

Prosperity Is More Than Being Rich

At the end of every one of my podcasts, I close out with the words of 3 John:2 in the New Living Translation. It reads as follows. "Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit." When the apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write those words, they were intended to address every area of our lives, including our personal finances. Let me make a comment about financial prosperity. If your primary desire in reading this article is to become super rich, then I suggest you reevaluate your motives, priorities and desires. Almost every rich person I've ever known did not set out in business just to get rich. Obtaining finances was the byproduct of doing our best in the work we have chosen to pursue. A podcast or book about prosperity is attractive to almost everyone. Teaching about prosperity is fun; writing about prosperity is great; and speaking to a group about financial prosperity will get people excited. However, we must be careful about who we listen to concerning financial teachings on prosperity. If any lesson on financial success is not based on the Word of God, it will be built on the wrong foundation.

There are those who will tell you to give money to the church with a primary purpose of getting money back. By that I am referring to a teaching on giving to God, then making Him obligated to give financially to us. Some may even suggest a donation to their ministry will ensure a great financial return. Please don't misunderstand me. We can receive financial blessings from God when we give. However, the apostle Paul said, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition" (Phil. 2:3, NKJV).

Allow me to talk to you about financial prosperity from a different point of view. As you can tell, I believe everyone

can experience financial prosperity. However, I am reminded of a quote from President Calvin Coolidge: "Prosperity is only an instrument to be used, not a deity to be worshipped." I believe prosperity is a promise from God. As a banker, I met so many who made prosperity their God. Their entire lives were dedicated to seeking and serving prosperity. Seeking only prosperity is like being addicted to drugs; the more you get, the more you want. Let's look to God's Word for an example of godly prosperity. Genesis 39:2,3 (NKJV) reads: "The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand."

In this passage, we see Joseph experience God's prosperity; the Lord provided success in all he did. The word prosperity, or to prosper, is found dozens of times in most biblical concordances. It is vital to point out that the referenced Scriptures on prosperity require godly living. Look at Deuteronomy 29:9 (NKJV): "Therefore, keep the words of this covenant and do them that you may prosper in all that you do." Then in 2 Chronicles 26:5 (NKJV): "He sought God in the days of Zachariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper."

There are conditions to receive God's prosperity. The Word of God warns us of the danger of financial prosperity without righteousness. Many Christians have prospered financially with new homes, cars and vacation homes. In some cases, these families have left their churches to pursue the things of this world. In many cases, the lure of financial gain has taken the place of serving the Lord. Soon infidelity and divorce destroyed their families. I believe this happens when a Christian is not spiritually prepared to handle financial success. It is my belief that financial gain without spiritual growth is not a blessing.

In my web page, , you will find my books, "Experience the Joy

of Debt-Free Living” and “Generosity: What’s In It For Me.” These are based on my work as a banker, real estate developer, pastor, and teacher. {eo}

David C. Friend was the founder and pastor of North Scottsdale Christian Church in Scottsdale, Arizona. He has served as the president of the Paradise Valley Chamber of Commerce and was chairman of the Grand Canyon University Foundation Board. Before answering God’s call and accepting the full-time position as pastor of North Scottsdale Christian, David spent 14 years in banking and owned a real estate development company for 20 years. He taught banking operations at Arizona community colleges. David resides in North Scottsdale with his wife, Sharon, and together they have two married children and six grandchildren. David is an award-winning author, veteran, entrepreneur, pastor, banker and teacher.

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