
How to Prosper from the Inside Out

Whether they admit it or not, a great many believers have trouble believing - really believing - they'll ever be financially prosperous. You can show them what the Word of God says.

You can load them up with scriptures that prove God's will for them is prosperity, and they'll agree with every word.

But they'll still go home and live poor. When they look around them at their mountains of bills, the faltering economy, and their dead-end job, they just can't see how God could possibly prosper them. "After all, what's He going to do?" they wonder, "Start floating twenty dollar bills down from the trees?"

How does God prosper His people? It's a good question. One that deserves an answer, and you can find it in 3 John 2. There, the elder Apostle John writes by inspiration of the Holy Ghost: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou may prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers."

I want you to notice something. That scripture doesn't say I pray you prosper even as the economy prospers or even as your employer decides to promote you. It says I pray you prosper as your soul prospers.

That's where most believers miss it when it comes to receiving financial prosperity. They keep looking at situations outside them, thinking that's where their hope lies. But God doesn't work from the outside in. He works from the inside out.

He blesses you materially as your soul prospers on His Word. Then, as the seeds of prosperity are planted in your mind, in your will and in your emotions, and as you allow those seeds to grow, they eventually produce a great financial harvest, no matter how bad the conditions around you may be.

Read the story of Joseph in Genesis 37 through 41 and you can see exactly what I'm talking about. When Joseph was sold as a slave to the Egyptians, he didn't have a dime to his name. He didn't even have his freedom.

But, right in the middle of his slavery, God gave Joseph such wisdom and ability that he made his owner, Potiphar, rich. As a result, Potiphar put Joseph in charge of all his possessions. Later, Potiphar's wife got mad at Joseph and he ended up in prison.

Talk about a dead-end job! There's really not much chance for advancement in prison, is there? But God gave him insight that no other man in Egypt had. He gave him such great wisdom that he ended up on Pharaoh's staff-not as a slave but as the most honored man in the entire country next to Pharaoh himself.

He went from prison to prime minister. He rode along in a chariot and people literally bowed down before him. During a worldwide famine, Joseph was in charge of all the food. Now that's prosperity!

How did God accomplish that? By prospering Joseph's soul. No matter how dismal Joseph's situation became, no matter how impossible his problems, God was able to reveal the spiritual secrets that would open the door of success for him.

That's what makes God's method of prospering so exciting. It works anywhere and everywhere. It will work in the poorest countries on the face of this earth just like it will work here in the United States. I've seen it happen.

A few years ago, for instance, we received an amazing firsthand report from an African village called Rungai. I'll never forget the story. There had been such a long drought in the countryside surrounding Rungai that the village was in terrible shape.

The reservoir that had once supplied it with water had been empty for so long that the dam was broken and crumbling. There didn't seem to be any hope. Then a local pastor latched onto God's Word concerning prosperity. He began to pray and seek God's guidance.

Sure enough, it came. God told him to get the believers in the village together and rebuild the dam. I'm sure it looked like a ridiculous thing to do.

There hadn't been any rain for months and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. But God had given them the secret to success and, in faith obedience, they acted on it.

Not long after the job was done, a rain cloud formed right over their little reservoir, filling it with water. But that's not the end of the story. You see, the soil at Rungai had been so parched, so full of alkali and poison, that nothing much would grow in it.

Yet, after that rain, the pastor called all the people together and told them to start planting around that water hole. He knew God was going to prosper those crops. He also knew that the crops belonging to the believers would be especially blessed.

So when he parceled out the land, he interspersed the believers' plots among those of the unbelievers so that the miracle of God could be clearly seen.

During that first season, everybody's crops flourished, sinners and believers alike. Then the season for harvesting ended. All the sinners' crops died as they were supposed to. But all the believers' crops produced another harvest. Then another. Then another. The believers' crops just kept producing all year long.

Now you may say, "Brother Copeland, God did more than just prosper their souls there. He worked some miracles." Yes, He did. But how much good would those miracles have done if He hadn't prospered that pastor's soul first?

How much good would that rain have been if the pastor hadn't heard from God and patched up the dam before it came? How much good would it have done for God to bless the soil if that pastor hadn't heard God's instructions to plant there?

Those miracles wouldn't have helped those people one bit if God hadn't prospered their souls first! It was because they believed His Word and were willing to listen to His voice that He could reveal to them the secrets of success for their particular situation.

Deuteronomy 29:29 says this: "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

Secret things! How many times have you racked your brain, trying to figure out the solution to a problem? You knew there was an answer, but you just couldn't figure out what it was. In other words, the answer was a secret - a secret that only God knew. It didn't belong to you.

But if you'd gone to the Word and really searched it in prayer and meditation, that secret would have been revealed! God would have shown you precisely what the solution to that problem was.

That's why He's given you the Holy Spirit. Do you have any idea what a tremendous resource He is? Most believers don't. They get in church and say, "Oh, yes, amen, brother. Thank God for the Holy Spirit. Praise God. Hallelujah."

Then they go home and forget about Him. It's not that they aren't sincere on Sunday. They are. They genuinely appreciate the little bit they understand about the Holy Spirit.

But they haven't learned how to tap into the unlimited wisdom and power He can make available to them in their daily lives. Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13).

If you're a businessman, that means the Holy Spirit will show you how to increase your profits and reduce your expenses. If you're a mother, it means the Holy Spirit will show you how to settle arguments between your children.

If you're a student, it means the Holy Spirit will show you how to excel in your classes. In fact, if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and are baptized in the Holy Spirit, somehow inside you is the answer to every financial problem, every spiritual problem, and every physical problem that exists. You have answers for problems you don't even know about yet.

There's a story that came out of World War II that illustrates that perfectly. The United States Navy had run into some serious trouble. Their ships were being sunk by the enemy faster than they could build new ones, a process which at the time took an entire year.

Finally, they came up with a way that made it possible to build a ship in a single day. But there was one hitch. The process involved building the ship upside down and when the ships were turned upright, the welds would pop and the ship would come apart.

The problem was presented to a deeply spiritual man who was a famous industrialist at the time. "I'll find out how to do it," he said. After days of prayer and fasting, God showed him the welding formula that would hold the ship together. One idea! Just one idea made it possible to go from building a ship a year, to building a ship a day. Can you begin to see now how God could prosper you?

There are so many people standing around wringing their hands and worrying. "God could never prosper me," they say. "All I get is this little paycheck, and my company's losing money, so I know they're not going to give me a raise.

How on earth is God going to prosper me?" Maybe He'll give you an idea that will take your company's loss and turn it into a profit. Maybe He'll give you an idea for a new product and you'll start your own company. God has probably already given you idea after idea that would have made you rich if you'd just had spiritual sense enough to recognize them.

But you didn't even know they were there because you weren't paying attention to the things of God. You weren't seeking revelations of the "secret things." You were probably too busy watching television and listening to some announcer tell you which brand of toothpaste to buy or how bad the economy is.

Listen to me. The Holy Spirit isn't going to be able to get through to you while you're lying around watching television. He's a gentleman. He just isn't going to come, grab the remote control out of your hand, and say, "Listen to Me, dummy! I have some important things to tell you." No. He'll wait quietly for you to shut off all that other junk that's been occupying your mind and tune in to Him.

Right here is where most believers miss it. They're so involved in life, and even so involved in church activities and religious organizations that they don't ever have any time to spend with the Lord. They never just stop and fellowship with Him.

There are believers God has wanted to put into high political offices. He would have shown them how to solve some of their nation's problems. But He couldn't get their attention. So He just left them where they were, spinning their wheels in a dead-end job.

There are others God would have promoted until they became chief executives of major corporations, but they were too busy working toward their own little goals to find out what His goals were.

Don't miss out on God's plans of prosperity for you. Spend time with Him. Listen to Him and learn to recognize His voice. It's going to take more than a couple of Bible verses and a five-minute prayer to tap into the revelations the Holy Spirit has for you. You'll have to get serious about it.

If you think you don't have time to do that, think again. How many hours a day do you spend in front of the television? How many hours a week do you spend reading the newspaper? How many hours reading novels and looking at magazines? How much time thinking about your problems?

Replace those things with the Word of God. Use that time to meditate on the Scriptures. Get in prayer and say, "Holy Spirit, I need to know what to do regarding this situation I'm in." Then listen. He'll start giving you the wisdom of God concerning your finances (or any other part of your life). Will He really? Sure He will.

James 1:5-6 says: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."

Again, though, let me warn you. We're talking about more than reading a few quick scriptures a day and wishing for prosperity. We're talking about digging into the Word and staying there until you begin to hear from the Holy Spirit and until you develop a faith that doesn't waver.

That's not something that happens overnight. Like a spiritual farmer, you must plant and weed and water the Word within you. It will take some time and some work, but believe me, the harvest will be well worth the effort.

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