

The prosperity Gospel

This topic is being discussed due to the very popular ministry of Joel Osteen and other TV preaches and ministries. This study is designed to instruct us as a church in the area of truth. This not intended to discredit Pastor Osteen’s ministry, rather it is designed to instruct believers on what his ministry is built upon.

First as your pastor let me make this statement:

I am not against everything...I am just willing to make a stand for something!!!! And if everything cannot align with my something...then I want nothing to do with it. Because God has not called me to proclaim everything...He has called me to proclaim something...the Gospel

Why this topic?

1. BECAUSE IT IS MY JOB AS A PASTOR...A pastor is to lead, feed, protect, guide and love the flock...If I am not willing to teach the tough issues....then who will?
2. Because we live in media driven world and just because someone says they are speaking the truth from God does not mean we must believe them.

What is so appealing about the Prosperity Gospel?

Positive

Uplifting

Encouraging

YOU CAN DO....JUST BELIEVE AND IT WILL HAPPEN

What is so unappealing about the Prosperity Gospel message?

- More concerned about how people feel and what they believe rather than who God is and what He has said.
 - It is a feeling oriented life rather than a truth oriented life.
 - Life becomes motivated by success, victory, and what we dream about.
 - I once heard a charismatic preacher say “I know what the Bible says, but I know what I experienced and now feel.” This is very dangerous when we put our feelings above the truth of God and His Word.
 - One will stop trying to live a life that is pleasing to God and will begin to live a life that is meeting their needs and dreams.
- Not exegetically solid...Poor teaching about God’s Word...No depth of Biblical teaching.
- Not doctrinally sound
 - Our doctrine as a conservative Baptist...is way different than Word of Faith/Charismatic.

Prosperity Gospel Preachers (Word of Faith)

<u>John Avanzini</u>	<u>Creflo Dollar</u>	<u>Joyce Meyer</u>	<u>Joel Osteen</u>	<u>Robert Tilton</u>
<u>Kenneth Copeland</u>	<u>Jesse Duplantis</u>	<u>Benny Hinn</u>	<u>Rod Parsley</u>	<u>Paula White</u>
<u>Paul Crouch</u>	<u>T.D. Jakes</u>		<u>Frederick Price</u>	

Prosperity gospel supporters "believe that faith works as a mighty power or force. That it is through their faith that they can obtain anything they want such as health, wealth, or any form of personal success. However, this force is only released through their faith."

Adherents of the Prosperity Gospel, almost always are part of the word of faith movement (Joel Osteen's background), they hold to the tenet that God never grants suffering or poverty, and that both always should be attributed to sin and Satan in every way, and in no way attributed to God.

For example, Kenneth Copeland writes,
"Tradition has taught that God uses sicknesses, trials, and tribulation to teach us. This idea, however, is not based on the Bible. God has never used sickness to discipline His children and keep them in line. Sickness is of Satan, and God doesn't need Satan to straighten us out! "Kenneth, I see Christians that are sick all the time. Why does God allow it?" God allows it because we do by having little faith.

A Biblical Critique of the Prosperity Gospel

1. God Himself is the chief blessing not our personal desires and wishes in life

While it is true that God often shows his goodness by granting health and wealth, we must see these as secondary blessings. The primary blessing is knowing God Himself & enjoying who we are in Him.

Psalm 27:4

One thing have I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to inquire in his temple

John 17:3

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

All secondary blessings are meant to point to Him. REMEMBER THAT IDOLS ARE ANYTHING IN OUR LIVES THAT ARE MORE IMPORTANT TO US THAN OUR DAILY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD....KNOWING, GROWING, ENJOYING WHO WE ARE IN HIM SHOULD BE OUR GOAL....NOT BEING SUCCESSFUL OR VICTORIOUS.

2. Jesus warned of the danger of wealth,

Jesus frequently warned against the allure of wealth. In Matthew 19, after Jesus told the rich young man, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (v. 21), he said:

Matthew 19:23-24

Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

Matthew 6:19-21

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Luke 6:24-25

But woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger. Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

I once heard a pastor say - "It is not sinful to be rich...it is sinful to die rich."

3. Suffering is a blessed means of producing endurance and testing genuineness

When we define (either implicitly or explicitly) blessedness chiefly as having material things and good health, and obligate God to bless us with these things, we ignore scripture which speaks of the sufferings of the followers of Christ as a badge of honor, and a means of producing endurance and testing genuineness.

Philippians 1:29

For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake"

Romans 5:3-5

More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

1 Peter 1:6-7

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 119:71

It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.

James 5:1-5

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

God's goodness is not bound by our exacting demands

The theology of the Prosperity Gospel also distrusts God's higher prerogative and wisdom and sovereignty. We do not limit the power of God by what we say...“If you just believe it and claim it God will do.....” The is not biblical. God has the final, supreme right to answer our prayers how and when he pleases. His wise goodness is not bound by our exacting demands.

<p>Why we need to distance ourselves as Christians from anyone or group that does not stand boldly on Biblical truth...The Gospel</p>
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In the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase

2 Cor. 6:14-7:1

14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? **15** What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? **16** What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

“I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

17 Therefore go out from their midst,
and be separate from them, says the Lord,
and touch no unclean thing;
then I will welcome you,

18 and I will be a father to you,
and you shall be sons and daughters to me,
says the Lord Almighty.”

7:1 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

2 Tim. 3:1-5

3:1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. **2** For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, **4** treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

Separation from any association with religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God

Rom 12:1-2

12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

2 Cor. 6:14-7:1 (See above)

1 John 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. **17** And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

2 John 9-11

9 Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. **10** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, **11** for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

A great quote to determine the substance of a messenger and his message:

"Any gospel that cannot be preached in a third-world country is not the True Gospel of Jesus Christ." - David Jeremiah

How effective would some of the sermons we hear on TV be in Africa, the Amazon, Middle East or any other third world country....