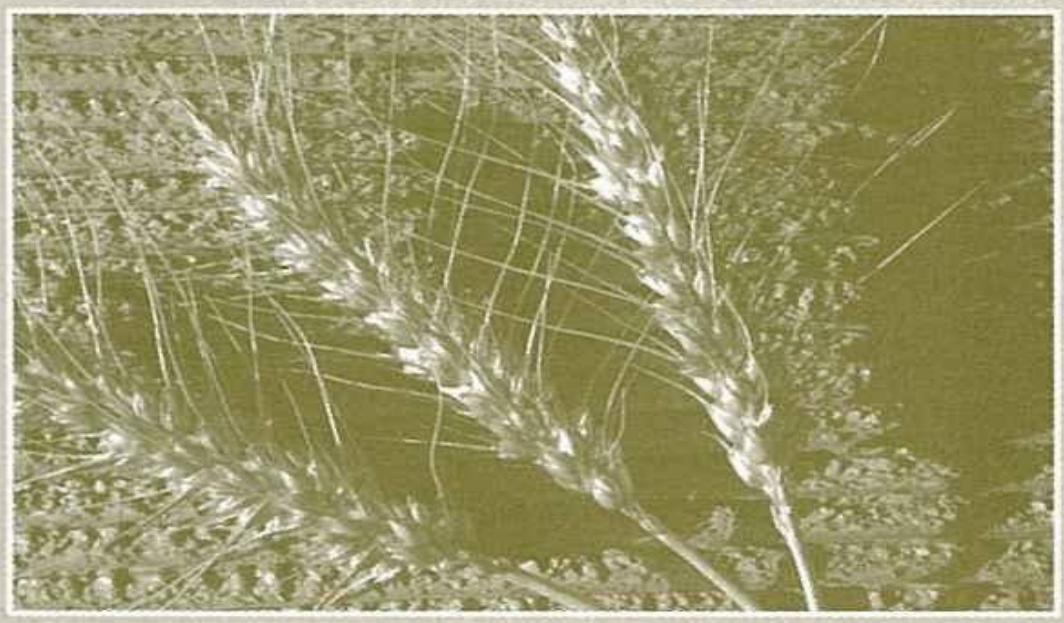
How God Taught Me About PROSPERITY



Kenneth E. Hagin

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in this volume are from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

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—Chapter 1—

A Revelation From Heaven

The subject of prosperity is currently so misunderstood in the church world that I feel I must comment on it.

The Lord Himself taught me about prosperity. I never read about it in a book. I got it directly from Heaven. It blessed me and my family so much I want to share it with you.

I was born and raised Southern Baptist, and the first church I pastored was Baptist. When it came to pastors, we Baptists had a little saying: "Lord, You keep him *humble*, and we'll keep him *poor.*" We thought we were doing God a favor. We thought that was the way it ought to be.

Then I got over among the Pentecostals. Because they had more vim, vigor, and vitality than we Baptists, they were twice as good at keeping the pastor poor!

And some way or other, we young preachers swallowed whatever our elders said about prosperity; we didn't take the time to examine the Word of God on the subject.

We were taught that if you're really *humble*, you're poor; and it's a characteristic of *holiness* to live on Barely-Get-Along Street, 'way down at the end of the block, right next to Grumble Alley.

We were taught that if you're a Christian, you ought to go through life —*especially* if you're a preacher—without anything, with the soles of your shoes worn out, the seat of your pants worn out, and the top of your hat worn out. And drive an old car with the fenders flopping. That's being humble and holy! That's honoring God!

I had heard others say, "I don't want any of this old world's goods," so I picked that up. I said, "I don't want any of this old world's goods." And I didn't *have* any of this old world's goods, either (as if there were something wrong with this old world's goods).

“Well, yes, there is,” someone will argue.

No there isn’t.

I pastored nearly 12 years. We had faith for healing for ourselves and our children, but we had no faith for finances. We always struggled financially, both as a family and as a church, in every pastorate.

As I look back now, I turn my face away in shame that I was so stupid. We’d finally make it through some way or another, by kicking and clawing, bawling and squalling, fasting and praying. It would look like we never were going to make it, but we would. God had mercy on our stupidity and ignorance and helped us in spite of ourselves.

—Chapter 2—

Willing and Obedient

I left my last church in 1949 and went out in “field ministry,” going from church to church holding what we called “revivals” or “meetings.”

After I’d been out on the field a solid year, from February 1949 to January 1950, my records showed I’d earned $1,200 less than my church had paid me for the previous 12 months.

Plus, the church had furnished our parsonage, and it was the best we’d ever lived in. Plus, they’d furnished all the utilities. Plus, they’d paid all my expenses to every convention I’d needed to attend, and they were always buying clothing and other gifts for my wife and me.

Now that I was out on my own, I had to pay my own rent, my own utilities, go to conventions at my own expense, and pay travel expenses to and from the meetings.

During that first year on the field, my clothes and my car had worn out. The car had four bald tires and no spare. In fact, it was so bad, I’d had to sell it for junk! I got enough out of it to pay just the interest—nothing on the principal—on three different loans I had taken out. With the little that was left, we bought some school clothes for the children. That left us with virtually nothing.

We lived in a three-room apartment. Ken didn’t have a bedroom. He had to sleep on a little rollaway bed in the kitchen, the room where I studied the Word when I came in off the field.

I was holding a meeting down in East Texas when I went to the Lord about our financial problems. I went on a partial fast, and each afternoon I spent several hours in prayer. (I talk to the Lord like I talk to you, because He knows what we sound like anyway; there’s no use in our putting on airs.)

On the third day, I had all my statistics laid out in front of me once again, and I said, “Now, Lord, see how much better off I’d be if I’d stayed in my church? That’s what I wanted to do anyhow.”

I'd gotten hold of that scripture that says, *"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land"* (Isa. 1:19), and I quoted it to Him again. I reminded Him that I had earned $1,200 less than my pastorate had paid me. I reminded Him that my clothes had worn out and I was on foot, without a car.

I kept saying, "Lord, You said right here in Your Word, *'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land,'* and I am sure not eating the good of the land. My children are not adequately clothed. My children are not adequately fed. We are not adequately housed. I know the problem is not with You, because You don't ever change. Where is the problem?"

That still, small voice of the Lord spoke to my spirit, my innermost being: "First of all, that Scripture you keep quoting to Me says, *'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.'* The reason you are not eating the good of the land is because you don't qualify. You are *obedient,* but you aren't willing. So you don't qualify to eat the good of the land."

Don't tell me it takes a long time to get willing! I know better. I made a little adjustment down on the inside of me, and I got willing in 10 seconds!

I said, "Now I'm willing. I know I am willing. You know I am willing. And the devil knows I am willing. Now I am ready. I am ready to eat the good of the land, because You told me that being willing is all I lacked."

"Yes," He said. "I know you are."

The next thing the Lord said to me was, "Your trouble is, you don't practice what you preach!"

Now, that was a low blow! I grabbed my stomach—I hurt so much it was as if someone had hit me in the stomach with their fist.

I protested, "Lord, You've hit me a low blow! Lord, I do practice what I preach. What do You mean, I don't practice what I preach?"

"Your trouble is, you preach faith, but you don't practice faith," He replied.

I came to my defense. I said, "Why, Lord, You know I do! In all the years since I got my healing, I've never really been sick. I've always received my healing, and my children have always received healing."

“Yes,” He said, “you practice faith when it comes to healing, and that’s commendable. But you use your faith only for healing, salvation, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. That’s as far as you ever go with your faith.

“But faith is the same in every realm, in every sphere. Faith works identically in every realm and in every sphere. Faith for finances works just like faith for healing, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, or salvation. Faith is the same in the financial realm as it is in any of the others.”

He continued, “Now, if it were healing you needed for your own body, you would claim it by faith and go out and publicly announce you were healed. You’ve done that. Sometimes even while you were preaching any symptoms you had would disappear. Now, you see, you have to do the same thing when it comes to finances.”

“All right, Lord, I’ll do that.” I saw I wasn’t exercising faith in finances at all. We hadn’t known we could exercise our faith for finances, so we did without. We struggled through. We barely made it.

—Chapter 3—

Back to Beginnings

You can't believe beyond actual knowledge. The Lord said, "I'll have to correct your theology a little." (I'd been indoctrinated with all that "religious" thinking, and unconsciously I still thought that maybe it was wrong to have the things of this world.)

So the Lord said to me, "Go back to the Book of Beginnings." (I knew He was talking about the Book of Genesis.)

He said, "You know I made the world and the fullness thereof [Ps. 89:11]?"

"Yes."

"You know I made my man Adam?"

"Yes."

"You know it says in the 50th Psalm that *'every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills'* [v. 10]?"

"Yes."

"It says in the Old Testament that the silver and the gold are the Lord's" [Hag. 2:8].

"Yes, I know that."

He said, "It's mine because I am the Creator and I made it. But then I turned it all over to my man Adam.

"I said, 'Adam, I give you dominion over all the work of my hands.' That meant Adam had dominion over the cattle of a thousand hills. He had dominion over the world and the fullness thereof. He had dominion over the silver and the gold."

Then the Lord said, "For whom do you think I made the cattle of a thousand

hills? For whom do you think I made the world and the fullness thereof? For whom do you think I made the silver and the gold—for the devil and his crowd? No! For my man Adam. But Satan came along and Adam committed high treason and sold out to the devil!"

I had never heard anybody preach this. Back in January 1950, this was brand-new to me—a revelation!

The Lord continued, "Adam originally was the god of this world. He ruled and dominated this world. That's the way I planned it. When Adam sold out to Satan, then Satan became the god of this world, as it says in Second Corinthians 4:4. But he wasn't the god of this world to begin with."

The Lord said, "Now, the world can build a dance hall, a honky-tonk, a beer joint, or a theater, put neon lights all over the front of it, and dress it up nicely. But if you want to dress up the church, people say, 'Ohhh, nooo!' I expect my people to have the best place in town to meet in!" (The Lord actually said that to me.)

The Lord said, "I'm not withholding adequate food and clothing from your little children—that's not Me! It's the devil. He's the god of this world.

"The money you need is down there on earth; it's not up here in Heaven. And I am not going to rain any money down from Heaven, because I don't have any American dollars up here. And if I did rain any $20 bills down, they would be counterfeit—and I am not a counterfeiter. You see, the silver and gold are down there on earth where you need it.

"I said in Luke 6:38, *'Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall MEN give into your bosom.'* Down there—down there!"

"Then what should I do?" I asked.

He replied, "In the first place—and this will help you—don't pray about money anymore; that is, the way you've been praying. *Claim whatever you need."*

I never had heard anybody say that about money. That came as a shock to me. I guess my mouth fell open and my eyes bugged out.

The Lord continued, "You say, *'Satan, take your hands off my money!'* because it's Satan who is keeping it from coming to you—not Me.

"Claim it because it's down there on earth and Satan has the most control of it, because he's the god of this world. Say, 'I claim . . . ,' naming whatever it is you want or need."

People will argue, "Well, I can believe that God will meet our needs, but that's getting *too* far out when you start talking about wants!" That's just what I said to the Lord. "Now, Lord, I can believe that You want to meet our needs—but our wants?"

He replied, "You claim to be a stickler for the Word. In the 23rd Psalm that you quote so many times, it says, "*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not WANT'* [v. 1].

"It says in the 34th Psalm, *'The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not WANT any good thing'* [v. 10].

"Claim whatever you need or want. Say, *'Satan, take your hands off my finances.'* Then say, *'Go, ministering spirits, and cause the money to come.' "*

I said, "Lord, what in the world do You mean by that? I never heard that before!"

He said, "Well, did you ever read in the Book of Hebrews where it said that angels are *'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister FOR them who shall be heirs of salvation'* [Heb. 1:14]?"

I answered, "Lord, I thought that said 'to minister *to*.' "

"No, it doesn't say they'll minister to you; it says they'll minister *for* you."

Jesus said, "Actually, ministering spirits are sent to *serve* you. For example, you go into a restaurant and sit down, and the waitress comes to wait on you—to serve that table—to minister for you. You turn your order in, and she goes and gets it."

Can you see what He was saying? *Turn your order in!* Send the ministering spirits out to get it by saying, "Go, ministering spirits, and cause the money to

come.”

I could see it then: For years, angels had been standing around me doing nothing because I had never told them to do anything. And I could imagine them saying to one another, “I wonder when that dummy is going to wake up?”

Let’s look at the complete passage in Hebrews:

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 [He is talking about the angels—all the good ones. The bad ones fell and are in chains against the judgment of that day.], sent forth [Where? Down here.] to minister FOR [Not minister TO.] them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Angels are spirits. They are ministering spirits. They are sent forth to minister for “them who shall be heirs of salvation.” That’s us! We’re the heirs of salvation!

I said, “Lord, I thought the Holy Spirit is supposed to do what the Word said He would do: dwell in us and teach us.”

This is the way the Lord explained it to me: “The devil, Satan himself, doesn’t do all the work of the devil. He is like the captain of the host. Demons and evil spirits do his work in the earth. They influence people. They speak to people. They try to get people to steal, to commit adultery, any and everything that is wrong.

“Of course the Holy Ghost influences you. On the other hand, angels, who are good spirits, are also on earth. If you’ll tell them to go cause the money to come, they will go and influence people for good—just as evil spirits go and influence people for bad.”

Then the Lord instructed me that after I once claimed what I needed, that was to be the end of the matter. I wasn’t to pray or do anything else. If I thought about the situation, I was simply to stay in faith and say, “Thank God for it. It’s working.”

—Chapter 4—

Up From Under the Barrel

I never will forget it. The Lord said all this to me in the bedroom of the parsonage, where I was praying. If you receive a revelation from God, prove it out first before you start preaching or teaching it. Don't proclaim it until you prove that it's in line with the Word and with experience. That's what I did with this controversial revelation concerning finances.

I left the parsonage and walked over to the church. My knees were actually shaking. I didn't know for sure if this would work or not. This was all new to me —I had never heard anybody say anything like it—yet I could see it because I had Scripture for it.

I remember standing on that platform in the empty church and picturing that little crowd of about 70. In fear and trembling I said aloud, "Ah . . . ah . . . ah . . . I claim $150 this week." Then I got pretty bold, and I said, "Satan, take your hands off my money!" Then I imagined I could see all those ministering spirits there, and I said, "Go, ministering spirits, and cause the money to come!"

I knew enough about faith to know that that settled it; there was no use repeating it, so I walked out of the church back to my room.

The Lord had told me to pray that way. I claimed $150 a week because I had figured up my budget for necessities to keep my family at home and me on the road, and it came to $150 a week. That barely got us by. I hadn't included one extra thing in that sum—not so much as a soft drink or a stick of chewing gum for myself.

I wasn't scraping the bottom of the barrel; I was *under* the barrel, and the barrel was on top of me! (Did you ever notice that you have more problems in the area of finances than in any other? The devil will fight you harder here because he has more leverage in this area. Money is in this world, and he is the god of this world.)

This church where I was holding the meeting was down in the oil fields of East Texas. Those oil fields were past their heyday. I had preached there 13

months earlier, while I was still pastoring my last church, and they had paid me $114 for two weeks. They thought that was big.

I knew that if I suggested to the pastor that I was believing for $100 a week, he would say, “It would take God to do that,” and if I suggested I was believing for $150 a week, he would say, “God Himself couldn’t do that!” Besides that, the pastor had pleaded with the people for 45 minutes—“Who will give $10? Who will give $5?”—to get me that $57 a week the year before.

That night I said, “Brother pastor, don’t make any pull for money for me. Pass the plate and say, ‘This is Brother Hagin’s offering.’ Say as little about it as you can.”

“Well, Brother Hagin, it is our custom to take up a pledge offering,” he protested. (Full Gospel churches won’t change customs. They would rather give up Jesus than change customs!)

“Well,” I said, “don’t take up a pledge offering. Just pass the plate.”

“But Brother Hagin, you won’t get anything. You won’t get a quarter.”

I replied, “If I just get a quarter, you’ll never hear me gripe about it. I will just go my way with a quarter, and I’ll know then that I missed it. I want to prove something. You just do what I tell you to do.”

I got this revelation about the middle of the week. On Friday the pastor asked me to stay longer because the meeting was going so well. I could only stay through the next Wednesday night, however, because I had to go to another meeting in Alabama. I went back to the Lord and changed my request from $150 to $200.

When Wednesday night came, the pastor handed me $240.15 after the service. He said, “That beats anything I’ve ever seen. I don’t know where in the world the money came from.”

I replied, “I understand it thoroughly.”

I tested this revelation again at my next meeting, claiming $150 a week. I counted 45 people in the morning worship service, including the pastor, his family, and myself. At the end of three weeks, I was given $750 plus a new set

of tires for the used car I had just bought.

From then on, I purposely went to small country churches, even though I could have gone to the bigger city churches. I'd get so much money, they'd be astounded. God's Word works.

It took all the faith I had back in 1950 to believe for that $150. After feeding my faith on the Word of God and exercising it for the past 30 years, I can now believe God as easily for $1 million as I could then for $150.

Your faith can grow. Start exercising it on the things you need, but don't start out claiming something ridiculous. And remember, it is not God who is withholding your needs and wants.

A Sinner’s Prayer to Receive Jesus as Savior

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come to You in the Name of Jesus.

Your Word says, *“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”* (John 6:37), so I know You won’t cast me out, but You take me in and I thank You for it.

You said in Your Word, *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”* (Rom. 10:13). I am calling on Your Name, so I know You have saved me now.

You also said, *“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”* (Rom. 10:9–10). I believe in my heart Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe that He was raised from the dead for my justification, and I confess Him now as my Lord.

Because Your Word says, *“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness,”* and I do believe with my heart, I have now become the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21) . . . And I am saved!

Thank You, Lord!

Signed_____

Date_____

About the Author

Kenneth E. Hagin ministered for almost 70 years after God miraculously healed him of a deformed heart and an incurable blood disease at the age of 17. Even though Rev. Hagin went home to be with the Lord in 2003, the ministry he founded continues to bless multitudes around the globe.

Kenneth Hagin Ministries' outreaches include *The Word of Faith*, a free magazine; Rhema Bible Training College; Rhema Alumni Association; Rhema Ministerial Association International; Rhema Correspondence Bible School; and the Rhema Prison Ministry. Rev. Hagin's son and daughter-in-law, Kenneth W. and Lynette Hagin, cohost *Rhema Praise,* a weekly television broadcast; *Rhema for Today,* a weekday radio program; and *Living Faith Crusades* held around the world.

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