

Deliverance From Materialism

By Dr. Dan Cheatham, www.devotional.net

TWO EXTREMES

Some people today have confused MATERIALISM with GODLY PROSPERITY. Some have erred thinking that the Biblical teaching on prosperity is a "get rich quick scheme". They have thought that God is a slot machine. They have treated seed-faith as a "gimmick". They haven't realized that divine prosperity is a "way of life" over an entire lifetime. One prospers only as he grows in his relationship and fellowship with God. One cannot buy God's power or blessing.

Then on the other hand, many have erred and rejected the Bible teaching on divine prosperity for fear of being materialistic.

Almost all truths in the Bible are DYNAMICALLY BALANCED. For example: There are many many scriptures warning against sexual immorality yet ON THE OTHER HAND there are scriptures that encourage married couples to make love often. An entire book of the Bible is devoted to romance and marital sexual lovemaking... the Song Of Solomon!

Likewise, in the Bible you find warnings against covetousness, greed, love of money and on the OTHER HAND you find wonderful promises of provision and financial increase as a reward for obedience and growing in wisdom and faith.

Sometimes, at first glance, it may appear that certain scriptures CONTRADICT, teaching opposite things. But this is never really the case... the problem is not that the Bible contradicts itself; the problem is our own Biblical immaturity and ability to rightly divide the scriptures. We probably have stumbled upon a DYNAMIC BALANCE and misinterpreted it as a CONTRADICTION. Remember...every coin has a flip side. There are three rules of thumb that we must apply as we approach the Bible. First, SCRIPTURE MUST BE KEPT IN CONTEXT. Second, SCRIPTURE MUST INTERPRET SCRIPTURE. And third, SCRIPTURE MUST BALANCE SCRIPTURE.

MATERIALISM DEFINED

Materialism is the worship of the almighty dollar. Materialism says, "BIG IS ALWAYS BETTER." Materialism says, "MORE MAKES HAPPY." Materialism is when money and things have YOU. Materialism is depending on money and things for SECURITY instead of God. "Nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."¹ "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall."² God has never said it is wrong for you to HAVE THINGS. But materialism is when THINGS HAVE YOU. One can desire great divine prosperity without being materialistic. The evil desire to be rich warned against in I Timothy 6:5-11 is the desire to get rich MAN'S WAY instead of GOD'S WAY. MAN'S WAY CONSUMES RICHES UPON MAN'S LUSTS. Materialism is just another word for greed. Greed is defined in Proverbs 1:19; Proverbs 3:27,28; and Proverbs 15:27. Man's way always leads to greed, or materialism. There is MAN'S WAY TO RICHES WHICH IS MATERIALISTIC. But there is GOD'S WAY TO RICHES WHICH IS PERFECTLY WHOLESOME. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."³

DON'T FEAR MATERIALISM

God wants you to desire wealth and riches so that you can help spread the gospel through your giving. Deuteronomy 8:18: But thou shalt remember the Lord your God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is today. But Brother Dan, doesn't Hebrews 13:5 command us to "be content with such things as we have." Yes, that's what it says. But read the whole scripture: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as YE HAVE..." What is covetousness? Is desiring something from God covetousness? No. If asking God for a blessing were covetousness, then prayer would be evil. That is foolish. So what is covetousness. Covetousness is WANTING ANOTHER PERSON'S BLESSINGS, BELONGINGS, OR WIFE. Covetousness is defined in the Ten Commandments. So in context, Hebrews 13:5 doesn't mean you can't desire financial and material blessings from God. It means don't covet; be content with your own blessings from God and be thankful for the things God has already done for you.

I hear people say, "I DON'T GO FOR ALL THIS PROSPERITY STUFF BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO BE MATERIALISTIC." But you need not fear becoming materialistic IF GOD PROSPERS YOU. WHY? BECAUSE GOD HAS PLACED A BUILT-IN SAFEGUARD AGAINST MATERIALISM, AGAINST GREED: "You must give, before you can get." The minimum condition to prosper financially is to consistently tithe a tenth of your income to God. God has a supernatural economy. According to Luke 6:38, the key to financial increase is to give over and above the minimum tithe in order to receive a reciprocal and proportionate blessing. SO LONG AS YOU CONTINUE IN GOD'S WAY OF PROSPERITY (GIVING), IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BECOME MATERIALISTIC, BECAUSE YOU ARE IN A CONTINUOUS CYCLE OF UNSELFISH GIVING, RECEIVING MORE, AND THEN GIVING MORE!

Praise God! Deliverance from materialism doesn't come by trying to be "poor and humble" (false humility). It comes rather by participating in God's way of tithing and seed-faith giving. In this divine economy, God uses your giving both as a seed to advance the Kingdom and as a seed to meet your own needs.

God spoke to me once about this. He said, "Son, no dollar amount of income or material blessing is too much as long as it is earned or inherited honestly, and the person tithes the gross of it, and gives offering out of it."

God spoke to Dr. Kenneth Hagin once, saying, "I am not opposed to my people being rich. I am opposed to them being greedy and covetous." I encourage you to read Psalm 112, which shares the secrets of a godly man's way to "wealth and riches".

The issue of prosperity versus materialism is NOT the amount of money. The issue is how you receive the money and what you do with that money.

God wants his people to be abundantly blessed materially and financially. III John says, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

Proverbs 13:22 says, "The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just." God desires to funnel the wealth of this world out of the hands of greedy, materialistic men into the hands of faithful Christians who will use it for God's glory. This supernatural prosperity will only come to God's people as they participate in supernatural giving, supernatural believing, supernaturally hard work, supernaturally smart work, and supernatural stewardship.

SCRIPTURES

1 Timothy 6:17

Proverbs 11:28

Proverbs 10:22