

Live the Creed: An Exposition of James
“The Right Kind of Prosperity Gospel”

James 1:9–12
The Lord’s Day Morning — April 28, 2024

The *wrong kind of prosperity gospel* lies about God: God promises health and wealth to all Christians who are good enough. Being good may mean manufacturing a strong faith in God, donating your money (especially to prosperity preachers) or positive thinking and speaking. Whatever the hoops, if we jump through them, we can obligate and manipulate God to give us physical healing and financial wealth, making it easier to “follow Christ.”

The *right kind of prosperity gospel* tells the truth about God: God wills for his people to occasionally suffer physical sickness or financial setbacks just as unbelievers do. There are dozens of possible purposes in these trials, but all of them work for our good and God’s glory. Trials humble us before a sovereign God, making us aware of our utter dependence. We can endure these present trials because we know that one day the trials will end, and we will inherit the earth and eternal prosperity. This is the Christian creed.

A Summary of the Christian Creed in James

1. God creates all people in his image, making them equal in worth and dignity (3:9).
2. God judges all people by the same standard regardless of their prosperity (2:8).
3. God declares all people guilty of sin and deserving of his wrath (2:10).
4. God declares all people who believe in Jesus to be justified (1:1; 2:23).
5. God adopts all whom he justifies, making them his children and legal heirs (2:5).
6. God tests his children to train and toughen them to be more like Christ (1:2).
7. God commands his children to follow his example in loving all image-bearers impartially (2:1).
8. God will give his children their full inheritance of prosperity at Christ’s return (5:8).
9. In view of this future prosperity, God expects us to endure temporary trials (1:9-12).

The Promised Prosperity in James 1:9-12

1. _____ Christians are exalted in their status as “brothers” of _____ Christians.
2. _____ Christians are humbled in their status as “brothers” of _____ Christians.
3. Wise Christians recognize present prosperity as a _____ they haven’t earned, a _____ that can’t save, and a _____ to manage that won’t last.
4. Wise Christians don’t quit on Jesus but endure present _____ for future _____ convinced that _____ is _____.