

The Gospel of Prosperity

According to Google, "The prosperity gospel, also known as the health and wealth gospel, is a Christian movement that teaches that financial prosperity and good health are guaranteed to believers through faith, positive declarations, and giving to religious ministries." Google furthers by listing the first of the core belief of this gospel as having: "Divine Right to Prosperity: Prosperity gospel adherents believe that God wants believers to be richly blessed in this life with good health and material riches. However, looking to the true Author of the Gospel, Jesus as authorized by God, this ideology cannot be found. In fact, when God put in place the Law that preceded the Gospel, He made it clear through inspired writers that such ideology can easily put one in opposition to God.

The dangers of wealth are very real because riches can easily corrupt godliness, kindness, and generosity. Thus the Proverb writer warns us, "He who trusts in riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like foliage" (Proverbs 11:28). Jesus states that, "...it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:24). The following words of wisdom from Proverbs help in understanding the folly in falling for the gospel of prosperity.

Whereas wealth may have its advantages, we must realize that some of those advantages might be good, but also understand that others can be evil. Wealth is a physical thing and can lead to thinking too highly of oneself. "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his own esteem" (Proverbs 18:11). Wealth might esteem us in our own eye, but what about God's? Having wealth, or having little, is not what relates us to God. The Proverb writer tells us that, "The rich and the poor have this in common, the Lord is the maker of them all" (Proverbs 22:2). Additionally, Solomon declares, "Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich" (Proverbs 28:6).

Most importantly, wealth will not protect nor shield us from judgment. Righteousness, not wealth, is that which protects us at judgment. "Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death" (Proverbs 11:4). Gaining a wisdom in God's will that will lead us to submissive obedience is a far greater wealth, even greater than gold and silver. "How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver" (Proverbs 16:16). Jesus reminds us that earthly wealth fails in comparison to the most important possession we have, our soul. "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world (wealth), and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36) Nothing is more valuable than our soul.