

# The Prosperity Gospel Exposed

Is prosperity biblical?

This question has been asked for decades, and in light of recent footage and Benny Hinn's admission of making mistakes in regards to prosperity, it's come back to the surface of what it looks like from a biblical position.

In an interview with Stephen Strang on the Strang Report podcast, Dr. Mark Rutland tackled this topic and how Christians can see prosperity in light of the gospel.

"God is a God of blessing," Rutland says. "The error comes where people say, 'if you're not blessed, you're doing something wrong. If you're not blessed, you're not a Christian.'"

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Rutland says it's this thinking that turns the purity of the message of Christ and turns it into a "gospel of greed." Using John Wesley's example, Rutland believes the purpose of blessing is not for us take in, but to give to others.

"The result of prosperity, the outcome of it should not be to accrue but to give," Rutland says.

He also says it is the job of church leadership to pray for blessing over their congregants' lives.

"Any pastor who's not praying for His people to be blessed, you should pray for your people to be blessed."

Rutland points out that in the same way ministries can abuse prosperity for their own sake, those who are donating can also misuse the principle of giving as well.

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“The problem is not just on those who exploit others from prosperity. It’s donors who exploit ministries for prosperity. They turn ministries into the kind of biblical slot machine...so sometimes they spread their giving out over ministries to see which one will give them the return. That’s also greed. So, it can be greed from the ministries, [or] it can be greed from the givers,” Rutland says.

Rutland says one of the ways we can fall trap to prosperity gospel schemes and thinking because of a warped view of God as our heavenly Father.

“I think we take some of our most unworthy attributes and impose those on God, that God says, ‘okay, [give] \$100 or withhold the blessing.’ That’s not God and it’s not characteristic of God.”

Just as God looks at our hearts and sees what’s truly there, a distorted view of God’s attributes is what leads many to become involved in prosperity gospel actions.

“The goodness of God is what’s in question here,” Rutland says. “We ought to concentrate on the joy of giving.”

We cannot give with the attempt to gain some type of supernatural favor or blessing; striving in our own works will never prove to be truly fruitful. How much and with what God decides to bless us with has absolutely nothing to do with our own abilities, but has everything to do with His limitless grace and mercy. Giving is meant to draw us closer in relationship to God, not to gain worldly things, but to know Him more intimately.

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# Isaiah Saldivar: Keys to Spiritual Authority and Deliverance

Have you ever cast out a demon before?

In a live Bible study interview with Kap Chatfield, Isaiah Saldivar tackled the tough question about how we, as children of God, should interact with deliverance.

The first thing Saldivar makes mention of is that if we actively become part of deliverance ministry, it is not a question but a certainty that people will leave our lives.

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“If you read what they did to Jesus when He started casting up demons, they called Him the devil,” Saldivar says. “So don’t expect to start all of a sudden [to be] casting out demons and everybody loves you and your family thinks it’s amazing. You’re going to be [cast out] for specifically confronting demonic powers and casting out demons.”

Another key point that Saldivar wants people to be aware of is how little the topic of deliverance is actually discussed. It’s something Saldivar says people need as a key to staying out of bondage. What’s more is Saldivar says the training process for Christians to engage in deliverance ministry is necessary because deliverance is not something for one or two

people to know how to do. Instead, it's something God is asking of His children to take part in to set the captives free.

When it comes to setting people free from bondage, Chatfield asked one of the most controversial questions surrounding the ministry of deliverance.

"People specifically ask this question," Chatfield asks Saldivar. "Can Christians be demon possessed?"

"It's the most contentious question there is when it comes to deliverance," Saldivar says. "I do believe one of the devil's greatest lies he's given is that Christians don't need deliverance...so, can a Christian be demon possessed?"

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The answer? Saldivar says absolutely not.

"There's no possible way a Christian could be demon possessed," Saldivar says.

Saldivar dives deeper into what this actually means. A Christian cannot be possessed, as in owned, by a demon. However, Saldivar makes it clear that the demonic can still try to influence a believer. While there are lots of theological debates about proper terminology, methods and beliefs about how deliverance ministry should be carried out, Chatfield and Saldivar both note that Christians should be aware of any open doors in their lives to the enemy.

"We should live in such a way where we're walking in holiness and righteousness and circumspect unto God with clean hands and a pure heart," Saldivar says. "Instead of going from deliverance to deliverance we need to walk in dominion."

Wherever you stand on the nuanced details of deliverance ministry, it's key to understand that there is a spiritual realm and the devil exists to steal, kill and destroy. Only through Christ can we be totally transformed and set free.

To pre-order Isaiah Saldivar's book, "How to Cast Out Demons," visit .

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## **Alexa PenaVega Clings to Faith After Daughter's Stillbirth**

A month after announcing her daughter was stillborn, Alexa PenaVega says her faith in Jesus has been critical for the pain her family has endured in the past month.

In a video on Instagram, Alexa PenaVega described how this season of losing her and husband Carlos PenaVega's daughter, Indy, has been the hardest thing their family has ever had to go through. Yet, it is through this incredible loss that she has been able to see God strengthen her faith, family and marriage.

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*One comment on Instagram described the power of spiritual healing experienced by those in attendance.*

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*“I was a line leader and this lady – probably in her 50’s, started running down my line. I held my arms out open and yelled ‘Welcome home.’ She ran down the line and hugged me so tight and said, ‘I am free! I am free.’”*