

Effortless Prosperity!

Key Verse #1: Matthew 6:24ff Paraphrase “No man can be the servant of two ruling authorities for he will hate and despise one, and love and hold on to the other. *You cannot be the servant of God and of mammon.* So I tell you, “Take no distracting, anxious thoughts for your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink; nor for your body, what you will put on. *Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing?* Take a look at the birds of the air: they don’t plant, they don’t reap, they don’t store up food in barns yet your heavenly Father feeds them. *Aren’t you more highly valued than them?* And can any of you add height to your frame by taking thought to add height? And why take thought for clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they don’t work for clothing, they don’t make their clothing: And yet even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of them. So, if God so wonderfully clothes the grasses of the field which are here today and gone tomorrow, *won’t He take great care of you, you little-faither [you confidence lacker – the self-rule issues are fueled by insecurity, aren’t they?]*? So, take no distracting, anxious thoughts, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what will we be clothed? *(For after all these things do the unsaved seek) for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But you seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.*”

Key Verse #2: Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, *and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*”

Key Verse #3: Genesis 22:14 “And Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide (YHWH Jireh), as it is said to this day, “in the mount of the Lord it will be provided.”

Introduction

Our two scriptures tell us that Father has provided an “effortless prosperity” for us all. Plainly, it comes by “*seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (character)*” and by “*believing that He is a rewarder, paymaster, compensator, of all who diligently seek (crave) Him!*” The scriptures declare this all-encompassing provision to those who believe Him, trust Him and completely yield themselves into His care as they seek His rule and transformation into the image of dear sons and daughters, ***above all else!***

His provision for prosperity is *not* the same type of “Jesus-did-it-all” provision as salvation and healing – *We have a part to fulfill to have His intended fullness* – But He offers a “no maintenance” option to those who will simply *believe Him!* Salvation and healing were purchased for us solely by Jesus’ redemptive sacrifice and were offered to us *by grace through faith!* Prosperity was provided for us when Jesus resurrected as “the firstborn from the dead in whom *all fullness dwells*” and is offered to all who have *faith, with obedience!* To have salvation and healing we *believe Him* and walk in them! To have effortless prosperity we *believe Him and while walking after Him, we “keep”* (guard, stay focused on, hold fast to) *His Words!*

“Effortless prosperity” is Father’s idea! He makes it possible! But “effortless” doesn’t mean we have nothing to do! It means we have nothing to do with *getting* or *maintaining* our prosperity! It means we do nothing of equal or great consequence to have and enjoy prosperity! It means we spend no energy, and conversely get no satisfaction or stress from, creating, increasing, directing and protecting our prosperity! It means we’re not in the game of life as the world plays it! IT MEANS:

We give up the typical Christian response to prosperity!

Luke 10:41,42 (paraphrase) “Martha, Martha, you are **careful** (merimnao: distracted, anxious) **and troubled** (turbazo: disturbed and in an uproar) **about many things** [she had invited Jesus into her home – good move, usual (wrong) response]. Only one thing is needful (required, necessary now) and Mary has selected the beneficial part (portion and participation) [Having the Master there she sat at His feet to hear His word – v39], which shall not be taken away from her.”

2Timothy 2:4 “No man that serves in the army **entwines himself with the affairs of this life** so that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

We do prosperity the way He intended!

Matthew 11:28-30 (Exegetical paraphrase) “Come unto Me all of you that are work-wearied and overburdened and I will give you refreshing. **Team-up with Me, let Me disciple and show you**; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you will find an intermission and recreation for your souls. Joining-up with Me is easy, and my tasks light.”

We let Him take care of our needs (so we can be about our Father’s business)!

1Peter 5:7 “Casting (throwing, divesting – aggressive) **all your care** (merimna: distracting, anxious thoughts) upon Him; for He cares (melo: is interested and concerned) for you.”

We realize that this life is not about us, what we need, what we want, what we can get or what we end up with at the end!

Luke 12:15 “Take heed and beware of covetousness because a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of things we possess!”

Effortless prosperity means we spend our energies doing our job; extending His kingdom, touching the world with His love, being obedient to His will, overcoming this world with its lusts, all the while letting Him take care of our earthly needs. It means we let Him decide if, when, where, and how He will provide whatever it is He wants us to have, knowing He is better than the best of Father’s who will give us all we have need of and more! It means trusting Him to distribute our “rewards” between earthly and heavenly accounts, at times delaying our immediate gratification to store up treasures in heaven! It means we choose to believe Him, seek Him, trust Him, and let Him work out all the hard and complex details of our “having and staying in” His prosperity! He offers this no maintenance (on our part) prosperity plan to “servants” who trust, and leave, the issues of provision to Him!

 **If we're not burning energy getting and maintaining prosperity, where are we supposed to spend our energies?**

[Necessary note: Many people accept salvation, most Christians embrace healing, but few press into the “kingdom rule → kingdom plan → kingdom blessing” that Father has prepared for those who fully yield to Him! In fact, most U-turn before this point thinking they have experienced all there is to a faith walk!] Of all the “Short-cuts” (“*You do the simple things and I will do the complex things in response*”) given us in the Word of God (*For holiness, 1John 3:3; for answered prayer 1Peter 3:7; for fulfilling the commandments Matthew 22:40, etc.*), this “no-rule-but-His-rule” short-cut to prosperity may be the most important to us by virtue of our daily struggle with money and possessions! (*Strangely enough, it is also the most frequently rejected short-cut! Most Christians opt for the high maintenance program with the custom “self-rule” features!*) Honestly, our prosperity, money and possessions, take up far too much of our waking hours (And we worry about it when we have and when we don't!)! We're too concerned about how it's coming in, how come it's not coming in, where it's going when it does come in, how much is staying “home” and how much leaves home without us! It takes up so much of our time that there is little left over to spend doing the things that are important and eternal! *We can't go a day without worrying about money and stuff, but we can go weeks, months and even years without bearing the fruit of righteousness! Something's wrong!*]

There should be no doubt in a believer's mind that prosperity is part and parcel of the Christian life. Poverty is as much of the curse that came on the world through sin (Genesis 3:17ff) as sickness and disease.

The curse of the law: Deuteronomy 28 Blessed = vs 11-13 / Poverty = vs 15-18; 38-40 / Redeemed = Galatians 3:13, 14

The “Blessing of Abraham” Genesis 22:14-18 How and Why are we blessed? What are the results? What is the purpose?

Poverty is a hindrance to spreading the Gospel. A poverty mentality in a believer is worse than poverty itself, and a sure killer of the abundant life Jesus came to deliver. There should be no doubt that Jesus came to reconnect all of Father's original plans for mankind, which included the free-flow of prosperity! But, Father's definition and measure of our prosperity can be vastly different from ours... Prosperity *is* part of every believer's life, but it should never be the whole of any believer's life! *Abundance is ours*, but it should never be our focus! There are more important things to focus on:

1Timothy 6:6-12 “*Godliness with contentment is great gain... But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in ruin and loss. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.*”

A True definition of Prosperity

The Bible definition and the world definition of prosperity are completely different! The Word definition of prosperity is “having all the resources of God available when you need them for the task He’s given you!” The world definition is having our resources stored up and close by for whatever we want (“Get all you can, can all you get, then sit on your can!”)!

Joshua 1:7, 8 Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

3 John 2 Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.

Luke 12:16-21 “And he spoke a parable saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he asked himself, What am I going to do, I have run out of room to store my wealth? This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and I will store all my goods there! And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have much laid up for many years; take it easy, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, You fool, tonight your soul will be required of you: then whose will these things be, which you have provided? So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

There’s a price tag for that kind of foolishness! The Bible never promises that we will have a fat bank account... Never have to look at price tags... Never have to plan for purchases... Live in the biggest homes in the city... Drive the biggest and newest cars, etc. The world describes prosperity as fatness! But if we held Jesus up to the world definition He would fail the prosperity test! Fatness is not Father’s goal! Historically proven, fatness breeds independence from God! If godly prosperity was fatness then in effect it would separate most of us from Him! Father’s prosperity does exactly the opposite – it breeds total dependence on Him to furnish everything, all the time! It breeds a heart of contentment and expressions of trust in Him - that He will take care of us no matter where we are, no matter what the situation! Just a few verses before one of the greatest promises of effortless prosperity (Philippians 4:19) Paul says:

Philippians 4:10-13 “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

In fact, the Word tells us that Father purposely sets adversity against prosperity so that we’ll never be too “fat!”

Ecclesiastes 7:14 “In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.”

Bible prosperity has nothing to do with the concept: “the one who has the most when the game is over is the winner!” In fact, many that are called heroes of faith, friends of God, men and women of Holy Spirit power have nothing that the world strives after... But in the Kingdom of God, where Father records and stores the riches of those who love Him... They were, and are, rich beyond understanding!

The Prosperity of God is having all the resources of God available for any need we face! It is having enough for whatever place we find ourselves in life so that we are not distracted with anxious thoughts of what we will wear, eat, and live so that we can continue in obedience to our primary calling as ambassadors of Christ!

 **What is Father's definition of Prosperity?**

 **What is yours?** _____

The Two Conditions of our Covenant for Prosperity!

The first condition is "seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness!" On the heels of the *directive*, the *promise* declares, "and all these things will be added unto you!" What's so wonderful about that promise is the complete release of care for the things we need for life! It's the promise "If you will yield yourself into My care completely, I will take over the care of your life entirely!" That means one, or all, of these things; He will provide everything we have need of, change our perception of the things we have need of, give us complete contentment in the midst of perceived needs, or keep us from ever feeling like we have a need for something we don't have! Take your pick! They all add up to the same experience: effortless prosperity! We set our affections on "things above" and He cares for everything "below!" (Col 3:1-3) We put to death things like covetousness which is idolatry (Having another God – mammon?), passionate lusts, envy, etc. and He releases us into the fullness of Spirit-life! We serve Him, the Master of the House/ The Husbandman of the Vine/ The Owner of the Fields/ The Steward of All Resources, and He provides everything we have need of to "fulfill our service to Him!" He is the All in all, He has all and He will give all to those whose hearts are perfect toward Him! (2Chronicles 16:9) Yield and receive! *Well almost...*

If the first condition of effortless prosperity is simply that we put Him first... then the second is a lot like it... We obey Him!

The second condition of effortless prosperity is obeying His word! He has spoken the guidelines for everything that pertains to our lives and our becoming like Him (2Peter 1:3,4) and whatever the Word says is what we should be doing!

 **What are the two conditions of our Covenant for Prosperity?**

a. _____

b. _____

In the case of biblical, effortless prosperity, no one will ever have it without obeying His word concerning *the minimum covenant requirement* of the tithe!

[Necessary Digression #1: To tithe is to give a "tenth" of everything incoming! The tithe was instituted by Abraham, the Father of our faith, as an appropriate response to the Lord for His goodness! 400 years after inception it became a non-negotiable piece of legislation installed to keep the covenant of effortless prosperity in force! When Israel could not be trusted to do what was right on their

own, Father legislated this minimum so that Israel would do what was right and what would insure their covenant of prosperity (Israel's compliance and wealth is legendary!). Father's desire for His people was that they would be a "delightful land," a people flowing with provision, that all nations would call "Blessed (Malachi 3:12)!" Seeing, and liking, the results of effortless prosperity in their lives they became legalistic with the tithe to a fault... But Jesus, while condemning the abuse, commended and verified the practice of the tithe in the New Testament!

Matthew 23:23 "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! *You pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin*, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these last you ought to have put into practice, *without leaving the other undone.*"

The tithe did not end with Jesus dying on the cross as some would like to think. The tithe was not part of the substitutional, ceremonial law that Jesus fulfilled and did away with (The blood of bulls, goats and birds, etc)! But Jesus did change the "rules" regarding our prosperity! Instead of being God's chosen people and owing and returning a "tenth" of everything to Him, New Testament believers were now wholly owned, acknowledging that 100% of everything they have belongs to God, is provided for the benefit of His kingdom, and is to be used at His direction and discretion... Unfortunately most NT believers do not live the 100% lifestyle, so the "old laws" of minimums are still in force to legislate right behavior when we won't willingly comply! [Honestly, aren't you glad that Father sometimes makes us do what is, genuinely, for our own good?]

Asides: "Laws of Minimums" **Matthew 5:17ff** "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, *but to fulfil, re-inflate, perfect.* For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all is fulfilled. **[Jesus didn't do away with the law; He raised the bar on our behavior!]** Whosoever therefore shall break one of these *least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven:* but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, *Thou shalt not kill* **[OT minimum still in force?];** *and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:* But I say unto you, *That whosoever is angry* **[NT 100% lifestyle!]** *with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca* **[NT 100% lifestyle!]**, *shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool* **[NT 100% lifestyle!]**, *shall be in danger of hell fire... Thou shalt not commit adultery* **[OT minimum still in force?]** *I say, Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her* **[NT 100% lifestyle!]**... *Divorce, making promises, taking vengeance, extending love...* All have OT minimums in effect with the anticipation of supersedure by believers with 100% lifestyles!

[Back to digression #1] Obviously, if you can do away with the tithe, you are off the hook, you are back in control, and if you don't do right, well "Father understands!" That's right! People who don't tithe are off the hook of obedience! They are back in control! Effortless prosperity gives way to the high maintenance version (The one where you have to control all the details and be "on" all the time because you have an enemy who is seeking whom, and what, he can devour! [Insight: His ways are better!])! And Father *does* understand, He knows the small, groping, fearful and unthankful hearts of men, and He extends forgiveness, mercy, and grace-opportunities to repent... But He does not extend effortless prosperity! Effortless Prosperity is a covenant between Father and those who seek Him and His kingdom FIRST, while obeying His commands!

[Necessary Digression #2: Because people ask, the tithe is a tenth of *all that comes in*. You can't give five percent of what comes in and say you are tithing. You can't give eight percent of what comes in and expect the covenant to be in force. Father is the one who gives us the power to get wealth...

Deuteronomy 8:16-18 "In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. "Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

...and He knows exactly how much is coming in and how much a tenth of it is! He is not fooled by all the schmoozing we do! When it comes to paychecks the tenth is on the gross, before taxes, not the net. (Some people have so many auto-deducts; mortgage, car payments, medical, personal loans, savings, retirement, etc. that by the time they get their check and tithe off the net, they would have us believing they're living on \$149.00 a week!) (How come we can quote the right "income figures" to the mortgage banker considering making us a loan and we become confused about which numbers to use when we're dealing with God? That silliness breaks our covenant! And if we're going to miss having the covenant in force by a few bucks, then it would be smarter to miss it by a lot!) Payroll, various refunds [Before anyone asks: *reimbursements*, which are an exchange of money, and *returns* of merchandise, which generally are re-spent don't *necessarily* qualify], settlements, financial gifts, profits from sales (i.e. stocks, bonds, home, auto sales), interest, etc. If it's *in-coming*, it's tithable, and it's part of the covenant for your effortless prosperity! [Cere's personal rule for safety: "When in doubt, do it!" Anytime I am challenged to "exclude" something from the tithe; I tithe to break the hold of it! I will not let anything rise up to challenge my openhandedness with Father's provisions, nor let covetousness rule in my heart! I never worry about the "balances" because I can never out give my Father, and He will never let me be depleted for giving back to Him!]

There is no way around it! Tithing is the cornerstone of our prosperity covenant relationship with the Lord! If tithing is just a religious invention or conspiracy then prosperity, having all the resources of God available when you need them, would work without obedience to His commandment, but let's listen to what He has to say:

Malachi 3:7-12 (Expositional paraphrase) "From the beginning you have not kept My ways and have tried to do this your way. "Return to Me, and I will return unto you," says the LORD of hosts [Interjection: that is a promise of true revival! Father and sons teamed up together again!]. But you ask, "How will we return?" Well, will a son of earth defraud God? Nevertheless you have tried to defraud Me! But you ask, "How have we defrauded You?" In tithes and offerings. *You are cursed with a curse*: for you have defrauded Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house, and experience Me now with it, says the LORD of hosts! See if I will not open to you the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing on you, that there will not be enough room to contain it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he will not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a desired and pleasant land, says the LORD of hosts."

Here is yet another promise of effortless prosperity, in overflowing abundance, to those who do things His ways! But there is also the warning of the "severance of provision" (the curse), of the impending destroyer, and the wake of his destructive bent for failing to be obedient! Disobedience always breaks the flow of blessing and

opens the door for destruction! In John 10:10, Jesus said that He came to bring us life and life more abundant (which is a prosperity-of-God promise) but that the devil comes to *steal* (the quality of life), *kill* (to take away life) and *destroy*!

Most Christians *want* to have prosperity (We have an inward sense of our inheritance in God!). Many Christians (Especially American ones) *have* prosperity (The worldly type). *But few have lives characterized by the peace, contentment, rest, and generosity of God that in-fills a person who knows he is being backed-up in abundance by the Lord no matter what the circumstances!* If we're going to focus on and "go for" prosperity... let's go for the real thing!

Show Me the Money!

Now remember, prosperity is more than just money! It is having the resources of God available when you have a need! Let's see if it works in real life situations!

Illustrative verse #1: When Jesus needed money (for taxes): **Paraphrase - Matthew 17:27** "To keep from offending them, go down to the sea, cast out a line, reel in the first fish that takes the bait; and when you open his mouth, you will find a coin: take it, and pay our bill!"

Illustrative verse #2: When Jesus needed transportation: **Paraphrase - Luke 19:30-32** "He said, Go into the next village ahead of you... right inside the gate you will find a colt tied up, that no one has set upon: untie him and bring him to Me. And if any man asks you, "Why are you untying him?" Just say, Because the Lord has need of him. And they *that were sent* went their way and found it even as He had said to them"

Illustrative verse #3: **Mark 14:13-17** When Jesus needed accommodations the question arose: "Where do you want us to go and prepare for the Passover meal? And he sent two of his disciples, and said, Go into the city, and you will meet a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wherever he goes in, you go in and say to the man who lives there, The Master asks, Where is the room where I can eat the Passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready: that is where we will eat. And his disciples went into the city and found everything as He said, and they prepared for the Passover. And that evening he arrived with the twelve.

[And don't forget the manna, quail and water for Israel (Moses)! Elijah's ravens. The widow at Zarephath (Elijah). The widow whose debts were paid by the supernatural supply of oil! (Elisha). The fishes and loaves [twice] (Jesus)... and many more! Father's promises cover effortless provision for your family, for your taxes, for almsgiving, and for His kingdom! "He can do it... oh yes He can..!"]

Where is "faith" in all this prosperity?

Some folks have a faith in God that says that He will give them things, specific things, things they have the "pleasure" of defining. Things like houses that belong to the unrighteous (whose "fortunes" are laid up for the "just"), things like red Cadillac's with custom options, or blue bicycles, or snowboards, etc. There is encouragement to visualize the prize and turn their "believers" on. Next is to protect their hearts against doubt, confess their hopes time and again, and hold on to their passions while cultivating their "faith muscles!" It's a lot of work and it takes up a lot of precious time, but this kind of faith works! It has happened often enough (by supernatural means

that exclude the deceptive works of “mammon”) to be validated by scores of sincere people. Father does give the “desires of heart” (though a misnomer for the soulish, self-ruled part of a man and not the biblical context or principle) to people so fixated on the gift(s) that they don’t know they can have, or who are willing to forego, an experience with the Giver Himself. Father is the reader of the thoughts and intents of our hearts... and if by providing us the gift, which has no ability to satisfy, He can get us looking “for more” He will do it. The unfortunate part is the compromise made to have the “stuff” of this life, when Father is offering us *His Life!* But Father meets us and encourages us wherever we are in our growth, whatever our grasp of faith!

There is however, a faith beyond the faith that believes for things! There is faith that pleases God and brings Him into our lives in genuine manifestation and co-habitation (John 14:21,23)! That faith simply *believes Him, and that He will reward us (as children of His love, as laborers together with Him in heavenly enterprise, as soldiers of His army, etc) with everything we have need of in this life, if, when, where and how we need it!* It is this faith that brings us into “effortless prosperity!” What do we need to live at this level of prosperity? A love-motivated, fear-overcoming, mind-transforming, heart-conforming, in-every-circumstance-trusting belief that He will do, exactly, what is right for our lives, spirit, soul and body while we are serving Him here on earth! “We know in Whom we have trusted and that He is well able...!”

Response To Truth

 For “Effortless Prosperity” to be mine I have to do two things:

- a. _____
- b. _____

 Am I at the place to accept this “rise” of faith? ____ YES ____ NO

Doing our job of extending the Kingdom of God, Getting people saved, etc.; Having all His resources to meet any need; H-I-S; We put Him first; We obey Him; Put Him first, Obey Him; Hopefully “Yes”