

BIBLICAL PROSPERITY AND THE ROLE OF FAITH

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Biblical Prosperity and the Role of Faith
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MAKE A WAY® PUBLICATIONS
Miami, Florida

AKA Cornerstone Financial Counselors
Cornerstone Consulting Ministries, Inc.

To contact MAKE A WAY MINISTRIES:

10621 North Kendall Drive
Suite 113
Miami, Florida 33176

1-800-357-4223

www.creditcounseling.net
www.exodus-financial.com
www.fixmyowncredit.com
www.christianhomesavers.com

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CHAPTER ONE GOD WANTS YOU TO PROSPER

The purpose of this publication is to bring about a deeper understanding of how faith works in the manifestation of God's prosperity in the lives of Believers. At the outset it's important to agree that true biblical prosperity isn't limited to just financial issues. Finances are certainly a part and it's common to associate prosperity with finances. The fact is though Jesus came to give us abundant lives (John 10:10), not just abundant finances. Nevertheless according to the Word of God His abundance is intended to include your finances even though the traditional teaching of men has tried to convince us to the contrary.

To be prosperous from a biblical point of view means that all your needs are being met spirit, soul and body. In other words, one's home and life are in order, all relationships are being conducted in love, business activities are successful, spiritual growth through progressive revelation is occurring, there is no sickness or disease, there is no lack or insufficiency, all family members are pursuing God's plans and purposes for their lives and joy and peace are the ongoing attributes of life. Not only are all personal needs being met but they are being met in abundance meaning there is a surplus beyond what is actually needed. In short, life is complete and all of this *prosperity* is very well expressed by the biblical word shalom.

The Meaning of Shalom Prosperity

The Hebrew word *shalom* in the Old Testament was frequently translated into the English word *peace* and we tend to think of it limited to that context. It's most often used today as a Jewish greeting that one says when encountering

someone and again when departing and it means: *may God's peace be upon you*. But the full meaning of the word *shalom* in scripture is much broader than this and so it was also frequently translated as *prosperity*. In this context, *shalom* means that life is perfect with nothing missing and nothing broken. The fullness of *shalom* prosperity communicates to us that a loving God wants only the best for His children and that deprivation and lack are not a part of His plan. The truth is, everything God has ever made was/is good (Genesis 1:31). There was no death, poverty, disease, hunger, or insufficiency until Man fell from God's purpose and was expelled from the Garden (Genesis 3:17, 23-24); all these negative things came from the curse, not from God.

In fact, only sin could have caused our loving God to allow deviation from His original plan of *shalom* prosperity. And so, because of that love, He sent Jesus to die on the Cross of Calvary to pay for our sins so that abundant life and prosperity could be restored to Believers by faith (Galatians 3:8-9). Since *shalom* prosperity has been restored, it's now up to each of us to learn how to both claim it and then receive it for our life and family.

Even before Jesus came to earth, God wanted His children to be prosperous. How much more then does He want prosperity for you now after Jesus. Friend, it's essential that we accept this as the desire of God's heart because we will become what we believe. In other words our future is in part defined by the level of our faith. Said another way, the level of our prosperity is defined by what we believe.

Financial Prosperity is Included

In defining prosperity, it's important to also emphasize that *financial* prosperity can't be excluded from this biblical perspective even though manmade *religion* has tried for the last two thousand years to glorify poverty. The truth is

there is no place in scripture under either the Old or New Covenants where financial prosperity was excluded from God's plan for His people. Nevertheless some people want to believe that under the New Covenant, some degree of poverty or lack is an essential requirement for achieving humility and that financial prosperity is no longer a part of God's plan even though it doesn't say that anywhere in the Word. What it does say is that humbleness comes from casting our burdens and anxieties on Christ (1 Peter 5:6-7), not from trying to be poor.

Moreover, the definition of the Greek word euodoo that is translated *prosperity* or *prosper* in the New Testament clearly includes financial prosperity (specifically it means "success in business"). A good example of its use can be found in 3 John 2 where the Apostle prays that *we might prosper and be in good health, just as our souls prosper*. The wording serves to emphasize that he was intending to specifically include financial prosperity in his prayer. With this in mind, why would he have prayed for us to enjoy financial prosperity if it was no longer part of God's plan? Besides, how would we be able to perform good deeds and bless others financially (2 Corinthians 9:8-9) if we didn't have surplus funds to give away? And, why would Jesus have dedicated two-thirds of His parables to the subjects of property ownership and handling money if we are supposed to be poor? In sum, this scripture tells us that as our soul (mind, will and emotions) prospers or matures in the ways of God's Kingdom, we will prosper financially.

The truth is, God is not glorified by poverty. It didn't (and doesn't) come from Him; it came from the Curse and God still prefers *financial* prosperity for His New Testament children just as He did for those under the Old Covenant. In fact, the Bible says that the New Testament is a better covenant (Hebrews 7:22).

Therefore, if God gave us financial prosperity and the ability to obtain wealth under the Old Covenant (Deuteronomy 8:18), does it seem reasonable that He would have exchanged those things for poverty and lack under a *better* one? When we consider all of the scripture just as it's written instead of only a few parts with the intent of supporting pre-conceived ideas, surely we must conclude that God really does want financial prosperity for His people.

God Wants to Push You to Success

But there is still more about Biblical prosperity you need to know! Another Hebrew word in scripture that was often translated *prosperity* is *tsalach*. *Tsalach* prosperity involves a type of *success in life* that results from being *pushed* forward. In other words, true Biblical prosperity comes as a result of assistance from a stronger power. It is a greater prosperity than you are able to obtain on your own and you need help to get it. Therefore, *tsalach* prosperity manifests when God is pushing you and guiding you into it and can only come when He is at the controls ordering your steps.

But there is still more! The complete meaning of *tsalach* prosperity is that God wants to keep on pushing you until you experience a *breakthrough* to the fullness of success in *every* area of your life. This is the real prosperity our loving God has for us. His prosperity is greater than anything you can possibly imagine and He is the only One that can deliver it. Open your concordance, study the Scripture for yourself and stop letting people and your enemy the devil rob you of the breakthrough Jesus died for you to have!

Some Final Thoughts About Chapter One

The prosperity that God has for His children is greater and deeper than we can imagine. The fullness of its meaning is that *nothing is missing and nothing is broken* in your life. He wants to push you forward into His prosperity and success and He will keep pushing until you experience a breakthrough.

In sum, the basic law of biblical prosperity is to accept as fact that God loves you and wants you to be prosperous. In fact, He will do everything He can to help you achieve it. If you want it, you can have it. The Lord will see that it happens. Your job is to learn about the biblical principles that govern prosperity, to know what you are to do with that prosperity when you receive it (so you won't mishandle it and consume it all on yourself), to confess the truth of God's Word and to be obedient when He tells you what to do.

CHAPTER TWO GOD CAN ONLY DO GOOD

Many Believers have doubts that God really does want them to prosper because they have had problems in their lives and are holding God responsible. Others are confused by traditional religious teachings that say God puts sickness, poverty and other kinds of tribulations on us to teach us how to be good and humble people. And there are still others who lack basic knowledge of the Word so they can only hope that God loves them enough to let them prosper.

God Is Love

The Bible says that God is love (1 John 4:16). The Greek word for *love* in this scripture is “*agape*,” which is a special kind of love that is unconditional and self-sacrificing. God so loves mankind that He gave His only begotten Son to die for us in payment for our sins (John 3:16). In fact, the death of Christ was intended by God as a demonstrative manifestation of His love (Romans 5:8). The truth is He loves us so much He calls us the sons of God (1 John 3:1); in other words, He has adopted into His personal family those people who are willing to return His love and accept the Lordship of Christ in their lives.

Further, the Bible on many occasions describes the Lord as long-suffering, full of loving kindness and merciful. Out of these qualities flows *grace* which is the unmerited favor of God that produced forgiveness. The nine fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (Galatians 5:22–23).

In short, God does what He is. He performs acts of love because He is love. In essence, the central message in the New Testament, after grace and salvation,

is about a God who wants to abide together with His believing adopted children so that His love will be perfected in them (1 John 4:16–17). And once we are abiding together in love, God will do anything we ask (John 15:7). Indeed, love is supposed to be the focus of New Testament Life.

God is Good

We can know for certain that “God is good” because the Bible says that He is. The Word of God is Truth (John 17:17) and perfect (Psalms 19:7). It is eternal and has existed from the beginning; it is itself a manifestation of God Almighty and has always been with God (John 1:1–2). Therefore, you can rely on the Word and trust in what it says. If it says “God is good” then He is. Following then are a few examples in scripture where it says that God is good:

Nahum 1:7 “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble...”

Matthew 19:17 “...there is none good but One and that is God...” (Spoken by Jesus)

Romans 2:4 The goodness (kindness) of God leads us to repentance.

Psalms 25:8 “Good and upright is the Lord...”

Psalms 33:5 “...the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.”

Psalms 34:8 “...taste and see that the Lord is good...”

When the Bible uses the word “good” in describing God, it means that He is kindly, merciful, One who bestows benefits and blessings, loving, etc. This is the God we serve! Also, please note from the preceding section that one of His nine principal attributes is goodness (Galatians 5:22). Since God is love, He only performs good and righteous works that manifest who He is.

Then Why Do Bad Things Happen?

Throughout scripture we can see God acting out of goodness and kindness and mercy. Since He is good, most of the “bad” things that come into the lives of Believers are the consequence of sin and so they flow to us from the Curse. It is true that Jesus has set us free from the Curse but if we choose to operate in the flesh anyway, to temporarily prefer the World over the Kingdom of God and His Word, we are again subjecting ourselves to the results that the World lives by. In other words, by lapsing into our carnal nature, we inadvertently put ourselves under the terms and conditions of the Curse.

God is NOT the author of sickness and disease nor does He send us into poverty and lack. Those things and the other problems in life that keep us from enjoying total *shalom* peace (nothing missing, nothing broken) are for the most part the result of our own doing. The reality is we ourselves through our own sin and our own decisions and choices usually cause these things to happen in our lives. Or our ignorance of the Word often leads us to unknowingly violate principles of life that then cause us to experience negative consequences. Or sometimes we disobey even when we know what the Word says. And after all of this, we tend to blame God for our situations when what He’s actually doing is working to make us stronger and help us make the most out of the negative experiences and consequences we ourselves have caused.

Many people believe that God arranges trials and tribulations for us to go through so that our faith will grow and we will become stronger. But this is not what scripture says. What it says is that the trying of our faith develops patience (James 1:3). The truth is, faith grows by experiencing God do wonderful and loving things in our lives; in fact our faith can be severely tested to the point of

breaking when we experience trials. Trials, tribulations, afflictions and persecutions are the result of the hostile environment we have inherited from Adam and even though God did not create those problems, the Word says through many scriptures that we can stick close to Him in times of trouble, He will see us through it, He will provide the strength to endure what we are unable to overcome on our own. The bottom line is we need to throw off the bondage of manmade religion and stop blaming God for things He never started. Instead we need to stay as close to Him as we can so we can endure the difficulties of life in love, joy, peace and total victory. Yes, there will be trials but by faith we can live in victory even while they're going on!

Another thing we need to do is learn more about what the Word really says concerning the relationship between God and our trials. These things are too important for you to rely on what a Preacher tells you once a week or even what this publication says. The Bible says that God's people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6) and often we experience bad consequences from taking wrong actions because we didn't know any better. If we violate a biblical principle of life, we can expect to experience an undesirable consequence even if our violation occurred in ignorance. Therefore, we desperately need knowledge and the only way to acquire true knowledge is to get into the Word of God ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to provide revelation directly to our spirits. Then we will learn what we need so desperately to know, we will stop violating biblical principles of conduct and we will finally begin to walk and live in victory complete in Christ.

Some Final Thoughts About Chapter Two

Friend, the truth is God is good and He can only do good things. He loves you and He is on your side. Once you finally accept this reality by faith, you will begin to trust Him to lead you through life so you can fulfill your destiny in the Kingdom of God. When you come to trust in Him by faith, then you will see that very often the things you once saw as trials and tribulations weren't really so bad; they were only bad as a matter of your perspective at the time they occurred. Once you are trusting in God you can only see yourself in victory so that the difficulties of life no longer cause anxiety and stress. Your perspective has changed. You are at peace and *you are prosperous* because you see (perceive) yourself that way by faith. You are trying to live your life lined up in every respect with the Word of God, secure in your knowledge of the Word and who you are in Christ.

The Bible promises that you can have what you say and believe (Mark 11:23–24). Will you say and believe what the Word of God says or what the World says? If you believe what the Word says, you can only believe that God is good and that what He does is always good for you and your family. And you can only believe that He is a God of prosperity and abundance in every area of life.

CHAPTER THREE BIBLICAL FAITH DEFINED

The truth is most Believers long to enjoy the fullness of biblical prosperity (nothing missing, nothing broken), but the reality is many of us aren't actually experiencing it. In fact, some of us are frustrated, even mad at God, because we've prayed and waited but the abundance of Christ (John 10:10) has failed to manifest as we had hoped. Our preachers and ministries tell us different things we should try but prosperity continues to be elusive. In frustration, many of us conclude that prosperity must be reserved for the next life.

In truth though, God *does* want Believers to be prosperous in *this* life. In Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham has come to the Gentiles (Galatians 3:14) which is to say that because Jesus became a curse on our behalf (Galatians 3:13), we have been delivered from the lack and insufficiency in this present life that the World is subject to. Since neither God nor His Word can lie (Numbers 23:19 and John 17:17 respectively), Christians must discover how to tap into the blessing and prosperity He wants us to have. The door to that prosperity is His Word. All the *laws* of conduct that activate biblical prosperity are contained in the Word of God and it's up to each of us to find out what those *laws* are and put them to work. The bottom line here is this: the main reason prosperity is not abounding to Believers as it could be is because of our ignorance of the Word.

The Bible says that without faith it is impossible to please God and that He rewards those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). It also says that whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). It says further that Believers must live by faith (Romans 1:17, Habakkuk 2:4) and that we should walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Therefore, it's apparent God doesn't do anything outside of an

environment of faith. In other words, the laws of conduct in the Kingdom of God including the laws of biblical prosperity must work through faith. Biblical prosperity is for Believers who live by faith; He will reward those who seek Him in faith.

Understanding Faith

In our thinking we tend to limit faith to mere belief. But the King James Version of the Bible defines faith as *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen* (Hebrews 11:1). This is the rather poetic-sounding definition that many Christians can quote. But what does it really mean in simple modern English that we can fully understand? It certainly is more far reaching than just belief in something but do we really comprehend this scripture so that faith can be operating effectively in our lives as God intends?

The more modern English translation of the Greek word translated in the KJV as *substance* is the word *confidence*. Thus, faith is having the *confidence* or the *assurance* that what we are hoping for will actually come to pass. By faith we believe in God, we accept Jesus as Lord and we are *confident* that the result will be eternal life. By faith we believe that the Word of God is Truth and we are confident that the promises it contains will come to pass. In addition, this particular Greek word conveys a sense of *ownership*. So we can say that faith involves taking *ownership* over the things we are hoping for before we actually receive them. It is a knowing, a certainty, that God will bring to pass what we are hoping for.

The use of the word *evidence* in the second part of this passage is synonymous with the words *proof* or *conviction*. Therefore, the scripture says that our faith is itself the *proof* that what we are hoping for is already a reality even

though it does not appear to be so to our physical senses. By faith we have the *conviction*, we are convinced, that what we are hoping for is reality before we actually receive it.

In short, we can say that faith is the act of *trusting* in God. We trust in His Word, we trust in what He has promised, we trust that what He tells us will come to pass in the natural, we trust that He will only cause goodness and blessing to come into our lives, we trust that soon by our faith we will come to enjoy the fullness of biblical prosperity. The Word says so and we believe it's *already* true even though we can't see it or touch it. You are debt free even though you may have outstanding balances on your credit cards. You are healed even though your physical body is fighting and resisting symptoms of illness. By faith you stand in agreement with what the Word of God says even though what you see in the natural is in disagreement. Therefore, true biblical faith is the opposite of fear. Which of these is your reality today: what the Word says or what you see in the natural? Do you walk by faith or only by what you can see?

Faith also involves *acting* on what we believe. The Bible says to be a *doer* of the Word (James 1:22) and that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). Another way to say this is that your faith will not be effective, that is it won't function properly, unless there is corresponding action. Your faith is confirmed by what you do. If you believe that Jesus is Lord then you can't continue to live like you belong to the World. If the Word says you are prosperous then you can't continue to speak and act as though you are in poverty and lack. Faith requires "stepping out" and trusting through your actions and speech that God will provide as He has promised.

Although we tend to NOT think of it this way, faith is also a *force*. The truth is our faith overcomes the world (1 John 5:4); it is not a passive emotion or feeling. It is a power force! Faith can cause situations in your life to change. It can cause prosperity to manifest. It can change your body and your health. It is a spiritual force that can activate the power of God in your life sufficient to accomplish what seems impossible in the natural. Faith can overcome any trial or tribulation you are facing and make it seem unimportant. It can completely change your perspective about anything. It can move mountains (Mark 11:23). Indeed, faith is a force to be reckoned with...

In sum, faith is much more than we tend to think it is and our enemy wants us to limit our perception of it to mere belief instead of the powerful weapon God intends for it to be. Therefore, when we think of faith in the future, we should see it in its expanded, more powerful context that is capable of changing our lives:

- Faith is the act of trusting in God instead of what we see in the natural.
- Faith is being confident that God will bring to pass what we are hoping for.
- Faith involves taking ownership of the things we are hoping for before we receive them.
- Faith requires that we take action on what we believe before it actually manifests.
- Faith is a *force* that is strong enough to overcome the world and move mountains.

Faith Can Lead to the Manifestation of Prosperity

The relationship between faith and the manifestation of prosperity in our lives needs to be understood. The Bible says that God has prosperity and abundance for every Believer in every area of life. That prosperity and abundance is contained in the Blessing of Abraham that Jesus acquired on our behalf at the

Cross of Calvary. Thus, the Blessing of Abraham is our inheritance but we can only access it by faith. Therefore until we release our faith with purpose and understanding, our inheritance is waiting for us in the supernatural. If we don't apply our faith in confidence or if it's too weak, we will not see God's plan of abundance fully manifested in our lives.

The truth is God is looking for a people with strong faith. In fact, the Holy Spirit is working within each Believer to help us get to that point. Jesus had/has strong faith and we who are being conformed to His image will eventually have strong faith as well. Your faith is supposed to be developed into a force that can move things from the supernatural into the natural. Therefore, strong faith HAS THE POWER TO MOVE YOU INTO BIBLICAL PROSPERITY AND VICTORY IN EVERY AREA OF LIFE. And strong faith comes from maturity in the Word of God.

Some Final Thoughts About Chapter Three

The Bible says to put your trust in God and His Word and you will be established and successful. (2 Chronicles 20:20). The person who trusts in the Lord will be blessed and live without fear or anxiety (Jeremiah 17:7-8). Your faith will justify you so you can live in peace with God (Romans 5:1) and in victory over the World (1 John 5:4). Therefore, *in order to experience the manifestation of biblical prosperity, you must walk in faith.*

Walking in faith means to live by faith. Most of us go through the details of life and give little thought to the involvement of the Lord. But He wants to be involved in everything. He wants you to trust Him for everything. Therefore, Christians by and large need to give much greater attention to what faith really is and the place that it occupies in their personal lives. We need to examine

everything we do and where necessary redirect or eliminate whatever is not going through faith. If it's not going through faith, it's not pleasing to God and the reward of biblical prosperity will never manifest.

CHAPTER FOUR THE SOURCE OF FAITH

In the previous Chapter we reached the conclusion that faith is a requirement for experiencing the manifestation of biblical prosperity in our lives. If you suspect that weakness of faith could be holding you back from all that God has, the purpose of this Chapter is to help you understand where your faith comes from so you can use that knowledge to make yourself *eligible* for the fullness of His prosperity.

Understanding How We Acquire Faith

Faith doesn't come from reasoning. Nor does it come from striving or by our own strength or from our flesh. It's not something we can work up. In fact, if it weren't for God we wouldn't even have any faith. The Bible says that "...*God has dealt to every man the measure of faith*" (Romans 12:3). In other words, you are not the source of your own faith; "...*it is the gift of God*" (Ephesians 2:8). God Himself is the author of your faith (Hebrews 12:2) and "*the measure*" is given to each of us at the moment of salvation so that we will be able to believe and be saved (Ephesians 2:8). We don't do anything to earn it; we don't do anything to deserve it. He gives it to us freely as a loving gift. And at the moment our spirit is reborn, we come back into fellowship with Him and we regain the ability to please Him by living a life of faith.

From the moment Christians are born again, we all start at the same place with the same measure of faith and begin a process under the supervision of the Holy Spirit that will conform us into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). But we each progress at different rates and in different ways. Some Believers build rapidly

on their measure of faith and they soon come to live a life of victory as they steadily grow spiritually towards the image of Christ. Others don't grow much beyond where they started, struggling in their own strength, defeated and dejected most of the time, striving by the flesh to obtain the victory Christ has already won and is holding out to them for the taking by faith. Why is there such a difference?

Understanding How We Develop Stronger Faith

The truth is we are ourselves responsible for developing the faith we are given at salvation so it will grow in strength and effectiveness. Faith is supposed to be the victory that overcomes the World for us (1 John 5:4) so that we can keep on the path of living by the spirit. But faith is like an undeveloped muscle in that it starts out small and relatively weak. It's big enough for us to believe God for salvation but it needs to be "exercised" in order to strengthen and develop into the force that produces a victorious and overcoming life. Now your question should be: "how do I exercise and strengthen my faith?"

The Bible says that faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17) and there are several ways you can hear it. You can hear someone preach and/or teach it. You can hear it read aloud or expressed in music. You can listen to tapes. And you can also study the Word so intently and deeply that it becomes internalized to such a degree you hear it by the Spirit directing you through life. The Word has become "written on your heart." When the written Word becomes God's spoken Word to you personally (*rhema*), your faith will then grow and develop. And then your faith will become strong enough to overcome the World

and produce victory in every area of life so that you have nothing missing and nothing broken.

In sum, the key to developing strong faith is acquiring knowledge of the Word of God. A very good scripture for this thought can be found in Proverbs 4:20–22:

“My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your sight; keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those who find them and health to all their body.”

The Word of God brings life and good health to the Believer that pursues it because it also brings strong faith. Strong faith does not come from trials and tribulations as tradition has tried to teach us. Rather, trials are designed to be the proof that you already have strong faith as evidenced by the fact that you praise and glorify God in the face of everything that happens (1 Peter 1:7). The truth is strong faith comes from hearing the Word of God.

Some Final Thoughts About Chapter Four

The reality is none of us can come to know the power of God’s provision and prosperity without strong faith and we won’t have strong faith if we don’t have knowledge of the Word of God. When Jesus was confronted by Satan in the wilderness, He easily defeated him with the Word (Matthew 4:1–11). Any of us can begin to develop that same kind of power once we make the decision to pursue an understanding of the Scripture.

But most of us are lazy because the flesh is lazy especially where the things of God are concerned. We think we’ll have more fun doing something else so we don’t invest the time in the Word that we know we should. If your conscience is

telling you that you could be studying the Word more, that's most likely the Holy Spirit speaking quietly to you, encouraging you to study so your faith can grow and you will be able to enjoy all the things Jesus won for you.

There's just no way to come to strong faith except by the Word. The truth is the lack of strong faith produced by ignorance of the Word is why so many of us are stuck at the Cross instead of participating in the Resurrection Victory that Christ won for us. If you are in that picture, you can change it yourself by simply asking God to help you develop a hunger for the Word. Whenever you ask Him for something in the name of Jesus, He will provide the answer and with this request, you will start to develop strong faith that can overcome the World.

CHAPTER FIVE THE FORCE OF FAITH

As we have seen from the previous chapters, our faith has the potential to become a force strong enough to overcome the World (1 John 5:4), which brings us an environment of peace and victory, and strong enough to move the promises of God from the supernatural to the natural. Overall, our faith correctly applied can lead to a *shalom* life where nothing is missing or broken. This chapter looks more deeply into our faith as a force, a weapon that the Believer can freely use against World and the enemy.

Faith Must Be Active, Not Just Passive

Believing in something is just the passive beginning of faith. We believe something but we don't do anything in particular about what we believe. The Bible says for example that even demons "believe" in God and that they tremble in their belief (James 2:19). But faith in God is much more than mere belief because it requires that you not only believe in Him but that you also *trust* that He and He alone will forgive (forget) your sins and give you eternal life. So faith starts out by requiring that you add trust to your belief. The demons tremble because they are unable or unwilling to trust God about anything.

Most professing Christians are trusting God for their salvation. Trusting for salvation is not entirely passive because we must work on overcoming our doubts particularly in the early years of our walk with the Lord as we face the trials and tribulations of life and the guilt of our recurring sins. Sometimes those difficulties make us question whether God is really out there. After all, we can't even see Him. But eventually our faith gains control and we increasingly trust God for our

salvation. Unfortunately this is where many good Christians stop in their development.

The truth is God wants to be involved in every area of your life. He wants to have a say in everything you do and He wants you to trust that where He is leading you will always turn out good, that you can rely on Him in both good times and bad. And He wants our trust to be so strong that we become confident that what He has promised to do will always happen. His promises are contained in His Word and obviously we have to know what those promises are before we can begin to trust that they will happen.

The problem is our flesh doesn't want to trust God for the things of life and it doesn't want to spend time studying the Word. But this is where our faith must become more active because if it doesn't, we will remain back at the salvation level when God has much more for us that will produce victory, overcoming and total peace (nothing missing, nothing broken) for our lives in this age. Having an active faith then means we take authority over the flesh and pursue God's way by the Spirit because we trust that it will be a better way than anything we can do on our own.

To overcome the flesh requires that we trust God for the fulfillment of His promises before it actually occurs. This is the essence of an active faith. We become so confident that what God has promised will happen we begin to take ownership over the things we are hoping for even though we don't know when those things are going to manifest. In fact, the Bible says we are to take action and speak as though what we are believing for has already happened.

Have you ever wondered why God requires this kind of active faith in order to receive the fullness of biblical prosperity? There are two main reasons: 1)

because active faith demonstrates the ultimate in trusting God and, 2) because an active faith is the only way to overcome your flesh and trust solely in God for your victory. Having active faith then is the key that opens the door to the complete victory—in-life God longs for you to have.

Active Faith is a Force

When you are able to achieve this active kind of faith, you will come to understand that faith is a force. We tend not to think of it that way but the truth is our faith overcomes the world (1 John 5:4). It is a power force! Faith can cause situations in your life to change. It can cause prosperity to manifest. It can change your body and your health. It is a spiritual force that can activate the power of God in your life sufficient to accomplish what seems impossible in the natural. Faith can overcome any trial or tribulation you are facing and make it seem unimportant. It can completely change your perspective about anything. Faith is absolutely a force to be reckoned with!

Faith becomes a force when you act on what you believe, when you confess with your mouth what God has promised. It becomes a force when what you do and say is in agreement with the Word of God especially when your immediate environment in the natural is in disagreement. You understand that you are who you say you are and that you can have what you say. It can become a force to move mountains as you develop it through the wisdom of God and by your growing expertise in the Word. Actually, there's not anything you can't do by active faith. Just say what the Word says and then believe what you say!

In order to develop your faith into the force it can eventually become, remember that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). The Word is the way to a faith that can cause things to happen.

You Have All Authority

Friend, the truth is you have all the authority you need to make your faith grow into the force it was designed to be. As you study the Word to grow and strengthen your faith, keep in mind that Satan is not allowed to touch you or anything you're working on *unless you let him*. If you resist him with the Word, he is obligated to flee (James 4:7). He can't put poverty on you unless you let him; he can't put sickness or disease on you unless you let him. Jesus already took your lack, your sickness and disease, your grief and sorrow and your sin on His back (Isaiah 53:4-6) and took them to the Cross of Calvary on your behalf. By faith in Christ, you can receive this inheritance any time you want it and you can walk in the Blessing of Abraham (Galatians 3:9, 14) with nothing missing and nothing broken in your life. Are you going to believe the Word of God or are you going to believe your circumstances? Is the Word true or the World? Is what you experience with your physical senses the truth or what the unseen is speaking into your spirit?

Certainly, Satan comes to try to deceive us into believing that the things of God aren't true; but it's up to us, to you, by strength of faith to resist the enemy and stand on what the Word says, not what he tells us or what the World says. Jesus said He had been given all authority and power (Matthew 28:18) and that includes authority over Satan. Christ has delegated that authority to all Believers (John 14:12) and that's why the enemy has to flee when you resist him. The

resurrection of Jesus confirmed His authority and released the victory He now shares with those who will take it by faith. All you have to do is believe it!

The Bible says that your faith is your shield against anything the enemy would try to do to you (Ephesians 5:16). It says very clearly that your shield can block ALL the “fiery darts” (KJV) of the wicked which means that none can get through unless you let them. And the Word also says that your shield, which is to say your faith, is the most important part of the armor God has given you for maintaining your position of authority over your adversaries in high places. God has given you what you need to live in total victory!

Some Final Thoughts About Chapter Five

If you are stuck with a passive kind of faith where you know you have salvation but the victory that God wants you to have has not manifested in your life, you can experience tremendous change simply by asking God for it and by committing to spend time in His Word. The Kingdom of God operates on the basis of the simple principle of sowing and reaping. Therefore, if you will sow your time into the Word of God you will receive a harvest of faith and by faith receive the victory and biblical prosperity you have always wanted for yourself and your family. Be encouraged that you can experience the kind of faith that changes things around you simply by learning about God’s Word.

CHAPTER SIX

HOW TO WALK BY FAITH

In this Chapter we discuss how Believers actually LIVE by faith in order to achieve the potential that God has established for each person. If you want to see your faith become the force it was designed to be and that God wants it to be, you must learn to live by faith. This means God must be involved in every activity of your life and that you make no decisions, that you take no actions, until you have conferred with your Father. He wants to be involved but Christians routinely exclude Him either on purpose or simply by indifference and omission. He will step aside when we insist and too often that's what happens so that we wind up living out of the flesh most of the time instead of experiencing God's best.

The Characteristics of Walking By Faith

In general, a faith person is someone who lives and walks by faith and not by sight. In other words a faith person is someone who lives by the promises of the Word and not by the five physical senses. A faith person is someone who rejects the values and principles of the World in order to follow the Word of God even when it seems to his or her disadvantage. A faith person has developed their faith into an active force that rises far above passive belief. How then do faith people live their lives so that in that process they will open the door to biblical prosperity?

There are several characteristics of life that are common among Believers who are living by active faith. The outward manifestations we can see are that they are joyful and peaceful, seemingly in victory all the time, continuously manifesting the blessing and favor of God. But behind those outward attributes there are a

number of spiritual activities going on we don't necessarily see that work to produce their strong faith and the blessing of biblical prosperity. Following are the key examples of these spiritual activities.

1. Faith people study the Word of God.

No matter how much our flesh wants it to be otherwise, a faith person is compelled to study the Word and grow in knowledge. This is the basic requirement. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Faith people often rise early in the morning at personal sacrifice sowing their time into the study of the Word in order to develop their faith and receive the related benefits. They spend hours going over scriptures and waiting for God to help them understand through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Even Believers who are mature in strong faith continue to study the Word and continue to receive new revelation.

2. Faith people know and understand the promises of God.

The Bible is full of the promises that God has made to His people. The Laws of Prosperity are just one example. But to cause those promises to bear fruit in our lives we have to first find out what they are so we can do something with them. That knowledge comes from diligent study of the Word because that's the only place you can find them. Too many Christians are falling short of seeing the promises of God manifested in their lives because they don't know those promises and the few they may be familiar with they don't know how to activate.

3. Faith people live their lives in agreement with the Word.

To live in agreement with the Word means to line up one's life with anything and everything that can be found there. In other words, a faith person must also be a Word person. The faith person meditates on the Word constantly because he/she knows it will produce success in life (Joshua 1:8). If the Word says we should do some particular thing or not do something, the faith person is trying to be obedient. The faith person knows that to walk in disagreement with the Word, which is to live by the flesh, is to open the door to the consequences of the curse that Jesus already overcame so we wouldn't have to.

4. Faith people ask specifically for what they want.

Faith people know that a Believer has to be specific with God. They know that the Bible says that *we do not have because we do not ask* (James 4:2) and they know that we can have whatever we ask for in faith if we don't doubt in our heart (Mark 11:23–24). But scripturally correct faith people are careful to put the Kingdom of God first in all their asking so they don't ask for things from wrong motives (James 4:3). Faith people ask specifically and then stand on the Word in faith believing that their prayers will be answered in due course.

5. Faith people believe they can have what they say.

Faith people speak out what they have asked for as though they already have it. They do this because the Word of God tells them to (Mark 11:23–24). They believe they have received the answer in the Spirit even though what they have asked for hasn't manifested yet in the natural. Remember what is real for the faith person is what cannot be seen (2 Corinthians 4:18).

6. Faith people are trying to fulfill the love commandments.

A person of faith realizes that to receive what they ask for they must walk in love (John 15:7–10). Matthew 22:36–40 tells us that all principles of life and conduct depend upon the commandments to love God and our neighbors. A person of faith knows they can't walk in the flesh neglecting God and treating other people badly and expect to have their requests answered.

7. Faith people pray in the Spirit.

People of faith pray privately but frequently in the Spirit (in tongues) because they know that the Word of God says we build up our faith that way (Jude 20). The stronger our faith is the closer we can come to being able to perform the works that Jesus did. You can have a private prayer language and be confident that the Holy Spirit will lead you into the right prayers and that they will be heard and understood even though you may not understand yourself. Speaking in tongues builds your faith.

8. Faith people wait for the Word to manifest in their lives.

Being a faith person involves a lot of waiting. But that's what faith is all about. If everything came immediately, little faith would be involved and we wouldn't have to trust God. Faith people are willing to wait and they don't give up (Luke 18:1) believing that God will deliver on what they have requested. Abraham waited 25 years for the promises of God to manifest in his life but eventually they did just as they will for any Believer who will stand waiting in faith.

9. Faith people confess what they are believing God for.

While they wait, a faith person only confesses verbally what the Word says instead of what is sensed in the natural. They walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). For example, since the Bible says we were healed by the wounds of Christ (1 Peter 2:24), you won't hear faith people confess (say) they are sick. They may have some symptoms but they won't agree with actually "having" the sickness and they believe their prayers of faith will cause the symptoms to depart from them even if by professional medical attention so they can regain outward agreement with the Word. They confess they are debt free (Romans 13:8) even though they may temporarily have credit card bills to pay. They are not denying reality because for the faith person true reality only exists in what they cannot see (2 Corinthians 4:18).

10. Faith people are content while they wait and trust in the Word.

While they wait for the promises of God to manifest, faith people don't complain to God or to others about the lack of manifestation in their lives. The Bible tells us to be content with whatever our circumstances are (Philippians 4:11) and to be content with what we already have (Hebrews 13:5). Instead of complaining about what they don't have, faith people are confessing that they already possess what they are believing God for. They have taken ownership over God's promises even though they can't see them manifested yet in the natural.

Some Final Thoughts About Chapter Six

Many Christians don't pursue living by faith and some of them give as the reason that a faith walk is the denial of reality. We've shown though that true reality is connected to what is not seen. Others say they want a more balanced walk with the Lord. Perhaps they mean they want to balance faith with the opposites of doubt, unbelief and fear. Such a "balance" is of course unscriptural. The truth is many Believers are stuck at the beginning with little more than the measure of faith they were given to be born again with. But God is pleased when Believers LIVE by a faith that is growing and becoming stronger.

If you are struggling with your faith, our prayer is that you will lift up to God the various ideas you have read about in this publication and then let Him show you His will for your life. We believe by OUR faith that He will show you that with strong faith you can be assured that God will send biblical prosperity into your life in the abundance Jesus promised (John 10:10).

CHAPTER SEVEN OVERCOMING DOUBT

The greatest hindrance to the full release of our faith is doubt. The Bible says you can have what you say if you believe (release your faith) and don't doubt in your heart (Mark 11:23). Most Christians read this verse and gloss over it as something impossible to perform; but why would Jesus have spoken it and encouraged us to do it if that were so? This is an invitation to move mountains with the force of one's faith! What's required is to speak out what we are believing for and to make a determined decision to not doubt that God will deliver as He has promised.

Defining Doubt

Doubt is unbelief. It's the principal thing that causes us to become passive and forget about the promises we are waiting for God to bring about. The word "doubt" actually means to waver or stagger in one's belief or to be unstable. That is, to doubt means to be double-minded (James 1:8) and in fact, both of these words come from the same root. Doubt (double-mindedness) is what your enemy uses to weaken your faith, to separate you from God's promises and to delay their full and timely manifestation in the natural. What the Bible actually says is that if you doubt you shouldn't expect to receive anything from God (James 1:7). Therefore, it ought to be apparent that many Believers need to awaken to the principle that casual doubt impedes the Lord's ability to deliver His promises so that we can then begin to focus on how to overcome it.

Resisting Doubt

The truth is most Believers frequently forget that resisting and overcoming doubt are a big part of faith. As a result we routinely fall short of our potential. Therefore, since biblical prosperity is not fully manifested in our lives, it's important that we recognize that doubt is actually a problem and then also that we should want to overcome it. At that point, there are some actions we can begin to take that will lead us eventually to overcoming doubt.

- 1. Ask Christ to help you with your doubt** – To start with you are going to need some help. You can't overcome something as big as unbelief in your own strength. On one occasion a certain father brought his demon possessed son to Jesus and asked Him if He could do something to help him. Jesus responded that "all things are possible to him who believes." And the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief" after which Jesus delivered the boy from the oppressing spirits (Mark 9:14–29). The point is Jesus will help us with our unbelief. All we have to do is ask Him and then release our faith that He'll do it.
- 2. Study the Word to make your faith grow and strengthen** – The development of strong faith requires that we immerse ourselves continually in the Word of God. Faith comes by hearing the Word (Romans 10:17) and strong faith is essential for resisting doubt. If we are negligent in studying the Word, our faith will be weak and our ignorance will cause us to act in unbelief (1 Timothy 1:13). Even if it has been strong at times in the past, if we stop studying, our faith will regress and return to weakness. Strong faith requires a steady diet of God's

Word as well as our commitment to obey and live by what we find there. Soon you can come to the point where your faith becomes a force that moves God's promises from the supernatural to the natural.

3. **Confess the promises of God** – In order to resist doubt, what you speak must agree with the Word of God and with your understanding of what He has promised to do on your behalf. When doubt presents itself, speaking is your first line of defense. If you are believing for debt freedom for example, then your speech should agree with it even though your circumstances appear to be entirely to the contrary. It is not denial to agree with the Word instead of your circumstances because you are agreeing with what God already has for you in the supernatural. Your job is to let the power of your confession draw the promise by faith from the supernatural into the natural. When you decide to let your speaking agree with your faith instead of with your doubt, you will be resisting that doubt and you will soon see the promises of God manifesting in your life.

4. **Speak directly to your problems** – Once you have asked the Lord to solve a particular problem in your life, you should believe that He has heard and answered your request. That means you don't have to ask Him anymore to take care of the same problem. Rather by faith you should begin to speak directly to the problem (Mark 11:23); command it to get in agreement with the promises of God and to get out of your life. You can also speak directly to the good things you have asked for and command them to manifest. If your faith is strong in the Word, your commands will move the promises of God into the natural.

5. **Cast down negative thoughts** – When thoughts of doubt come to you, instead of passively entertaining them and allowing them to weaken your faith, cast them down. Cast them out and away from you. The Bible tells us to cast down every reasoning that is raised up against the knowledge of God and to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). By casting down wrong thoughts, you will be resisting doubt.

6. **Rest, don't worry** – Once you've heard from God, begin to rest on His promises instead of worrying about how and when they are going to manifest. Worry is the outward evidence of a lack of faith (Mark 4:40). In fact, it is one of the primary things that chokes the Word and causes it to be unfruitful in your life (Matthew 13:22). When you start to worry you need to get yourself into the Word so you can transfer your focus from the thing(s) you are worrying about to Jesus. If you focus on Christ, you won't be worrying. Rather you will be enjoying the peace that passes all understanding where the force of a mature faith can move mountains.

7. **Walk in love** – Finally, the essential requirement for overcoming anything in the Kingdom of God is walking in "agape" love. Your faith won't work without love (1 Corinthians 13:2) and the result of faithlessness is doubt and fear. God is love (1John 4:8) and perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). Since fear is the opposite of faith, the logical and correct conclusion is that perfect love releases your faith. You can't be in strife or unforgiveness and walk in either love or faith. You also can't be rude, quarrelsome or easily offended. Lack of love will

always produce doubt. Every principle and law of Scripture depends on love (Matthew 22:37–40) and overcoming doubt is no exception.

Some Final Thoughts About Chapter Seven

Having thoughts that contradict our faith doesn't necessarily mean we are doubting; but we need to speak to those thoughts, take control of them and kick them out by the power of the Word and our faith. It's all about what we do with those thoughts that defines whether or not we have actually entered into doubt. Friend, the truth is passive faith won't get you very far and the biblical principle of Law that applies to our topic today is this: *if you want the full manifestation of biblical prosperity in your life, you must aggressively resist the temptation to doubt the promises of God.* If you can aggressively resist doubt and walk in love, you will come to the point that you receive what you say without delay and without fail. Indeed, if you can overcome doubt and walk in love, your faith can become a force that will move mountains.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A WORD ABOUT FALSE CHARACTERIZATIONS

Even though the Bible says that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6) and that we are to live by faith (Romans 1:17), there are some in the Body of Christ who try to discredit altogether the faith message that God wants to bring to His Church. To be sure, there have been some faith messages that can't be supported by the Word but those instances were quickly brought to our attention by those who have appointed themselves to watch over such things for the rest of us.

When something is taught that is additional to or in disagreement with the Word of God, it ought to be ignored. Each Believer has a responsibility to compare what is being taught against the Word and to take the appropriate action: either accept it or discard it and move on to the next thing. But advocating that we throw out the entire faith message including the parts that are firmly grounded and rooted in scripture is just as wrong as the teaching of a false message.

One of the problems for the faith message is that it wasn't widely taught in "classical" Christianity, which is to say that it wasn't a very significant part of traditional religion. But no message should be evaluated by comparing it to religion; rather, the correct approach is simply to compare it to the Word of God. If the message agrees with the Word but disagrees with traditional religion, we need to discard the religion instead of the message.

The technique that's been used the most to discredit the faith message is to mischaracterize it. Prominent theologians continue to tell us today that the faith message incorporates this or that belief or teaching when in fact it doesn't. Perhaps they heard someone else trying to discredit the faith message and they

repeated what they heard without checking it out. Or maybe they heard some extreme teaching one day that wasn't grounded in scripture and then used it to characterize the entire faith message. But sincere Christians searching for the truth will not be discouraged and will see through the mischaracterizations. They will go to the Word of God for their source and find out the truth for themselves.

As this publication is being written, religion is once again on the attack against those who say that one's faith can be developed into a force that can change circumstances in your life. Of course, there are some who have taken this message to the extreme but if something doesn't agree with the Word, simply disregard it. Likewise though, if something does agree you need to closely consider it. If faith can't change circumstances, then why pray and release your faith for someone to be healed? And why did Jesus say that faith changed the circumstances of many people He came in contact with? And why did Jesus tell us we would be able to move mountains with our faith if we believe and don't doubt in our hearts (Mark 11:22-24).

The Publishers of this booklet encourage every reader to search the scriptures for themselves and draw their own conclusions. Disregard the characterizations you hear and search it out for yourselves. Draw your own conclusions as the Holy Spirit counsels and you will always come up with the right answers.

CHAPTER NINE CONCLUSIONS

In a brief publication like this we can only bring you the highlights of this important biblical subject. If faith is required to please God, then it's something we should want to know about. God wants His children to live by strong faith; the reality is the Body of Christ today is weak in faith and far below its potential. We hope this publication has called this matter to your attention and helped you begin a quest for knowledge and victory in every area of life: spirit, soul and body.

Following are the major points to be retained. May God bless you in the pursuit of additional knowledge from His Word.

1. Biblical prosperity is more than just your finances. It covers every area of life: spirit, soul and body.
2. God loves you and wants you to prosper.
3. God is good and does not cause you to experience a lack of biblical prosperity. Shortage comes from our own sin, our own choices and our ignorance of the Word of God.
4. Our faith came from God but every Christian has the responsibility to make it grow and strengthen.
5. Every Christian can have victory in life but it requires that we sow time into the study and understanding of the Word of God.
6. Our faith can grow to become a force that can overcome the World and all of our tribulations.
7. You must learn to live by faith.
8. You have the authority of Christ over the enemy.

9. We must resist doubt and unbelief instead of passively entertaining it.
10. We must walk in love in order for our faith to be able to produce results for us.

The Publisher invites your comments and questions concerning the subject of faith. Please feel free to contact us at any time. Our email address is

theway@makeaway.net.