

The Laws of Prosperity

Kenneth Copeland



KENNETH COPELAND PUBLICATIONS
P. O. Box 8720
Fort Worth, Texas 76112

1

The Laws of Prosperity

As we begin this study of prosperity and how it functions according to the Word of God, let's read the basic Scriptures on which our whole study is founded. Let me mention here that we are putting the Word of God first and foremost throughout this study, not what we *think* it says but what it *actually* says! When we see it in the Word, believe it, and begin to act on it, faith is created. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

As you read our basic Scripture text, remember that Jesus said in John 17:17, ". . . thy word is truth." For a clearer meaning substitute *the Word* for *truth* as follows:

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth [the Word] that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth [the Word]. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth[the Word]" (3 John, verses 2-4).

It would be good to point out that when the Apostle John wrote this epistle, he was an old man and had been in the Christian walk for a long, long time—in fact, from the

time of his youth. He had walked with Jesus and watched Him closely throughout His earthly ministry. John was a wise old man, strong in the Lord, and he said, "I wish *above all things* that you prosper and be in health."

Through our traditional ideas we have been led to believe that prosperity is bad or ungodly. However, John writes that we *should* prosper and be in health and then says in verse 11, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." If prosperity is evil, why would he want us to prosper? You see, there is nothing wrong with prosperity in itself. *Money* is not the root of all evil. *The love of money* is the root of all evil (see 1 Timothy 6:10), and there are people committing this sin who don't have a dime! I want you to realize, however, that prosperity covers much more than finances.

When John said we should prosper and be in health, he added the phrase, ". . . even as thy soul prospereth." Man is a spirit; he has a soul consisting of the mind, the will, and the emotions; and he lives in a body. Thus, there is *spiritual* prosperity; there is *mental* prosperity; and there is *physical* prosperity.

To prosper spiritually, you must be born again. When you accept Jesus as your Saviour and make Him the Lord of your life, your spirit is reborn and brought into fellowship with your Father, the Almighty God. This then puts you in the position to receive from Him *all* the things promised in His Word.

To prosper in your soul, you must be able to *control* your mind, your will, and your emotions. Just because you have accumulated a large amount of knowledge does not

mean that your mind is prosperous. Prosperity of the mind comes when you use the knowledge that has been accumulated—when you are controlling your mind instead of your mind controlling you. Second Corinthians 10:5 says we are to cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (or against the Word of God), bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. The person who does this has control of his mind and is in position to prosper mentally. *You cannot control your mind completely without the Word of God being alive and operating inside you.*

You must control your will in the same way. Some people say, "Lord, help my will to crumble." God doesn't want a broken will that He can dominate. He wants your will whole and in submission to His will, so that the two of you can work together in unity. When God made man, He gave him a will that has power. It is actually a godlike will because man has the right to choose his own eternal destiny. Only a god has that kind of choice! Man was made in God's image and given the will to make up his own mind. You can go to hell if you want to and God will protect your right . . . you don't have to but you can. On the other hand, you can choose Jesus Christ and the Word of God. In Deuteronomy 30:19 God said, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." What a privilege! *The choice is yours!*

When a man's soul is prosperous, his will is in line with God's will. How can you get in line with God's will? You can't until you know what His Word says. His Word and

His will are the same! An honest man can't will one thing and say another. *If you are in line with the Word of God, you are in line with the will of God.*

Let's discuss our emotions as part of the soul. The person who is emotionally prosperous can control his emotions. I used to think this meant never showing emotions, but that's not so. Jesus had complete control over His emotions, yet He wept at the tomb of Lazarus! The important thing is that His weeping didn't cause Him to join the grief-stricken throng of people. He continued to move in the spirit. He put His priorities where they belonged and raised Lazarus from the dead. He showed emotions but He was not moved by them.

You will never be healthier or more prosperous than your soul. You can be born again, even filled with the Holy Spirit, and still not be prosperous in your soul. For instance, an old saint of God, living in poverty, can pray revival down on a church, get everybody in town saved, and be lying in bed sick the whole time—*if she does not believe the Word of God for her health!* She can do these things, never knowing the fullness of the infilling of the Holy Spirit and speaking with other tongues, even though healing and prosperity belong to her all the time. You see, her soul was not prosperous in these areas; her mind had not grasped the full meaning of the Word of God; her mental computer had never been fed on God's Word concerning healing, the Holy Spirit, and prosperity. She knew the Word enough to seek salvation and revival and used this knowledge to pray down the power of God. Her soul was prosperous in this area.

The world's definition of *physical prosperity* (prosperity

of the senses) includes gold, silver, financial favor or power, political favor or power, and social favor or power. The world's definition of *mental prosperity* (prosperity of the soul) is "knowing it all." Put these two ideas together and you have a person who can use his mind to get financial and political power. This is the world's total concept of prosperity. You can easily see its drawbacks! Wealth and power cannot answer every problem. Money makes a lousy god! It can't buy good health or prevent sickness and disease from taking over the human body. Yes, it can go toward buying it, but the world's system of healing just isn't good enough. In the mental realm a person can have all the facts in his head and not have the ability to use that knowledge to obtain the money or the health that he needs.

What produces spiritual, mental, and physical prosperity? What brings all these areas together? The Word of God. The Bible says in Hebrews 4:12 that the Word is alive, powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword. It says that it divides the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow, and that it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. *When you are walking in the Word of God, you will prosper and be in health.*

We cannot settle for prosperity in the physical or the mental realm only. It would be easy just to settle for spiritual prosperity; but we can't afford to be lazy and to discount physical and mental prosperity simply because we are saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. It is the will of God for us to be made whole—spirit, soul, and body—and to be kept that way until the return of our Lord Jesus Christ (*see 1 Thessalonians 5:23*). As you walk in the light

of God's Word, you will become prosperous in every area of your life.

Spiritual and Physical Law

We must understand that there are laws governing every single thing in existence. Nothing is by accident. There are laws of the world of the spirit and there are laws of the world of the natural.

The laws of the world of the natural govern our activities in this natural, physical world. We don't float; we walk. If the law of gravity were not in action, we would float. These physical laws can be manipulated. For instance, the law of gravity is used when flying an airplane, but it is superseded by another physical law, the law of lift. When you put the law of lift into operation, you can fly; but you must know something about the law of gravity in order to use the law of lift. You don't do away with the law of gravity; you just supersede it with a higher law. These are natural, physical laws, and they govern this natural, physical world.

We need to realize that the spiritual world and its laws are more powerful than the physical world and its laws. Spiritual law gave birth to physical law. The world and the physical forces governing it were created by the power of faith—a spiritual force. God, a Spirit, created all matter and He created it with the force of faith. Hebrews 11:3 says, ". . . the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The law of gravity would be meaningless if gravity were not a real force. It is the force of gravity which makes the law of gravity work. In the same way, spiritual law would

be useless if the force of faith were not a real force; but faith is a real force. Faith is a spiritual force, a spiritual energy, a spiritual power. It is this force of faith which makes the laws of the spirit world function. When the force of faith is put to work, these laws of the spirit function according to the way God says they will.

Romans 8:2 says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." There are two functional laws in the world of the spirit. One, the law of sin and death, was put into operation by Adam when he disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. The other, the law of the spirit of life, was put into operation by Jesus Christ at His Resurrection. The law of the spirit of life is the master law under which we operate as children of God. It supersedes the law of sin and death, and faith causes it to function. There are certain elements which, when combined, will bring forth the result God intends. Salvation is available to every human being on the face of the earth because the Word says that anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (*see* Joel 2:32; Romans 10:13). This higher spiritual law of life is here in the earth, but every day people die and go to hell. Why? Because the law of salvation hasn't been put to work in their particular lives. It will work *only* when it is put to work.

This same rule is true in prosperity. There are certain laws governing prosperity revealed in God's Word. Faith causes them to function. They will work when they are put to work, and they will stop working when the force of faith is stopped.

The Bible says that God's Word is established forever

and it is law (see 1 Peter 1:25). When God speaks, His words become law in the world of the spirit. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

The success formulas in the Word of God produce results when used as directed. Mark 11:23 says, ". . . whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." Here Jesus introduced a principle—a spiritual law—that works. It doesn't make sense to the natural mind that with faith you can have whatever you say, even though it may be contrary to what you can see with your physical eye; but Jesus said it and by the eternal Almighty God, it is so! When you act on it, mix your faith with it, and don't doubt in your heart, this spiritual law will work for you!

Do you see how this functions? The laws of prosperity work the same as the laws of salvation, healing, and so forth. We are dealing with the same God, the same Word, the same Jesus, the same force of faith, and the same thief, Satan, who is trying to steal it away from you! There are many people who have the world's idea of salvation, and they will go to hell on it! It is wrong! Man's good intentions have nothing to do with eternal salvation. You can have good intentions to fly, but you will never get off the ground until you make the proper arrangements—until you put the proper laws into operation. A farmer can intend to have a good crop, but if he never plants the seed, how can he possibly produce a harvest? These laws, both

spiritual and physical, must be followed if you expect to get results.

The Bible says in Deuteronomy 29:29, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." Any law that God has ever revealed to His saints will never pass away. It will work every time it is put to work. Anything God taught Abraham or his descendants about operating financially will work just as well today as it did several thousand years ago. If you don't believe it, you've never met a Jew! The formulas still work and they always will! Every law God has given us is recorded in His Word, and He sent the Holy Spirit as our Teacher to lead and guide us in these laws and show us how they operate *for one reason*—so that we will put them to work. Each time one of these laws operates, it glorifies the Almighty God who spoke it and adds one more defeat to Satan who said it would not work.

World's System vs. God's System

God has a highly organized system to meet the needs of every facet of your life. The world's system of meeting our needs works exactly opposite from God's system. *God's system is totally adequate.* The world's idea of anything is very limited at best and stands 99% percent chance of being totally wrong. As believers we must be careful not to limit God in our individual lives to what the world says is so. The problem with the world and its system of operation is that there is a spiritual mad dog loose in it, and his name is Satan.

The world has a system of healing that is a miserable failure! We thank God for what good has been done with it, but we are forced to admit it falls far short of being adequate to meet the needs of the sick around us. Some men are dedicated to it as if it were a god. The world's system of healing makes a god of the hospital and a god of medicine. Actually, for the most part it leaves God out entirely; and without God, it will not work! There is no way to get healing except through the power of God, either directly by His power or by the power He built into the human body. No man on earth can heal apart from God.

There are two choices before you—the world's system of healing or God's system of healing. God's system and its laws are contradictory to the world's system. The world cannot understand God's system of caring for the human body. The Bible says the things of God are foolishness to the world (*see 1 Corinthians 2:14*). God made the human body. He definitely should be able to repair it. Ford Motor Company has that much sense! If they can build the whole car, surely they can build the parts for it.

We haven't known much about the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and a lack of understanding has caused problems in making this law function for our benefit. The Apostle Paul wrote, "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind . . ." (*Romans 12:2*). In order to be successful at God's business, we must understand how His system works. Don't expect God's best to come from the world's system. He will work around and through it in order to reach you, but it is always far below His best.

The absolute priority in studying prosperity is that you

should *never* think of it from a carnal viewpoint, from the world's attitude. You must train yourself to think in line with God's Word. If you're not careful, when you think of the laws of prosperity, all you will see is money—only a very small part of prosperity. *True prosperity is God manifesting Himself to us in His Word.* If He is manifesting Himself through His Word, He is always within easy contact because you can handle the Word. The only way you will have God with you on a continual daily basis is through His Word. We should not judge by our feelings or by our emotions, but by what God has said in His Word.

Let's look for a moment at the world of finance, the biggest problem area on earth. Sickness is not our main concern. There are many healthy people who are head-over-heels in debt, *and God's people have no business being in debt!* Here again, we find that the world has a system of finance which is complex and very poor in its operation. It continually rocks back and forth between the two extremes of depression and inflation.

However, when you are functioning in God's system of finance, life can be very simple. Don't borrow from anyone—get it from God. The problem with borrowing is that it is controlled by the world's system. In order to borrow, you must subordinate yourself to another person. Proverbs 22:7 says that the borrower is the servant of the lender. By borrowing you subordinate your name to another person. This is very important because of the spiritual significance of your name. Your name is the same as your nature. If your name is good, then you are good—your reputation is good. You can do whatever your name can do. However, when you borrow and go into debt to someone else, you

bow your knee to that person and look to him as your source of supply. This creates a spiritual problem that can be very serious, particularly if the other person is ungodly.

Look to God, He will *give* to you, not loan to you! Believers need to learn how to operate in God's system. It isn't easy to learn; but as you search the Word, you will have the desire to know God's system. When you begin to operate by it and live by faith in every area of your life, God will step in and make up what you don't know. He will put you over! The deeper you get into the Word and the more you learn, the more you will expand; the more you expand, the more Satan will fight; the more he fights, the bigger the victory; the bigger your victory, the more glory to God; the more glory to God, the more you will expand! It is constant growth!

At this point, let me emphasize Satan's part in this. When you hear the Word, when you learn to believe God—especially in the area of giving—you *become dangerous to Satan!* Jesus taught that the sower sows the Word and Satan comes *immediately* to take out the Word which was sown (see Mark 4:1-20). Why? For three basic reasons:

- (1) The Word of God is the key to the laws of the spirit.
- (2) The laws of the spirit govern the laws of the natural.
- (3) Satan works in the natural world.

When you take the power of these laws and function them by faith, Satan is finished! When you learn the rules of the game, he is through. He is a defeated foe!

Let me mention that these laws of prosperity will work

for anyone, regardless of their age! My children operate them just as successfully as my wife and I. They have learned God's system of finance and can absolutely believe God for anything in the world and get it! I remember when we needed a van for the ministry to carry our equipment. My daughter Kellie came to me and said, "Daddy, I want to be the first to give money for this truck." She had a couple of dollars so she gave it, and we made an agreement together. Then she started confessing the return on her money and got it! It didn't take her several months, and she didn't start whining about it—she simply said, "In the name of Jesus, it's mine!"

One day our little boy, who was about six years old at the time, came in and said, "Daddy, I want to give my money." No one had said anything to him, he just came through leadership of the Lord. He doesn't fully realize that God is directing him, he just responds to it. He's a child. (This is how we are to respond, as children in obedience.) He gave his money into the ministry and began believing God for the return. A few days later, he got it! A six-year-old boy! It works for him proficiently! Why? Because he is a born-again believer, filled with the Holy Spirit. He is a child of God, and he has a right to work these laws. It isn't a man's age that causes the law of gravity to work; the law of gravity works because gravity is a force. Remember, faith is a spiritual force and works by spiritual law (see Romans 3:27).

Prosperity: The World vs. God

Once again, we have the world's information opposing God's information. If you know what God thinks or what

He has said, then you have a very easy task of thinking and believing the same way. If you know what God has said, you cannot be deceived.

To the world, prosperity, like everything else, is completely born of the senses, or the sense-ruled mind. The world is governed by natural impulse and the physical senses. Its slogan is *Seeing is believing*. If you can see it, taste it, hear it, smell it, or feel it, then it must be true; if you can't contact it with your physical senses, it is not true.

As we have discussed earlier in this chapter, the world's definition of prosperity is very limited in its scope—financial ability and power, political ability and power, social ability and power. In fact, it goes only this far by its own admission. The world itself admits that it has no power to overcome poverty, sickness, spiritual ills, or social ills.

True prosperity is the ability to use God's power to meet the needs of mankind in any realm of life. This covers much more than just finances, politics, and society. Money is not the only degree of prosperity. You can have all the money in the world and still be poverty-stricken spiritually, mentally, and physically. Money is the lowest form of power that exists on earth. Do you know what is the highest? *The power of prayer!* You can pray in the name of Jesus, and God will use His ability to handle your situation, whatever it is. It takes the power of God to make you completely whole. God's power is the only power that covers the entire spectrum of human existence. God is more than enough!

To live a prosperous life your soul must prosper in *all* the truth of the Word. God's power is in direct relationship with His Word. He has used His Word to release His

power. He has sent His Word to us so that we may be in contact with His great power. Isaiah was quoting God Himself when he wrote, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). His power covers the entire spectrum of human existence—so also then does His Word. We can see it in Scriptures such as Hebrews 1:3 that says He is upholding ALL things by the power of His Word, and Hebrews 4:12,13 that the Word is a living thing which covers spirit, soul, body, and thought-life. It even goes so far as to say that *nothing* in the earth is hidden from the Word of God.

Your faith is in direct relation to the level of the Word in you. Get your Word-level up so that you can believe spiritually, mentally, physically, financially, and socially. Thus you will be in the position to handle any problem that comes your way according to the Word of God. *You* may not have the answer, but God has! Getting through to you is His only difficulty! God always knows the answer, but we are not always in a position to hear what He is saying.

If you know how to use God's ability to receive healing and never use it to help anyone but yourself, then it won't work for you very long. If you can believe God for healing, help someone else get healed. Spread it around! If you know how to believe God financially, start helping the people around you. You will begin to grow as you reach out to others.

In John 14:18-23, Jesus was teaching His disciples and gave the perfect outline of prosperity: "I will not leave you

comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and *I will love him, and will manifest myself to him*. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him* (italics added)."

This is speaking of a manifestation of God. When God manifests Himself to you and lives with you, then you are living in prosperity. You see, God by the Holy Spirit is here in the world. He is ready to move whenever a sinner makes Jesus the Lord of his life; but He will not manifest Himself in a person's life until that person calls on Him. If God's presence were enough, every human being on earth would get saved because we all are in the presence of the Holy Spirit. He was sent to earth on the Day of Pentecost and is still here today. The manifestation of God is the important thing. When we operate in the Word of God, when we keep His Word, then Jesus will manifest Himself, or make Himself real, to us. He won't just be there—He will live there! Do you see the difference? If we put His Word first in our lives, Jesus will reveal Himself to us. Then whenever a problem arises in the physical realm, we know the answer is in His Word. We also know the Great One *living* in us will put us over when we act on that Word, no matter how impossible the situation is.

Some people are waiting for a special manifestation of God's grace before they will get saved, but they don't have to wait at all. We are born of His Word (*see* 1 Peter 1:23). If a man will confess Jesus as Lord and believe that God has raised Him from the dead, he will be saved (*see* Romans 10:9,10). It is a simple matter of believing God's Word. You don't have to wait to receive salvation—it is being offered. You don't have to wait to receive prosperity—it is being offered. These things are offered by Jesus in His Word.

You know, the Bible says in Philippians 4:19 that God will meet your needs *according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*, not according to your need. I have heard it preached that if you ask God for one hundred dollars but need only twenty dollars, you'll probably just get ten dollars. You won't find that in the Bible, but God does say:

"Delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth" (Isaiah 58:14).

"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:19).

"What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

". . . ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2).

When you act on the Word of God, the desires of your heart will begin to grow and line up with God. Then He can cause *all* grace to abound toward you (*see* 2 Corinthians 9:8). The first step is to get your mind off of yourself. Begin to take up the needs of the body of Christ as if they were your own. The Word states very plainly that if a man comes to you needing food and clothes, don't just pray for

him and send him away cold and hungry. Feed him and clothe him!

Another thing, God will not just meet your needs *according to your job*. Businessmen have come to me and said that these things work for me only because I am a preacher, but this is foolishness! I know preachers everywhere it's not working for. Some men say, "But I don't have the opportunity for people to give to me. I'm not out preaching. They don't think of me when they give. I have to work for mine." Well, if you have more faith in your job and your own ability to work than you have in the Word of God, then it definitely won't work for you. God will certainly use what is available in your job to bless you or even get you a better one, but He is not limited to your job unless *you* limit Him to it. If you will stop and think for a moment, God did not make His Covenant with a preacher; He made it with a farmer, a working man named Abram. The Scriptures show that Abram turned to the Sodomite king and said, "I don't even want the string from your sandal because you could say a man made Abram rich" (*see* Genesis 14:23). No man made Abraham rich. God made him rich. Can you see this?

There is a basic, fundamental truth that runs throughout the entire Bible, throughout God's history of dealing with man. Every time there was a need, no matter what that need was, God had a man somewhere who had the resources—spiritually, mentally, or financially—to meet that need. For Israel, there was Moses. For the world, there was Jesus. For Jesus, there was a man with a donkey. For Ephesus, there was Paul. The Bible says God gave gifts to men—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers (*see*

Ephesians 4:11). He has a man to provide every need. No one person will ever be so spiritual that he doesn't need other people. We all need one another.

Begin to include the body of Christ in your needs. Begin to include the lost in your needs. If a man came to you needing clothes and you didn't have any clothes to give him, both of you would be in trouble. You need clothes for yourself and you need to be able to supply him with clothes. Jesus said, "Why do you worry about what you will eat and what you will wear? Your Heavenly Father knows you have need of these things" (*see* Matthew 6:31, 32). But He also said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6:38).

When I realized this and began to consider the needs of others before my own, I found that my needs were met supernaturally! It was uncanny! I had spent practically all of my adult life in debt. It seemed that every business venture I tried just fell apart, leaving me even further in debt. Then I turned to the Lord, determined to commit myself to His Word, and began walking my bedroom floor with my Bible in my fist, shouting at the top of my voice, "My God meets all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus!" I just kept confessing this hour after hour, day after day! My situation looked absolutely impossible at the time! I had no place to preach and nothing much to say! (One thing I *could* say was, "My God meets all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus!" I knew that sentence very well!) Eleven months later I was completely out of debt. In the meantime, I learned to in-

clude other people in my needs by giving to them and getting involved with them. When I began to give, I suddenly realized one day how very busy I was with God's work. Years have come and gone and I haven't caught up yet. When you do this, God will move heaven and earth if necessary to reach you.

Now, a big question in the minds of many Christians is *Does Satan bless people financially?* Many times it looks as though the ungodly men have all the money, but this is not true. There is more wealth hidden away than they will ever possess. The Bible says plainly that God will cause us to have the hidden wealth of the world, the hidden riches of the secret places (*see* Isaiah 45:3). The Word tells us that the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just (*see* Proverbs 13:22). Why then does the sinner have it? Because there are certain facets of financial law that will work when put to work. Israel has proven this. God taught Abraham certain things that the Jews are using today and they are still working. You won't find a Jew who believes in poverty, because poverty is not in the Old Covenant. It is in religion, not in the Bible. It was put into Christianity as a religion during the Dark Ages when the Word was taken from the people and put away in monasteries. Poverty oaths were fed into Christianity when the religious hierarchy took over. The men operating it were not born-again men.

You can look at the world's system of finance and see a perfect picture of Satan's whole pattern. It can be stated in just a few words, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10).

How do you kill a body of water? Stop it from flowing.

How do you kill a physical body? Stop it from functioning.

How do you kill the body of Christ financially? Pile up all the money in reservoirs and stop it from moving. Satan is a deceiver. Absolutely nothing he does is a blessing. Proverbs 1:32 confirms this, ". . . the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." It may look as if he is blessing, but he always destroys. He always presents a dead end, no way out. In fact, if you want to discern between the work of God and the work of Satan, remember this: Satan always tells you there is no way out, but Jesus says, "I am the way" (John 14:6). If it is doubt, defeat, or discouragement, it is from Satan—ALWAYS.

By believing God and including the needs of the body of Christ in your needs, you become an open channel for the things of God to flow through to others. Everything you have received from God flowed through Jesus. Did Jesus ever lose anything by giving it to you? No, He still owns it all. First John 4:17 makes a startling statement, ". . . as he is, so are we in this world." This does not say *as He was* or *as we are someday going to be*; it says *as he is, so are we*. In His position at the right hand of God, Jesus has more than enough to give. Well, we are His joint heirs and He is ready to see to it that we have enough to give (*see* Philippians 4:10-19).

An example of this channel can be seen in the Book of Revelation. God gave His revelation to Jesus, who signified it to His servant John by His angel; the angel gave it to John; John was to give it to the churches; and they, in turn, would give it to the body of Christ who would feed it to the world. A constant channel, a constant flowing—the

flow of love . . . the flow of power . . . the flow of money . . . the flow of food . . . the flow of everything you need!

The basic principle God has planned to use in supplying the body of Christ and allowing the body of Christ to supply the world is summed up in one verse from Ecclesiastes, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11:1). Give, and after a while it will come back to you again. You have to start "casting your bread" sometime—tomorrow will never do. You can't wait until your bread comes back before you cast it out. Many are waiting for their ship to come in who have never sent one out! Things don't work that way. It would be like saying to a stove, "Give me some heat and then I'll put in some wood." You give—*then* it will be given to you again. The key is to give continually. As you are walking in the Word and God's prosperity is being produced in your life, you will reach a point when your bread is coming back to you on every wave! It is *your* job to put it on the water. It is *God's* job to see that it comes back! You do your job and let God do His; then you will be continually receiving. The more you give, the more you will get; the more you get, the more you will have to give. God intended for these things to work this way. When you get to this point, more will be coming in than you can give away!

Satan operates in a way exactly opposite from this. Everything he does spells filth and stoppage. When you see a wicked man with a great amount of wealth, you are looking at a financial reservoir created by Satan to stop the flow. "And Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, With what difficulty will those who possess wealth and

keep on holding it enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23, AMPLIFIED). If a man has a million dollars in a safe and won't spend it, it is absolutely worthless—to him and to everyone around him. There are many people who could benefit from it, but he has the channel blocked. The only one profiting from this kind of thing is Satan. He uses the forces of hate, fear, and greed to keep financial resources locked up. Proverbs 1:19 tells us that greed takes away the life of its possessors. Satan can show you how to *make* money, but he can't show you how to *keep* it. Selfishness is *never* able to maintain what it builds; it *always* destroys.

Suppose a man decided to save his left arm and just use his right one, thinking that years later when his right arm got tired, he could switch over and use the left one again. What would happen to his left arm? It would lose its ability to function, wouldn't it? Now, this is a foolish idea but the same principle is true for a man with one hundred thousand dollars stashed away because of fear that one of these days there wouldn't be any money left.

If you are exercising this kind of fear with a few dollars, you are just as guilty of being a reservoir—a dead end, a satanic stoppage—as the man who stopped up a million dollars. Someone with no more than a secondhand shirt can be just as guilty of greed as a man with millions of dollars piled up somewhere. One is just as deceived as the other. To a person who is cold, a secondhand shirt looks pretty good. As I pointed out before, the Bible does not say that money is the root of all evil; it says *the love of money* is the root of all evil (*see* 1 Timothy 6:10), and there are millions of people committing that sin who don't have a dime!

God can do more with fifteen cents given in faith than kings can do with mountains of gold! The little widow proved this with her two mites (*see* Mark 12:41-44). Remember not to limit God to only what you can see and understand with your head. When the entire world is completely destitute, God will still have plenty and can make it abound toward you. *As He is, so are we in this world.* So don't be afraid to become a cheerful, freehearted giver.

In the spiritual realm as a born-again believer, you have Life and the ability to share it with others. You need to learn how to give this Life to meet their needs. The Word of God says, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15). I wondered what this really meant until I heard the story of a missionary and his family who were captured by the Japanese during World War II. After they were taken captive, they were told that Washington, D.C., had fallen, that the United States had surrendered, and that Japan was in control. Well, you can imagine what this did to those people. They felt absolutely hopeless! The Japanese dragged them around the country and finally began killing them because there wasn't enough food. They took this missionary's little girl and shot her. The next day they heard a deafening roar and saw the sky covered with B-29's! Those people just went crazy! They had been completely without hope, laboring under the lie that their country was defeated. Later, a G. I. kicked in the door on their compound and said, "You're free," and when he did, the missionary fell down before him and kissed his boots! You have the life-giving force of God Himself residing inside you, and the world is desperate for that life!

Don't be stingy with it. Freely you have received . . . freely give.

When you make it your need to get salvation into the hands of the people, when you make it your purpose to feed the Gospel to the unsaved, God will support what you do. This is true prosperity! God has obligated Himself to communicate the message of Jesus Christ to the world. He will move heaven and earth to do it because, to the man who has never heard it, Jesus has never died or been resurrected from the dead. To that man, the sacrifice of Jesus means nothing. The Word says in 1 John 4:17, ". . . as he is, so are we in this world." God is feeding us through Jesus. When you go to the Lord, He has more than enough to meet the need. Have you ever turned to the Lord with a problem and had Him say, "Well, that's new! You've come up with something heaven can't cover"? Of course not! God has more than enough to solve the worst problem you could have. Jesus is the channel to us and we are the channel to the world.

True prosperity is the ability to look a man in the eye in his moment of impossibility and take his needs as your own. Those who are spiritual are to help those who are not. We are to bear one another's burdens. When a brother comes to you with a problem, join with him in prayer; join your faith with his. Put pressure on Satan with the name of Jesus and get him off the man. Put pressure on the laws of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Lean on your righteousness in Jesus Christ. Lean *hard* on it! Lean *hard* on your sonship. Lean *hard* on the Blood of Jesus. Praise God, they work!