



General Topics :: Prosperity ministry advice

Prosperity ministry advice - posted by MeGee, on: 2009/1/9 5:02

I was recently on holiday in the Eastern Cape South Africa, where I saw a lot of publicity and marketing on River Ministries.

As a bit of background River ministries is run by Andre Roebert and is also called the River group. The River Group owns TBN Africa, Christian television CTV South Africa. The River group also owns seven hotels, a number of Spas, Convention centre, Air charter service, several game farms, a media company and vision Magazine.

I while I was there on holiday there is a lot of chatter and rumours about this group. Now I did not want to get involve with hearsay, and people I knew there asked my opinion but whenever I tried to present a biblical view, I was given examples of the wealth of Abraham, Job, Solomon and the shrewdness of Isaac.

My question and I ask your help in giving good and sound biblical advice as to where there might be problems with this, I am sure that there is something wrong with this but I cannot articulate it well.

Re: Prosperity ministry advice - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/1/9 8:09

Welcome MeGee,

Quote:
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 -----My question and I ask your help in giving good and sound biblical advice as to where there might be problems with this, I am sure that there is something wrong with this but I cannot articulate it well.

Well enough. This is a great blight on Christianity and something that more than a few here have been entangled with at one point or another, myself included.

At bottom it is an abuse of the scriptures made to represent whatever whims or fancies they desire. It is made more difficult to unravel often due to legitimate efforts; business acumen, hard work and the like with their definitions of 'faith' - as "reward", as "demand", as "speaking things into existence", as "inheritance" and a multitude of spurious reasonings.

Even this which you mentioned seems on the surface to be a mixed bag from a general searching. However, this gentleman's own site is revealing enough by his product offerings (I.E teaching).

(<http://andrerobert.co.za/index.html>) andre' & jenny

The problems with this are multifaceted - Everything from a presumptuous idea that what we 'lack' (a favorite catch word) is learning how to tap into the unseen realm, which they will teach you, (for a price) - to sheer manipulation and fleecing the flock in a give to get sales scheme.

Add to all this the great deception of how well it 'works', *for them*, and how they will set themselves up as examples. What is missing is that without the support of those they wrangle out of their money - by distortion and contortion, *extortion* played on by the sentiments and trust placed upon them as supposed teachers and leaders ... They would be nothing and have nothing to speak of.

This is about as calm of a reply as I can muster. Try a search here on the word 'prosperity' for more and better articulation.

n brother. In my experience and mind, observation, the whole of this needs to be torn down at it's foundations - Trying to mitigate it at the surface level, even the middle level, ends up in rounds of circular scripture parsing, played one off the other and never gets down to the core of where this all came from, how recent it all is in Christian History, how it is a byproduct of the West predominantly and sadly spreading like the plague into others lands and nations ... It has caused the ruin of many, ruined financially, ruined spiritually - some of us still suffer the repercussions and ramifications even now, years removed from it in the tangled weave of subtle, subconscious notions in those we know, our loved ones and friends, acquaintances.

It's blasphemy and heresy what they do and the majority couldn't care less about it, especially while they are 'prospering' ...

If there is any *thought* that looms large and could be applied in general ...

*Ye lust, and have not:
ye kill, and desire to have,
and cannot obtain:*

*ye fight and war,
yet ye have not,
because ye ask not.*

*Ye ask, and receive not,
because ye ask amiss,
that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

*Ye adulterers and adulteresses,
know ye not that the friendship of the world
is enmity with God? Jas 4:2-4*

It's ironic in the sense that this could be all turned around as a misappropriation - That they do in effect 'prosper', despite these things. It is all in the manner of who they attribute this to and the irony is in the very thought that James emphatically denies here as does the majority of scriptures in regard to trouble and hardship, suffering - The flip-side; of contentment and soul prosperity, of being content with ones wages and trust in whatever circumstances, placement (Act 17:26) or predicaments and all the rest that the apostles and prophets, disciples and believers the world over have experienced. This idea that 'abundance' is an inheritance cannot be strangled from turning incidents into precedents (I.E. *the examples of the wealth of Abraham, Job, Solomon and the shrewdness of Isaac.*) as you so well relayed as their argument. It may be both and it may be neither or any combination of the two throughout this short travel on this earth, but if anything must be said predominantly ...

Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. Job 5:7

Not born to prosperity of the sort that they peddle.

Re: Prosperity ministry advice - posted by enid, on: 2009/1/9 8:31

As it is, if people are blinded by the love of money, they probably won't listen to any scripture you give them.

That said, where was the wealth of Jesus and the apostles?

Jesus said, the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

The apostle Paul said in 1 Cor 11v1, 'Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.'

In 2 Cor 11, Paul lists some of the things he experienced, stripes, prison, death often, beaten with rods, shipwrecked, etc.

Nothing mentioned about wealth.

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1 Tim 6v8 tells us to be content with food and clothing.

When we start to desire more, we become discontent and who knows what it might lead to.

1 Timothy 6 verses 9-10 tell us those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

Please note, destruction and perdition, that is what they are headed for.

Verse 10 is pretty well known, 'For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.'

The rich young ruler in Matt 19 went away sorrowful, because the riches that he had, he loved more than the life to come.

But still, there is very little you can say to someone who has already made their decision.

God bless.

Re: Prosperity ministry advice - posted by graceamazed (), on: 2009/1/9 9:43

I've spent some time in South Africa as well, and, sadly, I've seen the predominant influence of these "prosperity" teachers throughout their "Christian" culture. As a result, many in those areas (as here in the States) follow after Christianity, not because they have recognized they are sinners in need of the grace of God, but because they want more money, better health, and "power" to live a more "abundant" life in this world.

If you haven't already, I would recommend listening to Paris Readhead's "Ten Shekels and a Shirt" message (the most downloaded message on this site). While he isn't directly speaking to the issue of the prosperity message, he is speaking to what appears to be the root of such a perversion and that is the humanism that has invaded much of our western theology.

There is abundant scriptural evidence for refuting the "prosperity" message, but I would just point out a couple to think about:

Abraham, Isaac, Job, and Solomon are not the only men of faith in scriptures. How often do these prosperity ministers emphasize the lives lived by most of the prophets, or the Apostles, or our Lord Himself (though I have heard them try to explain that Jesus lived a life of extravagant wealth as well - nonsense). It would be just as wrong however, to teach that in order to be righteous you must live a life of poverty, rather, material circumstances should not be a measuring rod at all for our level of faith. I would point out Hebrews 11, which mentions many great men of faith, who saw great victories and wonderful miracles and who walked in wealth and earthly abundance - yet, it also says that "others were tortured...and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground."

All of these are examples of those who live by faith, and that is what matters, not the level of comforts they acquire in this temporal world. Let us esteem the Patriarchs as great examples, but let us also esteem the prophets and Apostles as great examples.

Re: Prosperity ministry advice - posted by Maloy, on: 2009/1/9 9:44

Hello Brother,

I too have been dealing with this issue.

First:

A "testament" is a covenant. We are not under the old covenant. A favorite passage of those who preach prosperity is Deuteronomy 28. This passage in verses 1 and 2 states:

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: 2 And all these blessings shall come on thee,"

Notice, the prerequisite is to "observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day." In chapter 1 of Deuteronomy, the writer notes that the whole book is Moses's final address to Israel in which he summarises the Law for them. That means that in order to receive the blessings of the 28th chapter, one must eat a Kosher diet, sacrifice animals, and all the other regulations of the book of Deuteronomy. This is just one example of manipulation of the different covenants to find proof texts for their teaching.

Second:

Prosperity teaching takes scripture out of context worse than any group out there. Their favorite passage in the N. T.:

3 John 2
"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" in the New Living Translation says (beginning with verse 1), "This letter is from John the Elder. It is written to Gaius, my dear friend, whom I love in the truth. 2 Dear friend, I am praying that all is well with you and that your body is as healthy as I know your soul is." NOTHING SAID ABOUT PROSPERITY OR WEALTH! ...And the passage is a simple greeting from one brother in Christ to another, not a promise of money to believers.

Third:

The teachings of Jesus are direct opposites of this teaching; ie. the camel going through the eye of a needle, the rich man pulling down his barns to build bigger, teachings on self-denial, et. al.

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2009/1/9 10:20

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 1 Timothy 6 v3-10

'..who suppose that godliness is a means of gain'. v.5

'..Now godliness with contentment is great gain'. v.6

'..But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.' v.9

I think this says it all!