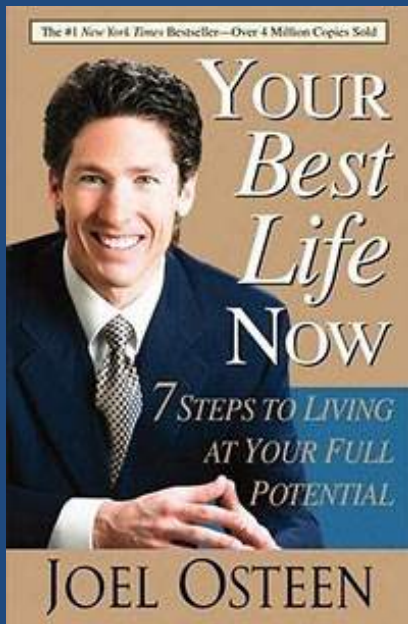




The Spiritual Bankruptcy of The Prosperity Gospel



Introduction

- “The prosperity gospel” – Is also referred to as “the health and wealth gospel”, the “word-faith movement”, and in the language of some, “name it, claim it”, “blab it, grab it”, etc.
- God wants you to be wealthy, healthy, successful, secure and happy. As His child, you are entitled to and empowered to bring this about.
- The elements of this false teaching include visualization, “faith”, positive confession (affirmation) and donations – lots of stress here.
 - The teaching is that there are spiritual laws, that when these things take place, faith becomes a force as you make your claims/verbalize your desires that move God to give you what you desire. You speak the right words, and God will oblige.
 - 17% of the population adhere to; 61% believe that God wants his children to be materially prosperous; and 3 of the 4 largest mega-churches in the country teach this doctrine. It is spread many times a day on TBN.
 - It has a great appeal to itching ears that are full of this world and desire for what it has to offer...plenty to scratch that itch. Those who see religion as a means of achieving the “American Dream”. It is fed by greed – of the hearers and the teachers – who abuse the word of God to enrich themselves.

Discussion

- The Prosperity Gospel is a perverted gospel.
 - It is not the gospel of Christ. (Rom. 1:16-17; I Cor. 1:18)
 - It is a twisting, distorting, cheapening and vulgarizing of God's saving message (sin and guilt, love and grace; death, burial and resurrection of Jesus; terms of pardon) to appeal to greed and covetousness with a message of money, stuff, worldly success and basically makes God into a celestial ATM --
 - Gal. 1:6-9; II Pet. 2:1-3; I Tim. 6:3-5
- The false teachers who proclaim this error include:
 - Going back to it's inception in the 1950's: Oral Roberts, A. A. Allen, "Rev." Ike...
 - Currently -- Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, Creflo Dollar, Benny Hinn, Kenneth Hagin*, Frederick Price, Charles Capps, Kenneth Copeland, Gloria Copeland, Kirbyjohn Caldwell, John Avanzini, Rod Parsley, Paula White, Jesse Duplantis, T. D. Jakes, Robert Tilton, Paul and Jan Crouch, etc.

The perverted message in their own words:

- **Joel Osteen:** → “today’s sermon is about how gratitude can “...save your job, get you a promotion” **Victoria** → “speaking words of faith” eventually brought the couple their dream home; how Joel discerned God’s favor in being bumped from economy to business class.
- **Kirbyjohn Caldwell** → Jesus did not die and get up off the cross so we could live lives full of despair and disappointment...it is unscriptural not to own land”.
- **John Avanzini** → “Jesus had a nice house, a big house, Jesus was handling big money,” and he even wore designer clothes.”

The perverted message in their own words:

- **Gloria Copeland** → “give \$10.00 and receive \$1000.00; give \$1,000.00 and receive \$100,000.00...in short, Mark 10:30 is a very good deal.”
- **Joyce Meyer** → “who would want to get in on something where you’re miserable, poor, broke, ugly and you just have to muddle through until you get to heaven?”
- **Creflo Dollar** → “When we pray, believing that we have already received what we are praying, ***God has no choice*** but to make our prayers come to pass...it is a key to getting results as a Christian.”

The Prosperity Gospel...

- Is the promotion of idolatry. (Col. 3:5)
- Is a religious ideology that would make entering heaven more difficult. (Mark 10:23-25)
- Promotes that which leads people into ruin and destruction. (I Tim. 6:5-10)
- Encourages laying up treasure that can be stolen, rusted and moth eaten. (Matt. 6:19-20)
- Is the preaching of that which spiritually chokes. (Lk. 8:14)
- Answers Satan's question to God in the affirmative...yes I'm serving you because of what I get. (Job 1:9)
- Promotes a walk of discontent. (Heb. 13:5-6)
- Makes promises that God has not. (James 4:3; II Cor. 4:4-10)

The False Foundation of The Prosperity Gospel

- Perversion of the promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-7; 22:18)
 - The P.G. says → “unpacked primarily in terms of material entitlements.”
 - The Bible says → Acts 3:25-26; Gal. 3:26-29
- Distortion of the atoning death of Jesus (Isa. 53:4-6,8,11-12)
 - The P.G. says → in his death, Jesus took upon him our physical ills and our financial health.
 - The Bible says → I Pet. 2:24-25; II Cor. 5:21

The False Foundation of The Prosperity Gospel

- Greedy, materialistic and mercenary motives for giving.
(Mk. 10:30)
 - The P.G. says → giving is a means to and endless cycle of increased financial prosperity. “...Mk. 10:30 is a very good deal.”
 - The Bible says → Lk. 6:35 → “...lend hoping for nothing again...”
- False definition of faith.
 - The P.G. says → Faith is an active force directed at God by the means of positive confession to get the material things one desires.
 - The Bible says → Heb. 11:1; Mk. 16:15-16; Rom. 10:14-17.
- Shoddy handling of scripture.
 - The P.G. → Twisting, distorting, out of context, misapplying, etc.
(III Jn. 2)
 - The Bible says → II Tim. 2:15; II Pet. 3:16

Jesus Did Not Preach The Prosperity Gospel.

- Matt. 6:19-20 → 19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:
- Matt. 16:26 → 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?
- Matt. 19:21, 23-24 → 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. ... 23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.
- Luke 9:23 → 23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.
- Matt. 8:20 → Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."
- Lk. 14:33 → "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. (NASB)

The Riches That God Has For His Children...

- The tax assessor came one day to the home of an old man to determine the amount of taxes he would have to pay. The following conversation took place.
 - “What property do you possess?” asked the assessor.
 - “I’m a very wealthy man,” the old man replied.
 - “List your possessions, please,” the assessor instructed.
 - First, I have the hope of everlasting life, Titus 1:2
 - Second, I have a mansion in heaven, Jn. 14:2
 - Third, I have a peace that passes understanding, Phil. 4:7
 - Fourth, I have joy unspeakable, I Pet. 1:8.
 - Fifth, I have divine love that never fails, Rom. 8:37-39
 - Sixth, I have a precious, faithful wife, Prov. 31:10
 - Seventh, I have healthy, happy obedient children, Eph. 6:1-4
 - Eighth, I have true, loyal friends. Prov. 18:24
 - Ninth, I have songs in the night, Ps. 42:8
 - Tenth, I have a crown of life reserved for me in heaven. II Tim. 4:6-8
- The tax assessor closed his book, and said, Truly, you are a very rich man, but your property is not subject to taxation.