

The Perplexing Prosperity Gospel

There seems to be a lot out there about the “Prosperity Gospel.” There have been points made from both sides. Some say that God wants us to be rich or God wants us to be poor, and those that hold to the truth on the matter. That is the key – truth. I find that when you break something down to its foundation and compare it with consistency and truth, you can see whether or not it is true or not. This is a logical thought process.

1. Is the doctrine a constant truth?
2. Does it contradict other clear Scriptures?

Naturally, if it is not a constant truth, and it contradicts clear Bible passages, and it is the very foundation of a doctrine, or system of belief, then it, just like any building with a foundation destroyed, will fall. Why do people think that evolutionists attack the book of Genesis? It is the very foundation of the Bible. If any part of the creation account can be proven false, then Christianity itself is a lie, and even worse, God doesn't exist!!!!

Now, as for the prosperity gospel, even a brief study on the subject will easily tell you that the foundation of it is this, “If I am a faithful Christian, it will show by my health and wealth.”

1. Is this a constant truth?

What I mean by this, is this same prosperity gospel that is suppose to apply to those that listen to those preachers, does it apply to me? Did it apply to Christ, the foundation of Christianity? Did it apply to Paul? Does it apply to someone else in an advanced country? Does it apply to someone in a third-world country?

Let's look at one of the very basic commands in the Bible. John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This applies to every person of all time periods, and no one denies it. This alone is proof that truth is not relative, but absolute, or in other words, it has no gray area. It transcends time and space.

Now look at the tenant of the prosperity gospel. It is a basic equation-

John 3:16-----Obedient (James 2:24) Faith = Eternal life

Prosperity Gospel-----Faithful Christian = Health and Wealth

Let's look at some facts. There are some celebrities that claim to be Christian, and they do try to live a good, moral life. They do have a lot of money, but not all have good health. There are some celebrities that have a lot of money, but they live some of the most ungodly lifestyles that any person could live. Some of them are in good health and others are not. Then there are middle-class people. Then you have those on the other end of the spectrum. For example, I know a man who, when he died, was eaten up with cancer, and died in debt. I also know that he was a faithful Christian. I know of other people that have passed on that were ill and rich that were Christians. I also know of those who died who were ill, not rich and who were not Christians. I know of a Christian girl in India who was kicked out of her own home because she is a Christian.

Let's let Paul speak for himself, "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

It certainly sounds like Paul didn't have a lot of money, and it sounds like he suffered a lot. I doubt that anyone would dare to question his Christianity. But in the instance that someone would, we need to examine the very foundation of Christianity – Christ Himself. If the doctrine of prosperity didn't apply to Christ, how in heaven and earth could it apply to His followers?!

Let's read the words of Christ, "And Jesus saith unto him, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.'" Matthew 8:20. Paul, by inspiration, wrote of Him, "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." 2 Corinthians 8:9. (Now on the off-chance that someone might twist this to teach the prosperity gospel, I do not see the prosperity preachers bursting at the seams to give their fortunes away so that others might be rich, yet every time I hear them, they are telling the viewers to send in money to their "ministries." It could be argued that we shouldn't judge them because they might be giving away their

salaries. They could be doing some good, and probably are, but I would like to see anyone try to deny the lavish lifestyles that they live.) Anyway, based on the evidence, the “prosperity doctrine” is not consistent in either time or space, making it relative, making it a non-truth, therefore, a lie, but there is more to go, for if it does not contradict clear Bible passages, then I will have to go back and look at point one, because of consistency and truth.

2. Does it contradict clear Bible passages?

There are several Scriptures that have been examined by people far more knowledgeable than I, but unless you are a lunatic or a liar, you should be able to tell that if it is not in line with one passage of Scripture, what would make it in line with the rest?

We will look at a few.

It is easy to go to John 10:10 and quote, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” But how does that stand with Luke 12:15, “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

I am not pitting Scripture against Scripture, for the Bible is in complete harmony. God is not stupid. He would not give a message that contradicted itself. We have to find how that the Scriptures are in harmony. We can look back to John 3:16 for a clue to help answer this seeming contradiction. The abundant life that Christ came to give is eternal life if we obey Him and trust Him to do what He said He will do.

With a proper study of the Bible, and an open mind, void of denominational preconceptions, one will quickly see that the prosperity gospel is not found in the Bible.

To sum things up:

1. The prosperity gospel's very nature of relativism makes it a lie.
2. The prosperity gospel is not found in the Bible when verses are kept in their proper context.

Don't fall for these greedy preachers...

Titus 1:10-11, "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."