

CLARITY TRUMPET

"It's Time for CLARITY!"

For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

-First Corinthians 14:8, 9-

The Prosperity Gospel

Proponents of the Prosperity Gospel teach that since believers are children of the King, they should live as royalty ought to live; it is our divinely given right to be healthy and wealthy, to tell God what we want (name it) and then to fully expect it to become a reality (claim it). And, of course, it is never God's will for any of His children to be sick, unhealthy or impoverished.

Bible passages are taken out of context and twisted to obtain the desired interpretation, and God's people are promised that there is a "miracle remedy" for every need just waiting for them to claim.

For instance, in Deuteronomy 8:10-18 God forewarned Israel to not forget Him, and when He would do good to them not to "say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.' And you shall remember the LORD your God, for **it is He who gives you power to get wealth.**" The usual interpretation is that God wants all of His children to be wealthy and, therefore, if you are not, it is because you don't have enough faith.

There is also Third John, verse 2, which says, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers." The claim is that all believers in Christ should be prosperous and healthy. This is John's prayer for an elder named Gaius. It is not a promise from God to Christians in general. Because John prayed this prayer does not necessarily mean that it was answered even for Gaius, much less for someone else for whom it was not prayed – such as believers living 2,000 years after the letter was written.

Those who preach the Prosperity Gospel are the ones who make out well financially, for they use the ploy that the average Christian must demonstrate their faith by giving generously to the ministry represented by the one doing the preaching. The poor long to get out of their poverty, so when they are told that if they give to the church God will multiply back to them many times over what they give, they embrace it totally. When they see that it doesn't work for them – no matter how much faith they have demonstrated through giving – they turn away, blaming God for letting them down, when in reality it

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\* The "Bold" emphasis in the verses throughout this article have been added

was false doctrine that failed.

Let's now see what the Bible really teaches about this whole subject of health, wealth and ease in the Christian's life.

## God's Clear Declarations

**Philippians 1:29, 30:** *For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.*

**First Thessalonians 2:14, 15:** *For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men. . . . Therefore, . . . we . . . sent Timothy. . . to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.*

**First Peter 1:6, 7:** *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

**First Peter 2:19-21:** *For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. . . . But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.*

**First Peter 3:13, 14, 16, 17:** *And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. . . . having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evil-doers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

**First Peter 4:12-14, 16:** *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. . . Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him*

*glorify God in this matter.*

**II Timothy 3:10-12:** *But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions. . . what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

**James 1:2, 3:** *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.*

**Romans 5:3:** *And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance.*

## The Old Testament Examples

**Hebrews 11:35-40:** *Others were tortured. . . Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.*

**James 5:10, 11:** *My brethren, take the prophets. . . as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure.*

## The Example of the Apostle Paul

**First Corinthians 4:9,11-13:** *For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. . . . To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. . . . Being reviled, we bless; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. By “offscouring” it means the apostles were considered the scum and rubbish of humanity and completely expendable, fit only to be destroyed.*

**Second Corinthians 4:8-11, 16-18:** *We are hard pressed on every side. . . we are perplexed. . . persecuted . . . struck down. . . always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake. . . our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

**Second Corinthians 6:4, 5:** *But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings.*

**Second Corinthians 11:23-27:** *Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently,*

*in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; . . . in perils of waters, . . . of robbers. . . of my own countrymen, . . . of the Gentiles, in perils in the city. . . in the wilderness. . . in the sea. . . among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. . .*

**Second Corinthians 12:7-10:** *...a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me. . . Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities. . . Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

## Christ’s Example

I refer you back to First Peter 2:19-21 where it is stated that Christ **suffered** for us, “leaving us an example that you should follow His steps.” Pretty clear, isn’t it? Then carefully and prayerfully read the entire fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and see how He suffered so for us. No one has ever been as godly as the Son of God, yet He did not even have a place to lay His head (Luke 9:58), and He suffered more than anyone ever has or ever will.

## The Example of the Christian Martyrs

Down through the centuries devoted men and women have gladly forsaken normal comforts, possessions and privileges and have given their very lives for the sake of the Gospel. Are we to suppose that they were lacking in faith or godliness because they suffered so and because they enjoyed so little of this world’s goods? Any doctrine that belittles believers who have little and/or who suffer much *for the Lord’s sake* is an affront to God and an insult to all who live godly in Christ. Such teaching should be rejected and denounced for the harmful unscriptural heresy that it is. It is not “good news” at all and does immeasurable harm to the true Gospel message of God’s free unmerited grace.

Missionary martyr Jim Elliott once said, “He is no fool who gives up that which he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” I’m afraid zealous followers of the Prosperity Gospel are tied too much to this world.

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