

Jesus Las Vegas

By: Rob Perez

Put in a dollar, get ten back. Put in a hundred dollars and get a thousand back.

Wow... is it really that simple like they say it is? God wants me to be millionaire right !?!

Folks like Joyce Meyer, Joel Osteen, Mike Murdock, Benny Hinn, Paula & Randy White, Cefalo Dollar, Kenneth Copeland and so many more preachers of the same ilk are nothing more than VIPERS. Maybe they had at one time a genuine love for sharing the gospel but obviously the multi-million dollar lifestyles they all lead gained a really strong foothold in their hearts and as a result all they deliver is prosperity sermons that do not line up with biblical definitions of being blessed. I guess that's how they maintain job security.

Viewing our Heavenly Father as some cosmic slot machine just waiting to give you a jackpot is the furthest thing from biblical truth and reality as you can get with regards to being blessed by God.

Yes tithing is essential and a very important component of the Christian walk but it should never be viewed as a means to any expectant "ROI" (return on investment) type transaction. If that is the motive in your heart for your tithing then you are looking at it from a worldly perspective and not from a biblical perspective.

Does God wish to prosper you in your life... sure. How He chooses to do it and in what form that may take is entirely up to Him and not us.

Ministers who capitalize on their God-given influence to obtain wealth put themselves in the same category as Balaam, a for-profit prophet who is now in hell (2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 1:11). And isn't it true that Jesus could have capitalized on His gifts and opportunities to make Himself immensely wealthy?

Beyond all of this, does Christ's prohibition against laying up earthly treasures have *any* application? Or have we once again accepted today's current liberal culture and attitudes towards the gain of money as being more seemingly relevant than clear cut biblical instruction. Where are the modern Christian leaders like John Wesley of old, who could have become extremely wealthy from the sale of his books, but who lived very simply and gave the large majority of the profits from his book sales to charity? He did so out of obedience to Christ and died owning very little.

I'm not advocating that we all take a vow of poverty or that there is nobility in poverty for God's sake (unless of course that is directly spear headed in you via the Holy Spirit) but the average household earns \$45,000 a year and these "preachers" are living in sprawling estates with vacation homes of equal size along with private jets and 80K automobiles. Really? Yes luxury isn't always a yardstick to measure greed as I do know of some really successful people who are very well to do but the manner in which they handle those blessings is an example of how God can choose to lavishly bless those that consistently do the right thing with those blessings and they don't get proud about it or make the mistake of losing their marbles thinking they are now no longer in need of God's divine providence.

The issue here that I am taking with these types of preachers is that they are dishing out FALSE DOCTRINE. Folks who follow or buy the books of these preachers are in my opinion

victims. I can empathize with those who are struggling from pay check to pay check wondering how they are going to feed their families and keep the lights on. I have been in that position in my life as well. What turns any situation around for anyone facing anything is a true heartfelt surrendering of that situation placed under the supreme authority of our almighty Father. Many untrained Christians all too quickly reach for their wallets for that last dollar bill to put into the Jesus Las Vegas slot machine rather than drop to their knees in total submission and just simply pray for deliverance. Do you think God is actually waiting for your last dollar before blessing you or do you think He wants to see your total submission and surrender of your heart to Him recognizing Him as the one that is in total control of your situation? Yes He may require that you sow before reaping but that sowing will always be attached to a properly aligned heart and it will never be at the expense of not paying someone else what you owe them. The over simplified act of tossing a few bucks at a prosperity sermonizer with nothing else attached to it and then sitting back waiting for your check to arrive is the farthest one can be from an intimate relationship with God. It basically equates to leaving your money on the night stand for services rendered.

The New Testament instructs Christians not to associate with any so-called brother who is greedy or covetous, just as it instructs Christians to not associate with any so-called brother who is a homosexual, a drunkard, an idolater, or an adulterer (see 1 Cor. 5:9-13). In order for Christians to obey this very clear instruction, there must be some valid criteria we can use to determine if someone is greedy. What could that criterion be but the actions and lifestyle realities of those we evaluate? That being so, would it be wrong to conclude that a spiritual leader is greedy if he/she accepts a salary that puts them in the top .001% of the world's population and uses that exorbitant salary primarily for their own extravagant lifestyle? If the answer is yes (and what else could it be?), then Scripture says we shouldn't associate with such a person. They bring reproach to Christ, as their selfishness is the antithesis of everything Christ taught and lived. If we shouldn't associate with such a person, should we listen to their sermons and support their ministry? (If you are among those who have been misled into believing that greed is only an attitude of the heart that has nothing to do with what one does with his money, please pray for a month before writing to correct me) The answer is no.

There is a proper and biblical way to enjoy being blessed financially by God. The true prosperity gospel is not about being rich for the mere sake of being rich, but seeking first the kingdom of God, and then experiencing the favor and blessings of the Lord from that pursuit as it pertains to His will for each of us. God's Word tells us that the blessing of the Lord makes us rich, and adds no sorrow to it (see Proverbs 10:22). The whole idea is to (with all of our passion) diligently seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then receive the blessings of God that He wants to bestow upon us in whatever form that may be according to His will (not ours) and through the dedication of true servant hood be a prayerfully good and responsible steward of those blessings.

We as followers of Christ are not to use or access the power of our almighty Father for our selfish self centered gain. On the contrary He is to use us for His Glory! Remember the only disciple that was concerned with wealth was Judas.

If we submit our financial path to the Lord then I can guarantee you one thing... we will be putting ourselves in a position to truly be utilized for His glory and the advancement of the kingdom. Spiritual wisdom will guide our thinking and sound financial choices will be made. However if you're walking around thinking that if you pull the arm of the Jesus Las Vegas slot machine expecting to hear the ching ching ching of a big win in return I would advise you to just keep your money and go listen to a different sermon.

Supporting scriptures:

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

1 Timothy 6:5 & 9-11

Hebrews 13:5

Luke 12:15

Ephesians 5:5

Matthew 6:24