

When Will You Be Ready to Steward Your Supernatural Prosperity?

What are the two most hotly debated charismatic doctrines in the past 30 years? I'd say those regarding God's provision for *healing* and *finances*. He used these controversial doctrines to teach me a key truth: The gospel of the kingdom includes prosperity. Prosperity is not the whole gospel—but the gospel is incomplete without it. If the enemy can keep you sick and poor, he will severely limit your destiny.

I can hear people now: "I can't stand that 'health and wealth gospel.'"

But I've got some good news for you: Jesus didn't die and rise from the dead for the "sickness and poverty gospel."

The same Jesus who, for six hours on the cross: bore our sickness (Isa. 53:5), became cursed (Gal. 3:13), became sin (2 Cor. 5:21), also became poor—so that you might be rich: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor so that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

"Well Jim, this means that we would be rich in spiritual blessings, not money," you may say.

I disagree. Second Corinthians 8-9 focus on finances and giving. The Greek word translated "rich" in these verses speaks about material wealth in other places in the New Testament (see 2 Cor. 9:11). Paul's use of the term "the grace of our Lord Jesus" means Christ paid for your provision at the cross.

Does anyone else consider this good news?

I understand that there has been bad teaching on finances and prosperity in the past. But there has also been bad teaching on heaven, and I still plan on going there. Fear of error is not a reason to ignore the truth.

Examine what 2 Corinthians 9:8 says about finances: "And God is able to make a little bit of grace squirt out to you if you are good enough."

No, that's not what it says. Instead, it says: "And God is able to make *all* grace *abound* to you, so that having *all* sufficiency in *all* things at *all* times, you may *abound* in every good work" (my emphasis). If that verse isn't true, John 3:16 isn't either.

From Provision to Prosperity

Here's my definition of prosperity: You have more than enough resources to fulfill every divine assignment God has for you and enough left to help others fulfill theirs.

Prosperity doesn't mean every Christian is going to be a zillionaire. It does mean we should have finances proportionate to our assignments from the Lord and more than enough to be a blessing to others.

That means the finances of the farmer in Uganda will look different than those of the person called to reach the Hollywood elite. If you are Joseph in prison, abundance isn't the palace on a hill or the finest chariot. The abundance of emotional health and well-being along with favor got him appointed as the head of all the other prisoners. The same would be true for persecuted believers today. God gives us an abundance to bring kingdom influence to our realm of responsibility.

If you think of yourself as a hose through which God's blessings can flow, it makes sense that the inside of a hose would get wet. If God can get money through you, He can get

money to you—and there will be plenty left over for you.

When you place the priority of your finances on God and other people rather than yourself, God will take better care of you on “accident” than you ever could take care of yourself on purpose.

And remember, His name is El Shaddai, not El Cheapo. God doesn’t mind meeting your needs in style; He just doesn’t want you chasing after things and giving your heart over to them.

Growing up, I heard amazing stories of missionaries out in the field. Often the stories went something like this: The family was out in a remote location, broke, with no food for their next meal. By faith, they would set the table with the plates and silverware, hold hands and pray for provision.

“Knock, knock, knock.”

The family would race to open the door, only to find someone standing there with a week’s worth of groceries. God had provided!

We need to hear those stories of miraculous provision. But what we need even more is an army of people with resources and the ability to hear from God where to put those resources. God is raising up an army of believers who realize prosperity has a purpose.

From Healing to Finances

In 2008, my wife and I began leading a church in Powell, Ohio. We went on an all-out ballistic assault, going after divine healing.

As a result, we saw some amazing breakthroughs in the area of physical healing: deaf ears healed, blind eyes opened, metal dissolved out of bodies, cancers healed, people getting out of wheelchairs, scars from girls cutting themselves disappearing during worship, HIV and Hepatitis C healed as well as many

other healings—including several people being raised from the dead.

These miracles didn't happen in Africa. They happened in Ohio.

In 2011, the Lord told me to go after breakthrough in finances the way we went after physical healing. I read about 100 books on finances, listened to hours and hours of teaching, studied and meditated on Scriptures and preached an 18-part sermon series on finances. I didn't talk about giving until week 13 because if you don't have the heart conditions right, people try to use their giving as if they were rubbing a genie's bottle.

What happened as a result? Heaven invaded our finances. About 25% of our people got completely out of debt within 12 months. Our church was given a five-bedroom house, which we used to house survivors of sex trafficking, and a 40,000-square-foot building on 32 acres. We also gave away an amount totaling more than seven figures over several years.

We've helped buy a building for rehabilitating trafficking survivors and a 42-bed building to serve as a new "family" model for boys in foster care.

This isn't about "sow a Toyota to reap a Ferrari" or other prosperity gimmicks. This isn't about using your faith to get nicer things. It's about prosperity with a purpose. It's about what I like to call "apostolic abundance." What is our apostolic commission? "On earth as it is in heaven." It's about using our finances to shape the culture over cities and transform nations.

We see this in the Parable of the Minas, where the master told the servant who invested his 10 minas and earned 10 more, "Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities" (Luke 19:17, NIV). When the servant proved himself faithful with finances, God gave him the anointing to influence and shape the culture over cities.

“When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices” (Prov. 11:10a). God releases the atmosphere of heaven into a city when His people thrive. More money equals more impact.

The Jews have always understood that this is the purpose of wealth: “[You shall] remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to create wealth” (Deut. 8:18a). For what purpose? “That He may confirm His covenant that He swore to your fathers” (v. 18b).

From Error to Truth

There were some clear errors in the popular “health and wealth” or “prosperity gospel” teachings of the '80s and '90s. We are still feeling the effects of these errors through two ideas:

1) Poverty is a spiritual value, and going without is a good thing. It keeps you humble. It is spiritual to live in poverty and lack.

If poverty is so spiritual, why does the Bible tell us to give to the poor? Wouldn't that ruin their spirituality?

As far as it being spiritual to live in lack, anyone who has ever been broke will tell you in King James English, “It stinketh!” Nowhere in the Bible is poverty ever said to be a blessing from the Lord.

Also, you can be broke without being poor. “Broke” is a temporary financial condition. Poverty is a lens that only sees meager possibilities and limits God's ability to be involved in your finances. Prosperity starts with *whom* you have, not *what* you have.

God calls each of us to be stewards of the money He provides. To be a steward, you must have something to steward. In the kingdom, everything we steward multiples and increases.

If poverty is from God, why did the Lord bless Isaac so he

“became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy” (Gen. 26:13, NASB)?

If poverty is so spiritual, then why are we told to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven?” (Matt. 6:10, NIV)?

There is no poverty in heaven. There is never a recession. No 30,000-year mortgages on your heavenly mansions. God has abundance; the enemy has a budget.

If money is bad for us, why doesn’t Satan just pour money on Christians? The more money, the quicker we would backslide.

If money is so bad, why did Satan take it away from Job? Why at the end of the book did God reward Job with a double portion?

Why is the good man the one who leaves an inheritance to his children’s children? (Prov. 13:22).

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33, ESV). We like the guy who “seeks first the kingdom.” But religion questions him when the “all these things” are added to him, even though that’s part of the verse too.

2) Spirituality is measured by the size of your house, how much money you make or what you own. This is just as perverted as the first idea. Someone’s material possessions are not a sign of God’s blessing—except when they are.

There are times when Scripture directly ties a person’s material blessings to their relationship with God. Look at Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Solomon—God was the direct cause of their blessing.

This means it is not your job to be the prosperity police, judging when someone else has too much. You can’t judge another man’s harvest when you don’t know the seed they

planted.

How much money is too much money? Whatever amount replaces trust in God. Some people get \$100 in their pocket and forget there is a God in heaven. For others, \$100 million wouldn't even move their heart because they are so anchored in His invisible realm. Loving God doesn't mean you have to be broke, and having money doesn't necessarily mean you are godly (just ask the Mafia).

Money is to the natural realm what the anointing is to the spiritual realm—it is a way to make things happen. In the kingdom, money is a tool. Nobody brags about their shovel collection, because we recognize a shovel is just a tool to accomplish a task. We need to see money the same way. It is a tool by which we turn those dollars into soldiers to accomplish kingdom purposes.

One of the first and biggest problems people have with teaching on prosperity comes from the belief that prosperity is selfish. But biblical prosperity is not selfish because it's not all about you. Real prosperity is defined by how much we give away, not how much we keep for ourselves. Prosperity is about blessing, not possessing.

Can we flip this thing on its head? It is actually selfish for you not to desire prosperity. When God only provides for your needs, the world lacks the revelation of an abundant Father.

David gave us a prayer to straighten out our thinking: "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations" (Ps. 67:1-2, ESV). This sounds like revival to me.

People lack a knowledge of the goodness of God. Our attitude needs to be, "God, put Your hand of blessing on my life so they will know what You are like!"

From Objections to Awakening

"I don't know, Jim. This sounds like a 'bless me' club." Well, Jesus didn't die for a "curse me" club! What is the problem with a "bless me" club? The more Christians get, the more they give away.

"Jim, I just want enough to provide for my family." That is like the spirit of ignorance marrying the spirit of poverty and the two having a child—and is also extremely selfish. Saying this is akin to saying, "I have all of my needs met. Who gives a rip about anyone else?" These words and actions keep believers from presenting to the world a true picture of our heavenly Father.

Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of England once said, "No one would have remembered the Good Samaritan if he'd only had good intentions. He had money as well." You cannot be a big giver without having an abundance from which to give.

It should be obvious that you cannot "Go into all the world" to disciple nations if you can't afford to go to the store. You can't fill someone else's cup if your pitcher is empty.

"Jim, money can't buy happiness." Neither can poverty. Poverty can't buy anything. People who say money can't buy happiness simply haven't given enough of it away. I have watched it buy happiness over and over again.

I remember sitting at my desk in my home office when I heard a knock at the front door. The young man who stood there—let's call him Johnny—wanted to sell me cable television.

Because I was busy, I planned to brush him off. But then he gave me one of those one-liners good salesmen come prepared to share. I invited him in and decided to buy from him.

As we talked, I shared some healing testimonies. "I don't believe in God," he said.

"That's OK. He believes in you," I told him.

I asked if he had any pain in his body. He said his jaw came unhinged and gave him pain from some old boxing injuries, and he had carpal tunnel syndrome in his wrist.

We prayed, and he experienced enough healing to know that God was real. Weeping, he opened up about his life. He was living with a girl whose sister was a prostitute who sold her body for heroin. A few days before, she had overdosed and died, leaving behind two children.

Johnny and his family had no money to pay for the sister's funeral. In addition, he and his girlfriend were now going to raise her two children.

I sensed the Lord saying, "Write the check."

"How much do you need for the funeral?" I asked Johnny. I walked into the other room and wrote the check.

"Why are you doing this?" he asked, crying, as I gave it to him.

"This is just a glimpse of how God feels about you."

We exchanged phone numbers, and he left.

"This might sound weird, but I feel like I am to go to that funeral and support Johnny," I told my wife later that day.

I showed up at the funeral, and tension filled the room. Baby mommas were sitting on one side with their baby daddies on the other. Many of the attendees belonged to gangs. I heard yelling and it looked like a fight would erupt at one point.

A big man with tattoos on his face approached me and asked aggressively, "Are you the guy who gave money for the funeral?"

"Yes," I replied, my voice cracking with nervousness.

Tears filled his eyes. “Wow, I’ve never heard of anything like that before.”

Johnny then pointed at me and announced loudly, “Hey everyone, this is my pastor!”

His pastor? Two days before, he didn’t even believe in God.

The children of the deceased ran up, jumped in my lap and called me “Uncle Jim.”

What happened? Proverbs 25:22a says it best: “Your surprising generosity will awaken his conscience” (TPT).

Nobody is saying money can buy divine joy and peace, but it can spread the gospel, feed the poor, plant churches, dig wells overseas, rescue girls out of human trafficking, shelter the homeless, take your family on vacation and awaken the conscience of an unbeliever.

From Recognition to Belief

Recognize the lies about prosperity. Poverty is not about being selfish, and having money is not a measure of your godliness. If you have believed these extremes, repent—change the way you think.

Think with intention. Knowing what is already ours in Christ, even though we haven’t experienced it yet, is the basis of kingdom confidence. If you believe God will supply your needs, why are you worried? Worry is a form of atheism; it is imagining your future without God. Faith is imagining your future with God.

You must think with intention: *What does God say?* In every area of your life where you believe the truth, you will be set free (John 8:31-32).

Believe you are prosperous—because of Jesus. The lie says you must wait until you see prosperity come before you believe you

are prosperous. The truth says you are already prosperous because of what Jesus has done. Like the promised land, prosperity is yours by promise. You will possess only what you can steward well.

Although there is much more to this topic, remember: Affluence is for influence. Income is for impact. Prosperity has a purpose.

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James Baker and his wife, Mary, are the senior pastors of Zion Christian Fellowship in Powell, Ohio, a church marked by worship, a strong presence of God, healings, miracles and a passion for personal and regional transformation. Visit for more of his resources on biblical prosperity.

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