

10 Things to Consider Before You Judge Jesse Duplantis for Believing for a \$54M Jet

Jesse Duplantis is believing for a new airplane. The way we respond will determine our financial future.

As an introduction, I need to make it clear that I personally wasn't raised in the Word of Faith movement. This isn't a knee-jerk reaction from a Word of Faith member, as I am not one. That being said, I've known many phenomenal believers who were deeply involved in Word of Faith, so I have firsthand testimony of some pretty awesome fruit.

In fact, you might read a recent article that exposes the limits of giving to churches and ministries without considering other, very potent and very important, financial strategies in a recent Charisma News article. Giving to ministries alone will never unlock the wealth that God has for his people.

The reason I bring this up is so you understand this isn't another article defending the faith message. I am making the focus more specific. Let's talk about Jesse Duplantis.

In fairness, we do need to let Jesse speak for himself. After you read what he said, you have to wonder what exactly people think is so wrong with his intentions:

"I'm not asking you to pay for my plane," the televangelist says in a new video posted to his ministry's website. "The Lord said, 'I didn't ask you to pay for it, I asked you to believe for it.' That is what I said. So I'm believing, and I want you to believe with me."

I'd be the first to defend him for fundraising if he were

actually doing that. However, he is making it clear he isn't asking for money. He's asking for people to agree in faith.

The following 10 points will at least give us a starting point when considering how to respond to Jesse's bold request. Be warned, though. My stance resulted in a longtime Facebook friend blocking me this morning and declaring I'm a false prophet. (He should know I don't consider myself a prophet at all, but I doubt that would have deterred him!)

1. The moment we embrace lack and limits for another is the moment we embrace lack and limits for ourselves.

Many years ago, I was the youth pastor of one of the wealthiest churches in the nation. My wife and I were earning \$24,000 a year, and the rumor was my senior pastor was earning well over \$100,000. He was also given a new Cadillac every couple of years, and he lived in a beautiful home. One day, I was pondering whether my pastor really needed such a high income. I wasn't complaining in the least. I was simply wondering. God heard my not-so-private thoughts and initiated a dialogue with me, though at first I didn't realize it was him.

"So, would \$40,000 a year be sufficient for your pastor?"

That's the question that dropped into my mind. My silent reply was something like, "Well, no. He's been faithful in ministry for years. He's surely worthy of more than that."

"How about \$50,000?"

"No, that's still too low. I appreciate all he has done and he certainly can earn more."

"\$75,000?" At this point, I was keenly aware that I was in a fearful conversation with God. I didn't even answer that final question. He didn't wait for a response. What he said next struck me and has impacted my finances and my ministry ever

since.

“Don’t you ever again presume I should consult you when I decide how to financially resource and bless one of my children. The moment you make a judgment on another’s finances is the moment your finances will come under judgment. When you embrace lack and limits for another, you will not find success breaking through lack and limits in your own life. If you affirm lack for another, you will experience lack yourself.”

I’ve never questioned another’s financial situation again. I bless those who are financially blessed, period.

In fact, I’ve met many people who faithfully tithe and give who are always struggling financially. In addition to what I addressed in my other article referenced above, I believe this issue is very often a cause.

“But you must remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to get wealth, so that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is today” (Deut. 8:18).

2. It’s not being used for personal pleasure. It’s a tool to reach people with the gospel.

If a pastor announced a fundraiser for a new church van, would you protest? Of course not. It’s an important tool for ministry. Pastors regularly raise funds for important works including millions for new buildings, buses, missions and other ministries. Jesse is believing for fast transportation so he can reach more people. I find no fault in that.

In fact, what if Jesse stood in faith for a \$54 million jet personally, instead of for his ministry? That way, he could use it any way he desired, including for ministry. You might consider that to be a strange point, but consider this: I use my car in the same way. I have a 501(c)(3) ministry, but my car was not secured through my nonprofit. I own it personally.

So, I use it to go to Walmart, on vacation and to various ministry destinations.

The problem is that many are judging Jesse's motive, which is radically irresponsible. They presume to know just what's in his heart and, therefore, judge that his attempts to secure the airplane are immoral. They presume he's coveting. They think he's selfish. That judgment is out of line.

There is not one person alive, with the possible exception of those who are very close to him, who knows what his motive is. Biblically, we are mandated to judge fruit, but until we have clear proof of indiscretion, it's foolish and irresponsible to say we know what his motives are.

3. Why is it any of your business?

As I sit back and watch people become unraveled about this, I have to wonder, *Why are you so uptight about someone you don't even know?* The truth is that this is none of your business. Stay silent. Nothing immoral has occurred. No crimes have been committed.

4. If it is your business, what specifically has God told you to do in response?

While I doubt God chose to consult you about Jesse's situation, let's pretend he did. God doesn't gossip. He doesn't share information about someone else just so we can enjoy shaming them. If he reveals another's immorality to you, I'd be shaking in my boots. The fear of the Lord should wreck you. His revelation means you have a sober responsibility to help bring restoration to the one in error. What would your first step be? For starters, that should mean implementing Matthew 18 protocol if you felt he sinned against you: "'Now if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother'" (Matt. 15:18).

5. If you gossip about Jesse, you are in the wrong.

God doesn't gossip. Neither should we. When we speak negatively about someone without them there to defend themselves, we sin. Gossip and slander are serious violations that can bring swift judgment to us. Today with social media being such a powerful medium, supposed Christians are spending their waking hours spouting out their gossip and slander about people of all types without any measure of grace or love. There's a way to honestly discuss issues with a heart of love and honor without bringing shame to the one being talked about.

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not proper. They were filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, proud, boastful, inventors of evil things, and disobedient toward parents (Rom. 1:28-30).

"Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, that it may give grace to the listeners." (Eph. 4:29).

"If anyone among you seems to be religious and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26).

6. Why are you threatened by his faith?

Jesse is inviting people to join him in mountain-moving faith. We need more people to believe for absolutely shocking, magnificent, world-shaking things. Celebrate when men and women of God are not only dreaming big but actually putting action to their faith. Visionaries have always threatened those with no vision for their lives.

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).

7. Those who have will be given more. It's a biblical principle.

So many miss this powerful biblical truth. The kingdom isn't governed by socialism. Financial equality doesn't exist. Yes, we are to give to those in need, and we are to take care of the poor. However, the truth remains: Those who handle their finances rightly will always have more money than those who don't. If this weren't the case, there would be no poor among us, but Jesus made it clear that the poor would always be with us.

I personally want to support and stay close to those who continually grow their financial portfolios. I'm not talking about manipulators or swindlers. I'm talking about true people of God who are so faithful with their finances that they can't help but to prosper.

““So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from him who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away'” (Matt. 25:28-29).

8. Don't let pride convince you that you have better ideas on how to use the money.

We would all use \$54 million differently. Evangelists would use it to reach the lost. Pastors would build large buildings so they can nurture the saints. Teachers would create a media ministry so they could get the message out. Apostles might build many churches in different regions. Prophets would probably invest in the soap box and megaphone industry. Christians in business would develop new businesses and multiply the money. Those without biblical financial training would waste most of it.

Don't pridefully presume your plans for the money are better than another's. For Jesse, a jet is how he can most effectively minister. Again, we can't judge motive. Let's take him at his word.

9. If God told him to pursue this, he had better do it.

Do you have any idea how much trouble we'd be in (and he'd be in) if we convinced Jesse to disobey God because we presumed our wisdom to be greater? If God spoke to Jesse about this airplane, we had better get out of the way and keep our mouths shut, unless blessing and honor is all that would be spoken. How foolish Solomon must have been to use his wealth the way he did, right? Wrong. God spoke, and wealth was not all given away. It wasn't used to eradicate poverty. It was used in ways that didn't make much sense. But that's the wonder of God. His ways aren't our ways.

Added together, the gold and silver used along in Solomon's Temple was worth \$216,603,576,000. This does not include all the precious metals, bronze, iron, ivory or cedar wood used in the temple.

10. If he missed God on this, extend grace.

If Jesse is wrong, let's bless him, love him, honor him, pray for him and believe for great things in his life. Extending grace while also standing for righteousness is something we must do. But, again, not one single person reading this article knows whether he's wrong or not at this point, no matter how much you might believe God is consulting you on the matter. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Rev. 22:21).