

How God Prospers Believers – Part 2

by Gary Carpenter

Phil 1:9-10 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.

The way it is written, I could not make much practical sense of this verse. I was having a hard time understanding what Paul was actually saying to them. I looked up every key word in both of the verses in my Greek Dictionary and listed them in sequence on a sheet of paper. Here are the words, with the definitions:

Knowledge = Epignosis = Full knowledge, a greater participation by the knower in the object known, thus more powerfully influencing him.

Judgment = Aisthesis = Perception, discernment.

Approve = Dokimazo = To approve after testing. Used especially regarding metals. Coins could be tried by fire to see which were precious.

Excellent = Diaphero = Differ, the highest and best.

Sincere = Eilikrines = Unalloyed, pure of unmixed substances {single minded}.

Offense = To stumble, or to cause to stumble.

After many more hours of meditation and prayer in the spirit, keeping in mind the context of the entire letter, the Lord gave me the following paraphrase of verses nine and ten;

"I pray that as your love for Jesus increases, you will increasingly come to know Him better. You will come to understand what He is doing in the earth and become even more of a participant in His plans, purposes, and pursuits. The mind of Christ Himself will come to have an ever increasingly powerful influence in every area of your life. Your greater depth of acquaintance with Him will result in more comprehensive discernment regarding what to get involved in, and what not. You will be able to test various potential endeavors with the very mind (thinking processes) of Christ to determine which of them contain the highest and best potential for accomplishing His plans in the earth. By this process you will remain sincere, unalloyed, pure and single minded in serving Jesus and not Mammon. That purity and single mindedness will both keep you from stumbling into the world's way of thinking (the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things), and it will keep others from stumbling also."(Paraphrased)

Notice how this prayer goes far beyond the typical "formula" that is normally taught today concerning how to prosper in the Kingdom of God. Giving and receiving is

important, but the Lord told me that He is changing the mentality of the Church from "formula to relationship" when it comes to prosperity.

Look at how this prayer agrees with that statement. Paul prays for them that their "love for Jesus" will increase. That they will come to "know" Him better and better. As they come to actually know Jesus and have an ongoing relationship with Him, they will begin to understand His mind and His plan for their lives. By knowing these things, they will be able to make correct decisions regarding the everyday affairs of life ... what to get involved in and what not to get involved in. By this method, Jesus Himself will be directing their steps so He can prosper them "individually" according to His plan for each specific person.

This requires RELATIONSHIP & FELLOWSHIP...NOT FORMULA! With Jesus Himself directing your steps by the leadership of the Holy Spirit, He can prosper you without you falling victim to the world's way of thinking, which is normally typified by greed, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things. Those are the things that often cause even very sincere Christians to stumble once they start prospering. Jesus desires for His brethren to prosper, but not at the expense of their relationship with Him! Remember,

Mat 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

That is why in my teachings regarding Kingdom Finances, He has me emphasize so strongly the importance of spending much time in worship, praying in the spirit, and the meditation of the Word of God. Time spent doing these things is what builds an ongoing relationship and increasing fellowship with Jesus Himself! Time spent doing these things is what fine tunes our spirit man to be sensitive to receiving the leadership of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. To develop an actual relationship with Jesus requires spending time with Jesus. But, oh, the rewards of that relationship are "unsearchable."

He wants our relationship and our fellowship with Him to be so much more than merely some "formula" of giving and receiving. Again, our giving and receiving is involved, but it is never the foundation for our prosperity. The foundation of our prosperity is the "grace of God" that Paul taught first to the Philippians, and then to the Corinthians;

2 Cor 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Jesus bore our poverty on the cross in exactly the same way that He bore our sin. Jesus bore our poverty on the cross in exactly the same way that He bore our sicknesses and carried our pains. He took the curse of poverty upon Himself so that we could have access to all of the riches of the Father in glory. The finished work of Jesus Christ is the foundation for all new testament prosperity ... NOT OUR GIVING!

It seems to help people when I explain it this way. We all know we are supposed to forgive every man their trespasses against us. Amen! Yet, if I were to ask you, "Is that how a person gains entry into heaven ... by forgiving people?" ... you would say "No. A person is saved because Jesus bore their sins on the cross and they have received Him as their Saviour and Lord." That is correct! In other words, we put our faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross when He bore our sins away and we received complete forgiveness. HIS WORK IS OUR FOUNDATION! Our "forgiving others" is simply an outgrowth from the foundation of His finished work when "we were forgiven." When it comes to salvation, we all understand;

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

It is the same with healing. We all know that we are not healed by "our works." You cannot "earn" your healing no matter how many "good works" you do. Again, like our salvation, we are healed by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ when He bore our sicknesses and carried our pains, and by His stripes we were healed.

Yet, if we believe the popular teaching of the day, it seems that when it comes to us being redeemed from poverty, it is all up to our "giving" ... our "works." No, No, a thousand times NO! By GRACE we are saved from sin. By GRACE we are saved from sickness. By GRACE we are saved from poverty. The knowledge of this GRACE is what turned around the "deep poverty" of the Philippians to the point that they "abounded in their liberality."

Giving and receiving are very important but they must never become the "foundation" of our prosperity. Yet most of us have it turned around backwards in our minds. What I mean is, most of us "give" believing that God "will" prosper us. No, we give because He has already provided open access to all the riches of the kingdom when Jesus bore our poverty on the cross. It is by GRACE that we are saved in every realm of life. GRACE always refers to the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. HIS WORK is our foundation. All of our actions are outgrowths of what He has already done for us. That's why Paul could pray for His supporters at Philippi,

Phil 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Have you ever wondered why Paul found it necessary to finish that wonderful statement with the words "by Christ Jesus?" Why didn't He simply say, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory?" IT IS BECAUSE THE REASON FOR GOD BEING LEGALLY FREE TO SUPPLY ALL THEIR NEED IS BASED ON THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS CHRIST WHEN HE BORE THEIR POVERTY!

Jesus bore their poverty by grace so they could always have free access to His wealth by faith.

Was their giving involved? Absolutely! Giving is a corresponding action to the fact that they "have been prospered" in precisely the same way that "forgiving others" is a corresponding action to the fact they had already "been forgiven." Real faith always requires "corresponding actions" to become effectual. James told us. That's why Paul could pray for His supporters at Philippi,

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works [corresponding actions] is dead also.

But we must always make sure that we are never substituting "works" for "grace." I correspond with many believers who are in dire financial trouble. I always listen for a long time at first to find out what is in their heart in abundance, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Almost without exception, they won't be talking longer than five minutes when their emphasis will be on how faithfully they have "given" into the work of the kingdom. The longer they talk, the more they reveal that their faith is in "their giving." To this day, I have never yet heard even one of them even mention the fact that Jesus bore their poverty on the cross. Look at the verse once again;

2 Cor 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

What does it really say? What provides our access into the riches? THROUGH HIS POVERTY! THROUGH HIS POVERTY! THROUGH HIS POVERTY!

Jesus allowed Himself to be stripped of every earthly possession on that cross. They even cast lots for His clothes. He had left the riches of heaven to come to earth and subject Himself on the cross to complete poverty. The question is why? Again, He bore our sin in order that we could receive His righteousness. He bore our sicknesses in order that we could receive His healing. He bore our poverty in order that we could have access to His unlimited wealth.

When I begin discussing this fact with the people who call or write, it is like a totally new concept that they have never heard of before. No wonder the devil has been so successful at keeping true financial prosperity away from the people of God. Even Satan knows that it is by GRACE we are saved, not by works. Anytime He can manipulate our thinking into trusting in our own "works," he knows that we will be excluded from the GRACE that can only be accessed by FAITH. Faith in what? Faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

What is the proper course of action? If you are a giving Christian who is still in financial trouble, the first thing I would suggest is that you begin to sow 2 Cor 8:9 deep within your spirit by saying it and saying it. I confessed that scripture literally hundreds of times once I saw this truth. I wanted to plant that seed so deep within me that there would never again be the possibility of me making my "giving" the foundation of my prosperity. Do I still give? More than ever! Once I switched my faith from "my giving"

to "His work" on the cross for me, it did not take long for my finances to really begin to blossom. The same GRACE that took the Philippians from "deep poverty" to "abounding liberality" began working for me also. But it was still not by "formula," as the next two paragraphs show.

Secondly, in the same way that you worship the Lord as your Saviour, and in the same way that you worship the Lord as your Healer, begin to worship the Lord as your Provider. It is His work that has opened the Father's unlimited resources unto you. Your giving is simply a corresponding action to that already finished work. In your times of worship, give Him thanksgiving for the fact that He bore your poverty in order that you could have access to His wealth. Call Jesus your Provider. He truly is!

Third, along with your times of worship, be sure to spend much time praying in the Spirit. This is one of the primary ways that your "fellowship" with the Lord becomes most intimate and most personal. The Holy Spirit will begin to reveal the mind, the plan of Christ for your individual life. He will begin to show you "what to get involved in, and what not to get involved in." You will find yourself simply making decisions that are ever more in line with Christ's plan for YOU ... YOU, personally!

1 Cor 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

"Freely given" sounds a lot like GRACE, doesn't it? By the GRACE of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have been given "free access" to all the riches of the Father in glory. The Holy Spirit has been sent that you might "know" these things. He will bring the mind, the plans and the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ to you as you spend time in fellowship with Him.

Gary Carpenter Ministries
P.O. Box 9667
Tulsa, OK. 74157
www.garycarpenter.org