

Addressing Culture with Scripture: Seeing and Answering the Many Faces of False Teaching

False teaching has been in our world since Genesis three and has metastasized so many times that it fills every culture so that it manifests itself in seemingly enumerable degrees and forms. The Bible repeatedly warns the people of God to be on guard against all false teaching, to defend the true faith, and to be prepared to give answer for the hope we have in Christ. Paul's warning from Colossians 2:8 needs to be heard loud and clear in the church today, "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy or empty deceit..."! Therefore, starting October 5th we will begin a 9-week study of specific false teachings that inundate our culture, constantly seek to infect our homes, and even strive to distract our ministry. The plan for this class is to not only see some of the primary false teachings listed here but also to equip you with a sound biblical defense of the truth that has been twisted by these deceptions of the devil. We are living in a world filled with lies but we are called to be people of the truth who graciously but boldly live out and declare the truth in love. May the Lord use this study to further help us to remain on guard as we grow in our understanding of and submission to the Scriptures.

Date	Scheduled Lesson Topic
10/5	Prosperity Gospel / Word of Faith Movement
10/12	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormonism)
10/19	The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah Witnesses)
10/26	Roman Catholicism & Eastern Orthodoxy
11/2	Islam
11/9	Mind Science Groups & New Age Spirituality
11/16	Middle Eastern Religions (Hinduism; Buddhism...)
11/30	Secularism & Atheism & Naturalism
12/7	Legalism & Antinomianism & Universalism / Inclusivism



The Perversion of the Prosperity Gospel

Intro:

- The Warning We Must Heed: Col 2:8; 2 Tim 3:1, 12-13; Acts 20:28-30
- The Reality We Must Face: 1 Jn 2:18, 4:1; 2 Cor 11:13-14 cf. Gen 3:1-5
- The Description We Must Never Forget:

New Testament Descriptions of False Teachers (Not Exhaustive...Consider James 3:1!!)

1. Scripture Twisters (2 Pet 3:16 cf. Acts 13:10; 20:30)
2. Servants of Satan (2 Cor 11:12-15)
3. Dogs (Phil 3:2) who return to their own vomit (2 Pet 2:22)
4. Blots and Blemishes (2 Pet 2:13)
5. Accursed Children (2 Pet 2:14)
6. Slaves of Corruption (2 Pet 2:19)
7. Pigs that return to wallow in their own mere (2 Pet 2:22)
8. Wolves (Mt 10:16)
9. Ravenous Wolves who hide in sheep's clothing (Mt 7:15 cf. Ezek 22:25-29)
10. Fierce Wolves who spare not the flock (Acts 20:29)
11. Deceitful Workman (2 Cor 11:13)
12. Deceivers (Titus 1:11; 2 Jn 7)
13. Deceived (2 Tim 3:13)
14. Antichrists (2 Jn 7 cf. 1 Jn 2:18; 4:1-6)
15. Unreasoning Animals (Jude 10; 2 Pet 2:12)
16. Hidden Reefs (Jude 12)
17. Waterless Clouds (2 Pet 2:17; Jude 12)
18. Fruitless Trees (Jude 12)
19. Wild waves of the sea that cast up their own shame (Jude 13)
20. Loudmouth Boasters (Jude 16)
21. Smooth Talkers (Rom 16:18-17)
22. Cursed (Gal 1:6-9; Jude 13)
23. Twice Dead (Jude 12)
24. Grumblers and Malcontents (Jude 16)
25. Showing Favoritism to Gain Advantage (Jude 16)
26. Blasphemers (2 Pet 2:10-12)
27. Creatures of Instinct (2 Pet 2:12)

- 28. Eyes full of Adultery (2 Pet 2:14)
- 29. Hypocrites (Mt 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29)
- 30. Blind Guides & Blind Fools (Mt 23:16-17, 24, 26)
- 31. Whitewashed Tombs (Mt 23:27)
- 32. Serpents and Brood of Vipers (Mt 23:33)
- 33. Money Mongers (Titus 1:11; 2 Pet 2:14)

The “prosperity gospel” is also known as the “Word of Faith Movement” ; “Name it and Claim It”; “Gab it and Grab it”; NAR (New Apostolic Reformation) is everything the Prosperity Gospel Movement is but even worse!

I. The Historical Roots of this False Teaching

1. **Phineas P. Quimby** (1802-1866) who is seen as the father of “The New Thought Movement” and the great grandfather of the “Word of Faith Movement” though Quimby was not a pastor or preacher but a philosopher. This movement believed and taught that whatever you think about you will attract to yourself. This movement believed that sickness was only a mind issue so that one only needs to deny sickness for it to go away. (See Andrew Womack teach this heresy [here](#)) The New Thought Movement is also foundational to the false teaching of “Christian Science” that is neither Christian or science!

2. **Essek W. Kenyon** (1867-1948) known by most to be the grandfather of the “Word of Faith Movement” being a pastor who preached in churches in New York and Massachusetts. As a pastor he disciplined many in the heretical teaching that “faith” is the foundational substance for everything materially and physically. This means that if you could break everything physically down in the universe you find that its ultimate core component was faith. Thus, having the right faith (a physical force) is how you build the physical and material blessings in your life. He taught with faith all you have to do is “speak it into existence” and it will come. Everything from health to wealth!

3. **Kenneth Hagin** (1917-2003) known by most to be the father of the modern “Word of Faith Movement” and claimed that Jesus appeared to him at least 8 different times. Interestingly, that one evaluates what “Jesus” spoke to Kenneth Hagin was almost word for word what Essek Kenyon said verbatim. Was it divine revelation or human plagiarism! Kenyon was the most influential leader in the life and Kenneth Hagin.

4. **Oral Roberts** (1918-2009) who was a Methodist and became the one who really put the “Word of Faith Movement” on the map as he became one of the most seen and known television evangelist with his healing services being seen on 500 stations at one time on Sunday afternoons on Sundays in the 1950’s.

5. **Kenneth Copland** (1936-) became one of the first self-proclaimed billionaire preachers and really put the “Word of Faith Movement” on the map globally becoming one of the most famous and well-known television preachers internationally. His spiritual father was Kenneth Hagin.

II. Some Core Tenants of this False Teaching¹

1. The Abrahamic Covenant is the Means to Christians Material Entitlement (Gen 12, 15, 17, 22 cf. Gal 3:14)
2. The Atonement of Christ extends to the Sin of Poverty (Isa 53:5; 2 Cor 8:9 cf.14)
3. Christians Must Give to Get Material Blessing from God (Mk 10:30 cf. Lk 6:35)
4. Faith is a Self-Generated Spiritual Force Leads to Prosperity (Mk 11:22-23)
5. Prayer is the Tool to Force God to Grant Material Wealth (Js 4:2b cf.3) Not humble dependence but arrogant independence
6. God's Will is Always for Believers to be Healthy and Wealthy² (Isa 53:5)
7. Believers have the Power to Speak Things into Existence Just Like God... "miracles in your mouth"³ (Luke 1:20)
- 8 Believers are little gods⁴ (Gen 1:26-27 cf. Jn 10:34... Consider what lies behind Satan's temptation in Gen 3:1-5 and Satan's desire that ended in expulsion from heaven Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:1-19. Also, Adam was created as a god just like God so that in salvation man becomes like God and thus man must enjoy prosperity for God is not poor or unhealthy.)

III. A Summary of Why the Prosperity Gospel is Another Gospel (Gal 1:6-9)

- 1. A Small View of God:** The prosperity gospel makes God out to be another god who is more like heaven's bellhop or a cosmic genie in a lamp who exists for us and moves at our beckon call! This false gospel makes God weak and controlled by man not sovereign and all powerful. (Isa 45:5-7)!
- 2. A Shallow View of Christ:** The prosperity gospel makes personal prosperity, physical health, and material happiness the point of man's greatest satisfaction and not knowing Christ Jesus (Phil 3:7-14)!! There are numerous prosperity preachers that deny that Christ was God because He got hungry and slept (Dollar) and that he never claimed to be God (Copland), not the only Son of God (Paula White). This makes them "Arian" and clearly heretics as they deny the deity of Christ. Thus, they have a different Jesus and therefore preach a different gospel! (Rom 8:28; - 30; 1 Cor 1:30-31; 2 Cor 5:14-15; Gal 6: 14; Eph 1:6; Col 3:1-4, 11; Rev 1:12-17)

¹ This material adapted from numerous helpful resources such as "A Field Guide to False Teaching" from Ligonier Ministries; "God, Greed, and the Prosperity Gospel" from Costi Hinn; "Health, Wealth, and Happiness: How the Prosperity Gospel Overshadows the Gospel of Christ" from David Jones; "Clouds Without Water" from Justin Peters see [here](#)

² See Andrew Womack teach this heresy and many others [here](#)

³ See Joel Osteen teach this heresy [here](#)

⁴ See Creflo Dollar teach this heresy [here](#)

3. A Flippant View of Sin: The prosperity gospel makes sin very light so that it is not man's greatest problem and deepest plague but simply a hindrance in keeping man from being happy and healthy in this life. Sin is not seen as a direct and cosmic attack against God Himself but a force that invades man from the outside not a death that comes from inside out (Mk 7:20-23; Rom 3:9-18; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 2:1-3; Heb 9:22, 26-28; Js 1:12-15; 1 Pet 2:22-25)!

4. A Contrary View of the Atonement: The prosperity gospel sees Christ's work on the cross as primary for the purpose of bringing physical healing and perfect health through His death. They also teach that Christ did not atone for man's sins on the cross but then Jesus went to hell and was tortured to death, and it was through that "spiritual death" that man's sins were atoned for. If Christ dies "spiritually" as prosperity preachers say, then Christ was never God to begin with for God cannot cease to be God (Isa 53:5 cf. Rom 3:23-26; 5:3-5; Phil 1:29; Js 1:2-3; 1 Jn 2:2)!

5. A Twisted View of Scripture: The prosperity gospel preachers constantly twist Scripture (2 Pet 3:16) to fit their false theology and make God's Word submit to them instead of submitting their life and ministry to the Word of God (2 Tim 3:16-17). Instead of seeing the Scripture as all the believer needs to live a life pleasing to the Lord (2 Pet 1:3-4) this heretical movement is always looking for more from God instead of submitting to His sufficient Word already given (Ps 19:7-11; Prov 30:5; Jn 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 4:1-5; Titus 1:9; Heb 4:12-13; Js 3:1; 1 Pet 1:24-25; Rom 10:17)!

6. An Exalted View of Man: The prosperity gospel convolutes the gospel of Christ by making it all about man and not about God. In Christ's gospel everything is about the holy grace, patient mercy, and the sovereign greatness of God to providentially propitiate His own just wrath through sinless sacrifice of His pure and perfect Son. But in the prosperity gospel it is all about greatness and goodness of man who is so valuable to God that He could not help but rescue man and then bless with endless temporal prosperity. A true perversion of the true gospel (Gen 6:5; Deut 7:7-8; Isa 59:1-13; Jer 17:9-10; Jn 3:16-18; Rom 3:9-12; 5:8; 9:10-13; 11:33-36; Eph 2:1-3; Titus 3:1-5)!

7. A Disastrous View of the Gospel: The prosperity gospel makes the "good news" all about personal glory and personal stuff so that your life is all about personal comfort instead of being graciously conformed into the image of Christ. It is a gospel about goodies and not the glory of Christ. Therefore, the prosperity gospel is a deadly doctrine of bad news as it produces false converts who think they are going to heaven but are truly on their way to hell (Mt 7:21-23; Jn 14:23; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18-4:6; Eph 1:4; Rom 8:29; Col 3:10; Phil 2:12-13; 2 Tim 4:1-4; 1 Jn 3:1-3)!

8. A False View of Faith: The prosperity gospel the clarity of Christ centered repentant faith and turns it into a nebulous force that is at work around us that man must harness and then make it work for him and his desires. At the end of the day this false gospel makes faith a work of man and not a gift of God. Faith is all about the key you use through the money you give so that you can unlock the blessings of God in heaven and bring them to earth. Therefore, in this man centered theology "faith" is really the object of your faith and not God! The prosperity gospel

markets faith in faith and replaces the gospel of Christ which is repentant faith in God (Hab 2:4; Mk 1:15; Jn 3:16-18; Rom 1:17; 3:17-21; 5:1-2; 10:9-11; Gal 3:24; Eph 2:8-9; 1 Pet 1:6-9)!

9. An Idolatrous View of Money/Health/Happiness: The prosperity gospel views everything through the prism of personal wealth so that it turns money and comfort into an idol. Paul said it was the love of Christ as seen in the cross that compelled him. However, not so in the prosperity gospel for it is the love of money that drives everything (Prov 3:13; 10:2; 11:28; 16:8; 1 Tim 6:6-10; Titus 1:11; 2 Pet 2:14)

10. A Demented View of the Church: The prosperity gospel is a cult for charlatans who prey on vulnerable people like wolves in sheep's clothing. This is totally antithetical to God's design for the church where it is to be a place where people are protected with truth not abused by lies. A place where people are feed with God's Word not pilfered by man's word. A place where they selflessly give in the service of others not falsely give to others in the service of self. A place where believers are to be built up in Christ and grow in holiness and not a place self is exalted so that man lives in wickedness.

Conclusion:

Consider how it is as much about the people who long for the prosperity gospel as it is about the people who preach it! Think about it, there would be no market for man centered preaching if man did not like it and yearn for it! See 2 Tim 4:1-5...what does that say about our prosperity driven city and region?