o f that which is to come."*

Now a lot of folks try to tell you that we don't have any promise in this life. They tell you that we just get saved and then we're to go through life with our nose to the grindstone, living on Barely-Get-Along Street way down at the

end of the block, right next to Grumble Alley. And they think that is a sign of godliness!

But, no. God said, "*.. godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise o f THE LIFE THAT NOW IS …"* (1 Tim. 4:8).

We've got promises in *this* life. The rest of that verse says, "…AND *of that* [life] *which is to come."* So godliness pays off here *and* hereafter.

"Godliness" just simply means *living for God.* Now what do we mean, "living for God"? Living for God means doing just exactly what Paul said in verse 12.

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Be an example for believers in word, in conduct or manner of life, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. That's living for God. And living for God is profitable!

Yet the way some people talk, living for God doesn't pay off in this life. But notice that Paul said, "*… having promise of the life that NOW IS.. . . "* That's present tense. You see, too many times, Christians only think about what a great day it will be when we all get to Heaven. And don't misunderstand me, that *will* be a great day, thank God! But these folks seem to imply that God's promises are all for the next life.

But notice that Paul said living for God is profitable in this life and in the next one, too, "*… having promise of the life that NOW IS, AND OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME"* (1 Tim. 4:8)!

What does it mean, godliness is "profitable"? You see, God has an investment in us as believers, and He wants to realize some returns on His investment! We talk about *our* inheritance. But *God* has an inheritance in *us*, and He desires that it produce a high profit, because He said, "Godliness is *profitable."*

Then notice in the latter part of First Timothy 4:15: *"… that thy profiting may appear to all."* That's talking about in this life!

You know that in this life when a person gets a little money, sometimes he wants to invest it. And he usually wants to invest it where it brings the best dividends.

I believe that God not only desires for us to be saved (and thank God, He *has* remitted our sins), but He also wants us to bring glory unto His Name *after* we are saved. That will help bring God great dividends for His investment in

us!

In the Bible, the Apostle Paul writing to the Church at Corinth said something along this line.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:9

9 … ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

That can be a little bit blind to us because that word "husbandry" doesn't mean so much to us today. But a modern translation reads, "Ye are God's *garden."* Another translation said, "Ye are *God's farm."*

Well, you expect a farm to produce, don't you? You expect a garden to produce; you expect it to be *profitable.* There wouldn't be any profit in planting a garden or tilling or working a farm if it didn't produce anything.

You know, friends, godliness is not a hindrance to success.

It's exactly the opposite. *Godliness is profitable unto all things!*

It's profitable unto protection, promotion, perpetuity, and prosperity. Hallelujah!

Godliness Ensures *Protection*

First of all, godliness will ensure *protection.*

You see, if we're God's, we belong to Him! And He will protect us. You remember Paul said in First Corinthians 6:19, *"… your body is the temple o f the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have o f God, and ye are not your own."*

You see, you don't belong to yourself. You're not your own.

You were bought with a price; you belong to God.

Since we belong to God, then we ought to expect Him to take care of us. As I said, godliness ensures *protection.*

Now that doesn't mean that we're to act foolish and think we'll just automatically be protected. For example, Acts 27 says Paul had to appeal his case to Caesar and was on his way to Rome to do so. As they boarded the ship for Rome, Paul said, " … I *perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only o f the lading and ship, but also o f our lives"* (v. 10).

Now notice Paul didn't say, "God *showed* me" or "God *told* me." No, Paul *perceived* it. You see, each one of us ought to have a certain amount of spiritual perception.

Paul perceived that their voyage would be "with hurt and much damage." But

those who were sailing with Paul didn't pay any attention to him because the south wind was blowing softly.

So they set sail for Rome anyway.

ACTS 27:14-20

14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;

19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

All hope that they would be saved was gone. They'd thrown all of their merchandise overboard to try to save themselves.

Then Paul stood forth in the midst of their hopeless situation (v. 21).

After seeking God and the Lord speaking to him (in fact, the Lord sent an angel), Paul said, *"… I exhort you to be o f good cheer: for there shall be no loss o f any man's l i f e among you, but o f the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel o f God, WHOSE I AM, and whom I serve"* (vv. 22, 23).

In other words, Paul said, "I belong to God." Hallelujah!

Just think about it! God saved the whole bunch of them just because Paul belonged to God. I don't know whether or not there was anybody else on board who belonged to God.

But God saved all of them because of one godly man. The angel told them, "Now the ship is going to be lost.

But if you'll do what I tell you, there will not be the loss of anyone's life."

Paul said, "I belong to God!"

ACTS 27:23

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, WHOSE I AM, and WHOM I SERVE.

Then Paul went on to tell them what the angel told him.

ACTS 27:24,25

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I BELIEVE GOD, that it shall be even as it was told me.

Now notice this passage of Scripture again. There's another little clause here that I want to emphasize. After Paul said, "…*there stood by me … the angel o f God, whose I am, and whom I serve"* Paul also said, "I believe God!" (v. 25).

Paul said three things: I *belong to* God, I *serve* God, and I *believe* God!

Not only did Paul belong to God, but Paul said, "I serve God."

That's very positive. Notice he didn't say, "I'm *trying* to serve God. The Lord knows I'm doing the best I can." No, talk like that is just a human cop-out.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, Paul said, "The time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. 4:6). Paul knew it was time for him to leave this world. But notice what he said: *"I have fought a good fight, I have FINISHED MY COURSE, I have kept the faith"* (v. 7).

Notice Paul *finished* his course. He didn't halfway finish it!

You see, if you're going to serve God, you're going to put God first above everything else. That means that whatever He tells you to do, you don't quit in the middle of the stream.

That's what it means to be godly—to live for God and serve Him wholeheartedly. There's reward or profit for living a godly life. Living for God will affect you in every way, including in the realm of finances.

The Lord didn't say the going is always going to be good. In fact, the Word of God says, "The afflictions of the righteous are many" (Ps. 34:19). Now that's translated from the Hebrew language, and that word translated "afflictions" is talking about troubles and trials.

In Psalm 91, God said, "I'll be with him in trouble." Well, you see, if you never had any trouble, why would He say He'd be with you in trouble? No, serving God doesn't mean you're not going to have any trouble.

Some people get the idea if you live by faith and walk by faith, you just sort of float through life on flowery beds of ease.

They think you'll never have any persecution or opposition or trouble. They get the idea that the blessings of protection, promotion, perpetuity, and prosperity will just sort of fall on them like ripe cherries off a tree. But that's not what the Bible said.

Psalm 34:19 says, *"Many are the afflictions o f the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out o f them all."*

You see, we're living in a world where Satan is called its god (2 Cor. 4:4). Although we're *in* the Kingdom of God, we also live *in* this world. But we can be thankful we are not of this world.

Godliness ensures divine protection! That simply means *God will see you through!*

Godliness Ensures *Promotion*

Godliness pays off! It's profitable! It will ensure protection, and it will also ensure *promotion.*

When I talk about promotion, I'm not talking necessarily about promotion according to the world. Yet right on the other hand, your promotion or your profiting shall appear to all according to First Timothy 4:15. "All" means everybody in the world and everybody in the Church as well. All means *all!*

Godliness ensures promotion. You know, God has been *unable* to promote many folks. He wanted to bless and promote them. He wanted them to develop and grow. He wanted their profiting, including financial prosperity, to appear to all.

But, you see, they didn't apply themselves. They were too lazy or slipshod. Too many times they had a cotton string for a backbone. We need people, especially young people, with a crowbar—an iron bar—as a backbone. We need young people who will say, "I'm going to stand my ground no matter what!"

I certainly wasn't perfect growing up. I knew nothing about holiness; I'd never heard the word. I was born and raised in a denomination that taught that you can't help but sin—that you've got to sin every day.

I got born again the twenty-second day of April, a Saturday night, at twenty minutes till eight o'clock in the south bedroom of 405 North College Street in the city of McKinney, Texas.

But I went right back to the same church I was going to because there was no Full Gospel church in our town. And I was an oddity to all the people in my

church because I had changed.

You notice that Paul said to Timothy, "… *be thou an example o f the believers, in word, in CONVERSATION.* .." (1 Tim. 4:12).

To many of us, the word "conversation" means *speaking words.* But Paul just got through saying, *"… be thou an example o f the believers, in WORD … "* (v. 12). Then he said, "… *in conversation…. "* So the word "conversation" has to mean something different.

If you'll look it up, you'll find out that this Greek word translated "conversation" here means your *conduct.* In other words, be an example in the way you conduct yourself. Or be an example in your *manner of life !*

As a teenager, I spoke to different groups among other denominations, especially to youth groups. And the young people would all say to me, "Kenneth, what makes you different from us? You don't go to the dances" (yes, they even put on worldly dances in church!).

I didn't go because I don't believe in that. I didn't then, and I don't now. I don't believe in putting on any kind of a dance, especially in church. Now the Holy Ghost comes on me sometimes, and I begin to dance in the Spirit. That's a different thing entirely. That's the kind of dancing I believe in.

But these young people said, "You don't go to the dances with us. You don't smoke cigarettes." Kids in their early teens and even younger kids sometimes think doing that makes them grown up.

I was fifteen when I got saved. When I was about thirteen, sometimes when somebody else was smoking, I would smoke. I could hardly inhale it, and then I would just puff the smoke out.

But, you know, the first thing I promised God when I got born again was, "I'll never smoke another cigarette." Some way or other, my spirit just knew things my head didn't know, and I knew smoking wasn't right. So I promised Him I'd never smoke another cigarette. And I never have.

I didn't even go to picture shows (they called movies "picture shows" in those days). The only ones that seem to be any good now are those they had back then! Most of these modern-day ones are full of junk! You need to be careful to be an example along these lines. Be an example in your manner of life or conduct.

Those young people who were questioning me were all church people. They said, "Kenneth, you don't drink." (They'd even have church and Sunday school parties and dance, drink, smoke, cuss, and have sex.)

"You don't do any of those things," they said to me. "What makes you

different?”

“Well,” I said, “I’m a new creature.”

“A new what?” they’d ask, and that would give me the opportunity to preach. You see, they opened the door. I didn’t just go around spouting off. But if they opened the door, I was ready. So don’t go around trying to push something off on somebody. But if they ask questions and open the door, you be ready to answer them.

Pay careful attention here. I’m still talking about promotion—promotion in every way, including financially. I’ll tell you about a secret I learned years ago as a Baptist boy.

After I got born again, I missed a whole year of school.

When I became bedfast, I’d already completed two years of high school, but I just skipped by; I got a C minus on two subjects.

And in my day, if you failed one subject in the second year of high school, you had to take the whole year over, not just that one subject.

Well, there were two subjects, English and mathematics, that I’d made C minus on. They graded us A, B, C, or D. The grade D meant you were failing, and a C minus meant you just barely skimmed by.

The teachers in both the English class and the mathematics class said to me, “You actually made a D, but you lacked two points of making it with a C minus. You just skimmed by.”

Neither one of them knew what the other teacher had said, but they both said about the same thing. They said, “I thought maybe I’d missed a point or two on some test through the year, so I just gave you the C minus.”

But then I got born again, and, of course, I began reading the Bible. Having been in Sunday school all my life, some of the things I read refreshed my thinking because I remembered the stories I’d heard as a young boy.

I’d walk to school every morning. Those were Depression days and there wasn’t much traffic, and sometimes a whole bunch of us would just walk right down the middle of the street.

But while everybody else was talking and laughing, I would talk to the Lord. You know you can talk to Him out loud, but you can talk to Him on the inside, and He hears that too.

Now let me prove that by the Scripture. In First Corinthians 14, Paul said, *” I f any man speak i n an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret”* (v. 27).

Then notice what he said in verse 28: *"But i f there be no interpreter, let him keep silence.. . . "* That is, you don't say anything out loud.

Now notice the rest of the verse: "*… and let him speak to himself, and to God."* So you can talk to God right on the inside of you.

And so every morning on my way to school, I'd remind the Lord and myself of His Word, making my faith confessions.

I didn't know that's what I was doing, but when you sum it up, that's what I did. I reminded Him about Daniel and the three Hebrew children in the Book of Daniel who were in school over in Babylon.

And, of course, according to the Hebrews' religious custom, the Hebrews didn't eat certain animals. The food that was supplied to Daniel and the three Hebrew children in Babylon was against their religion. So they went to the dean of the school and said to him in effect, "It's against our religion to eat these certain foods, and we don't want to violate our consciences."

The dean answered, "You know, you're going to get me in trouble."

"Well," they said, "just put us on bread and vegetables for ten days."

He did, and at the end of ten days, their countenances were brighter and they looked better than all the others who were eating the regular foods that were supplied to them.

So the dean said, "Just go ahead and eat what you want to eat."

Well, when Daniel and the three Hebrew boys graduated, the Scripture says, *"And i n all matters o f wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired o f them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm"* (Dan. 1:20). God promoted them.

So I'd remind the Lord of that Scripture. I said, "You can bless me like that too. Now I'm going to do my part, don't misunderstand me. I'm not going to shirk my duty. I'm not going to be absent from school (and I never missed one day or one class).

"Lord, I'm not going to whittle my time away," I continued.

We had a study period in study hall. I spent every one of those periods studying.

And I never took one single book home to study for the next two years of high school. I didn't do any studying except at school, and I made nothing less than a straight-A report card. I stood at the head of the class.

God Rewards Faithfulness

You can do the same thing. If you'll believe God, He'll promote you too. That means He'll move you forward.

When you live for God, He'll promote you. He's on your side. He's not against you. Now if you just whittle away your time, it won't work. You see, if I'd just messed around in school, throwing paper wads all day and sleeping during the study-hall period, then I would have had to do some studying at home. And then if I hadn't studied at home, I would have failed.

I remember in foreign language class, I made an A minus.

And the teacher said to me right in front of the whole class:

"Kenneth, actually I guess I should have given you an A, because nobody else in the class made anything above a C. You were so far ahead of the rest of them, I thought, *Maybe he's not that far ahead o f them, so I'll give him an A minus.*

"But I may have missed it," she said. "I probably should have given you an A. I wanted to say that in front of the whole class."

But, you see, the point I want to make is that I moved up ahead of all of them in class, and I didn't do any studying at home. I didn't write any themes at home. I never even took a book home with me. But I applied myself at school, and I believed God.

You can apply yourself, and God will promote you. But if you whittle away your time and you don't put God first, you'll get in trouble.

Notice again our text that says godliness, or living for God, is profitable. That's true in the financial realm, but it's also true in every other realm. *It pays to live for God.*

You'll remember that Jesus said, *"But seek ye first the kingdom o f God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Matt. 6:33). Notice He said, "… *all these things shall be ADDED unto you,"* not taken away from you!

Godliness Ensures *Perpetuity*

Living for God is profitable in this life because it ensures or guarantees protection and promotion. It also guarantees *perpetuity* to those who live for God.

Let's look at what the Bible says about those who *don't* live for God.

PSALM 55:23

23 … bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days….

Well, that does away with the theory that everybody's got an appointed time to die, and when that time comes, he's going to die anyway no matter what. Here in this verse it says, "Bloody and deceitful people won't even live out half of their days."

Sometimes people say, "Well, I'm not a person out for blood." But what about deception? It says, *"… bloody and DECEITFUL men shall not live out half their days.. . . "* That's what deceitful means—to deceive people.

Deceitful people are on your side one time, and the next time they're against you. One time they're one way, and the next time they're another way. They're very deceptive. We sometimes call them "two-faced."

God said that not only those who are out killing people won't live out half their days, but deceitful people won't live out half their days either.

JOB 17:9

9 The righteous also SHALL HOLD ON HIS WAY, and he that hath clean hands shall be STRONGER AND STRONGER.

"The righteous also shall hold on his way…. " In other words, he'll stay right in the way of God and walk in the way of God.

And he'll get stronger and stronger. Hallelujah!

Well, now, if you'll go back to what Paul said to Timothy, that's exactly what Paul was talking about. He said, "Be an example in word, in manner of life or in conduct, in love, and *purity."*

We walk in purity by walking in the Word and by walking in love.

PROVERBS 2:1-5

1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding [knowledge];

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

Look at verses 3 and 4 again: "*… i f thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; I f thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures."*

We could say it like this: “If you would be just as diligent about crying after knowledge and lifting up your voice for understanding as you would about looking for hidden treasure….” If you knew where there was a treasure hidden, you’d go and dig for it, wouldn’t you?

Verse 1 says, “*… i f thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee.”* Paraphrasing that, it says, “If you’ll receive the Word of God and hide His *commandment o f love* with thee,” because that commandment of love fulfills all commandments!

PROVERBS 3:1

1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my COMMANDMENTS.

Understand this, *all* the commandments of God are fulfilled in the law of love. You don’t have to worry about any other commandment than the law of love because if you walk in love, you’ll fulfill all the commandments of God. That’s the reason Paul told Timothy, “Be an example in charity or in love.”

ROMANS 13:10

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

What are the benefits of godliness?

PROVERBS 3:2

2 For length of days [shortness of days? No! *Length* of days], and LONG LIFE, and peace, shall they add to thee.

I’m glad I saw this truth years ago. *“My son, forget not my law … ”* (Prov. 3:1). The law of love is this: Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. Love is the fulfilling of the Law. The rest of Proverbs 3:1 says, “*… but let thine heart keep my commandments.” If you walk in love, you will fulfill all of God’s commandments!*

If you’re walking in love, you won’t break any command that would curb sin. What will walking in love do for you? Is there any benefit or profit to it? Yes! It will bring you profit spiritually, mentally and emotionally, physically, financially, and in *every* area!

In the margin of my Bible, it says the Hebrew words for “long life” are “years of life.” In other words, “For length of days, and *years of life* , and peace, shall they (remembering God’s law and keeping His commandments) add to thee” (Prov. 3:2)!

Godliness ensures perpetuity—long life!

PROVERBS 10:27

27 The fear of the Lord PROLONGETH days….

"Fear" in this verse doesn't mean you fear God like you would a rattlesnake or a tornado. It's talking about reverential trust!

Again, in the margin of my Bible, the word "prolongeth" in the Hebrew means *addeth.* The fear of the Lord will add days to your life!

PROVERBS 10:27

27 … but the years of the wicked shall be SHORTENED.

"Well," somebody said, "I knew people who were wicked, and they lived a long time."

Well, they still shortened their days! If they hadn't lived that way, they could have lived longer and better!

I don't know about you, but I set out years ago to get God's best in life. And I saw this truth right here among all the other truths. Thank God for His Word.

You understand that it's conditional whether or not days are added to your life—whether or not you live a long life. God promised it, all right, but it's up to you to reap the benefits of God's promise. It's up to you whether or not it's so in your case.

Godliness Ensures *Prosperity*

Godliness not only ensures protection, promotion, and perpetuity, but, thank God, godliness also ensures *prosperity!*

Of course, when you use that word prosperity, people think about the natural realm—about financial and material prosperity.

That's true, but it actually means to prosper in spirit, soul, and body.

Did you ever notice that according to what John said in his third Epistle, your physical, material, and financial prosperity depends on your *spiritual* prosperity?

3 JOHN 2

2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest PROSPER AND BE IN HEALTH [that's physical prosperity], EVEN AS THY SOUL PROSPERETH.

You know, when it comes to the realm of the natural, so many people don't see the truth that God wants them to prosper financially and walk in divine health. They think, "God wants to bless us *spiritually,* all right. But we may

have to go through life poverty-stricken and barely able to get by."

But that's not true, and we see that fact over and over in the Word.

2 CHRONICLES 26:5

5 And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: AND AS LONG AS HE SOUGHT THE LORD, GOD MADE HIM TO PROSPER.

If you'll read all of that account, you'll find out that God is talking about material and financial prosperity.

Besides that, remember what God said to Joshua in the very beginning of Joshua's ministry when he'd taken over to be the leader in place of Moses.

JOSHUA 1:8

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then THOU shalt make THY way PROSPEROUS, and then thou shalt have GOOD SUCCESS.

We could paraphrase that verse like this: "This *Word o f God* shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do *(do* the Word; don't just be a *hearer* of the Word) according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous…."

Did you notice what God said? He said *you'll* make *your* way prosperous. Now we understand, of course, that God would be behind your prosperity. He's the author of it. But it's up to *you* whether or not you make your way prosperous.

It's up to *you* whether or not you prosper mentally. It's up to *you* whether you prosper in school or on your job. It's up to *you* whether you prosper financially and materially. It's up to you!

God tells you what will happen when you put His Word first: "… *THEN thou shalt make thy way PROSPEROUS, and then thou shalt have GOOD SUCCESS."*

Dealing Wisely in the Affairs of Life

I like another translation of Joshua 1:8: "You'll be able to deal wisely in the affairs of life."

Well, you couldn't have good success if you didn't deal wisely in the affairs of life.

And God tells you exactly how to deal wisely so you can have success! It says the Word of God shall not depart out of your mouth—you'll meditate therein day and night. You'll observe it and do it, then you'll make your way prosperous.

You'll have good success. Glory to God!

To tell you the real truth about it, most folks who are not prosperous are that way because they haven't honored God.

They've *dishonored* God. But if they honor God, they will prosper.

For example, some people are always behind in paying their bills. I guess most of us have been there at sometime or another before we could see certain truths the Word of God taught. But some are *always* behind with their bills—behind with their rent, behind with this payment and that payment.

You see, so many people are always behind and can't get caught up. Then they can't do what they ought to do about spreading the Gospel—sending out missionaries and getting the Word of God out to others.

Reasons Why Some Don't Prosper

Certainly, God wants us to prosper, but we have our part to play. And if we honor God, He will bless us.

We already read in Joshua 1:8 *how* to prosper: by meditating on the Word day and night that we may observe to *do* it. So we know it's God's will that we prosper.

On the other hand, however, you can get in the ditch on the other side, believing God is going to prosper you no matter how you're living.

Some people think that all they have to do is "honor" God by giving and God will give back to them. But, no, He won't, because God honors His Word—*all* of it, not just a part of it.

God expects you to walk in the light that you have from His Word. We already found out from the Word that our financial and physical prosperity is dependent upon our *spiritual* prosperity (3 John 2).

I know of people who thought God was going to prosper them in their giving (and they gave for that very purpose—just to get something in return). But they weren't living right. In fact, they got their money by being crooks! They were givers, all right, but God didn't honor their giving.

I know of one particular man years ago who was a millionaire (that was like being a billionaire today). He had a palatial-home in those days that was way beyond what anybody else had in those days.

Back then, not too many people had Mercedes, Lincolns, or Cadillacs either. Yet he and his wife, son, and daughter all had their own expensive cars. He also had his own private jet.

This wealthy man was very liberal in his giving, yet he eventually lost everything he had. He didn't prosper.

Why didn't this man prosper? He paid his tithes; he gave offerings. He didn't prosper because many of his business deals weren't quite right. In other words, they were crooked or shady.

And God couldn't honor that.

That man's shady business dealings affected him spiritually.

They affected him financially, and they affected him physically.

Both he and his wife were very sickly.

You see, the whole package of God's blessings goes together. But if we're not careful, we'll put all our emphasis on money.

Certainly, God's Word talks about material prosperity because the Bible says, "*… whatsoever he doeth shall prosper"* (Ps. 1:3). But let's look again at the second verse of that first Psalm.

PSALM 1:2

2 But his DELIGHT is in the LAW OF THE LORD [God's Word]; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

That goes right along with a statement Jesus made in Matthew chapter 6.

MATTHEW 6:33

33 But seek ye FIRST the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Did Jesus say, "But seek ye *second* the Kingdom of God"?

No! He said, "*… seek ye FIRST the kingdom o f God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

Now we expect God to honor His Word and to do His part.

But as I said, we have a part to play too. We can't give just to get.

Don't misunderstand me. There is a sense in which we *do* give to get. But we don't give *just* to get. The "getting" is not our main motive. We need to maintain balance in this area. And we need to be an example to others in this area too.

Remember Paul told Timothy, "… *be thou an example o f the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, i n faith, i n purity"* (1 Tim. 4:12). Paul was telling Timothy to be an example to other believers.

God wants us to be examples, but there are three things that are problem areas with many people, and that's why they're not prospering. Sometimes it's just one area that's causing the problem. Sometimes it's two of the three areas. And with some people, it's all three of them.

Reason Number One: Laziness

Number one, some people haven't prospered because they're *lazy.* They want to sponge or live off the other fellow.

People come to RHEMA Bible Training Center sometimes and try to do that. Now I know there have been some people whom the Lord has told not to work while attending RHEMA.

They volunteered in various areas of the ministry helping us, and God took care of them. But if the Lord didn't tell you not to work, then *work!* Don't be lazy. Do something!

My wife and I were in a certain restaurant once, and a fellow waited on us who was well qualified to do some great things. He was a college graduate, yet he was there at that restaurant waiting on tables.

Well, he wasn't lazy. He was doing something. And God will prosper him and bless him. He won't have to wait on tables forever. But, you see, he didn't just sit around and wait for something big to turn up. He put his hand to something.

People have told me that they were waiting for something to turn up in the way of a job. But the only thing that will turn up is more bills because they're just sitting around not doing anything!

I was holding a meeting in another state back in 1958. The pastor of the church where I was holding the meeting asked me, "Brother Hagin, would you talk to Brother So-and-so?"

"Certainly," I said. "If I can help him, I will."

The pastor went on to explain that this man and his family had gotten saved and started coming to church there. And they had gotten some of my books. Then the man in the family quit a good job and said he was going to live by faith and that God was going to take care of him. I call that ignorance gone to seed!

The poor children in that family were suffering. The wife was doing some laundry, ironing, and housework for different church members just to try to

get a few dollars.

Some of the church members would take up money to help the children while the father was just staying home, sleeping every day, waiting for something to happen.

This pastor had two men in his church who owned factories, and one of them offered this man a job for good pay for that day.

“No,” the man said, “that’s not exactly what I’m looking for.

You know, I’m believing God.” This man had been lying around that way for two or three years! And the church was taking care of him and his family!

That man wasn’t any more believing God than I’m an astronaut who landed on Mars day before yesterday! He was nothing in the world but a lazy bum! He was just plain lazy. And a lot of folks haven’t prospered because they’re lazy. That’s the very reason that particular man hadn’t prospered.

Reason Number Two: Extravagance and Excesses

Then number two, others haven’t prospered and won’t prosper because of *extravagance.*

No, it isn’t even the devil. I know it’s a whole lot easier if you can lay it off on the devil, saying, “Well, the devil got me into this debt.”

No, if you’ve been extravagant, the devil didn’t get you into it. You ran up those bills on those credit cards yourself. And the devil didn’t sign a single one of them!

In fact, you knew when you bought those things that you were going to have to make payments. And you knew that the interest is excessive—sometimes twenty-one percent. But you just kept buying anyway.

The devil didn’t get you into that. That’s called extravagance.

And God can’t bless that.

Reason Number Three: Poor Management

The number three reason folks are not prospering is closely related to reason number two: *poor management.*

Some folks just don’t know how to manage money. Some *know* they don’t know how to manage money, so they let their spouse manage it for them, and they prosper as a result. If you don’t know how to manage money, you can get yourself in a mess!

One reason some people are poor managers is they buy everything they see. They put it on a credit card, and they get into trouble. Then they want to

borrow money to get out of trouble.

They may even preach and teach prosperity, yet they're not prospering. No, and there's another little saying that goes with that: They're not *going* to prosper until they straighten up! They don't have to have the devil cast out of them. They just need to get some sense and some discipline. The Bible teaches us to discipline ourselves.

"Yes, but I really *wanted* that item." Well, the Bible teaches us to keep the flesh under (1 Cor. 9:27). When you get into trouble with credit cards and act extravagantly, that's the flesh; that's not the devil.

Many times when folks act like that, they didn't really need the things they bought anyway. They were already up to their necks in debt.

But God wants us to prosper!

I like something that John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church, said along this line. He said, "Make all you can; save all you can; and give all you can."

Pay your tithes and give offerings. Make all you can. If you get a better job and can make more money, that's fine. Do it. But don't spend it all. Pay your tithes and give offerings, and save all you can.

I remember the years when I was in The Voice of Healing.

There were about 120 of us who were evangelistic preachers in The Voice of Healing. I had been holding meetings in churches, and the Lord said to me at that time, "Stay in the churches."

So for the next thirteen years, I held meetings in churches.

Then the Lord said, "Get out of the churches and go hold meetings in auditoriums and neutral places. If you do go to a church, put on your own meeting."

I had my ledger on my desk. I kept a record of all my finances. And I saw something very interesting over a period of months.

Before that, for a thirteen-year period, I had been in the churches. I'd held meetings about once a month for two or three weeks—sometimes longer.

I saw that every three months, out of every three meetings, there was one meeting that I would make money way over and beyond my budget. The next meeting, I'd just barely make my budget, and the third meeting, I wouldn't meet my budget. But because I made more than my budget the first month, I saved the extra money. I didn't spend it. That way, I had it made. I never did get into trouble financially.

But I saw others who were co-laborers in the ministry, people used of God in the gifts of the Spirit, and miraculous and spectacular things happened in their ministry. They judged their budgets by their big months—by the months when they made over and beyond their budgets. I know that because they'd tell me and others about it.

And I even knew one Voice of Healing minister who rented offices three different times. He bought equipment and desks.

He hired a couple of secretaries. He did that based on his "big months," and he wasn't even operating as big as I was. He couldn't make the payments and lost it all. He did that three times, and each time, he lost it all.

You see, he thought when he had that big month, it was going to be that way from then on. I knew a number of others who did that very thing.

Well, I thanked God for the big month, but I knew that every month wasn't going to necessarily be big, especially in the ministry. That's the reason I had my budget, and I stayed with my budget.

The next month I just barely met my budget. I didn't go below my budget, but I received just in the neighborhood of my budget.

Then that third month, I fell below my budget. Yet it didn't hurt me because I'd saved the extra money from the month I went above my budget. And I went a whole lot more above my budget the first month than I went below my budget the third month!

But if I had based my budget and had started spending on the basis of that big month, I would have been in trouble.

Honor God by Walking in the Light of His Word

We've dishonored God a lot of times by laziness, extravagance, and poor management. But God said, "Those who honor Me, I will honor."

There are a number of ways we can honor God in the area of finances. We can honor Him by believing His Word and by being a doer of His Word. That includes faithful tithing and giving.

We also honor God by honoring our pastor and those who have the oversight over us. And we honor God by walking in godliness and by being good stewards of what He's given us by properly managing our finances.

God desires that His children prosper and succeed in life.

And He has provided us biblical keys—scriptural laws—to put into practice that will positively change our circumstances. As we are faithful to walk in the light of God's Word, we can expect Him to bless us in *every* area of life,

including the area of finances.

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