

D-LIFE BOOT CAMP

Training for a lifestyle
of discipleship.



Keeping it Real
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Pastor Dale L. Crawley Sr.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

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“Biblical Prosperity: God's Design for Flourishing Without Idolatry”

Theme Verse:

Deuteronomy 8:18 – *“But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant...”*

Lesson Objectives:

- To understand God's view on poverty and prosperity
 - To explore the purpose of human creativity and innovation
 - To examine the dangers of materialism and how to guard against it
 - To recognize the Bible's influence on economic and societal prosperity
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I. Poverty vs Prosperity: What Pleases God?

Key Passages:

- Proverbs 10:22 – *“The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, without painful toil for it.”*
- 3 John 1:2 – *“I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”*
- Matthew 5:3 – *“Blessed are the poor in spirit...”*

Discussion:

Many Christians have been taught to associate poverty with humility or spirituality. But Scripture never declares poverty itself as morally superior. Rather, it's the **attitude of the heart** that matters.

In Christian thought, **neither poverty nor prosperity is inherently virtuous**. What matters is the **moral context and motivation** behind them. Poverty due to oppression, laziness, or injustice is not pleasing to

God. Prosperity pursued through **exploitation or greed** is equally offensive to God (**Isaiah 10:1-2; James 5:1-5**).

The **ethics of biblical prosperity** focus on justice, honesty, stewardship, and compassion. God's blessing is not a license for self-indulgence, but a **calling to greater responsibility**.

✚ *Christian ethics teaches that wealth is a **trust** from God, not a sign of divine favoritism.* We must use prosperity in ways that reflect God's justice, generosity, and care for the vulnerable (Psalm 112:5, Matthew 25:31–46).

Answer to Question 1:

Poverty in itself is **not more pleasing to God than prosperity**. What pleases God is a **heart of dependence, humility, and righteousness**, whether one is poor or rich. Ethical wealth—gained and used in alignment with God's principles—is a **valid expression of faithfulness**.

✓ **Takeaway:** The **moral purpose behind how we gain and use resources** is more important to God than our economic status.

II. Innovation and Invention: A Mandate from God?

Key Passages:

- Genesis 1:28 – ***“Be fruitful and multiply...fill the earth and subdue it.”***
- Exodus 35:31-32 – ***“He has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding...to make artistic designs...”***
- Proverbs 8:12 – ***“I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.”KJV***

Discussion:

God is the **Creator**, and humans are made in His image. Our ability to **invent, develop, and improve** is a reflection of God's nature. Throughout history, believers have been at the forefront of scientific and industrial breakthroughs because they see **work and creativity as worship**.

Ethically, human innovation must:

- Honor creation (environmental ethics)
- Serve human dignity (technology must uplift, not enslave)
- Operate under **moral guardrails** (integrity, justice, and stewardship)

The command to “subdue the earth” implies **ethical development and cultivation**, not exploitation. That includes agriculture, art, technology, medicine, and systems of governance.

✚ *Christian ethics affirms progress when it aligns with God's intent to **preserve life**, promote justice, and honor His creation.*

Answer to Question 2:

Yes. **God intended for humanity to keep innovating**, improving life, and stewarding resources. The command to "subdue the earth" includes harnessing its potential for the good of all. But innovation must be **governed by God's moral law**, ensuring it serves creation and doesn't become destructive or prideful.

✓ **Takeaway:** Ethical innovation is part of fulfilling God's dominion mandate. Christians must pursue excellence in science, technology, and the arts—**not just to advance culture, but to glorify God.**

III. The Trap of Materialism: How Can We Guard Our Hearts?

Key Passages:

- Matthew 6:19-21 – ***"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth..."***
- 1 Timothy 6:9-10 – ***"Those who want to get rich fall into temptation...the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil."***
- Luke 12:15 – ***"Life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."***

Discussion:

Prosperity can **bless or blind**. The danger isn't in having things—it's in **things having us**. Wealth can become a spiritual distraction when it **shifts our trust and affection away from God**.

Christian ethics teaches us that **possessions are tools, not treasures**. They are means to **love others** (1 John 3:17) and **honor God's kingdom**, not build personal empires.

How to Guard Against Materialism:

- **Tithe and Give Generously** (Proverbs 3:9)
- **Practice Contentment** (Philippians 4:11-13)
- **Remember Eternity** (Colossians 3:2)
- **Serve Others with Your Wealth** (Acts 20:35)

✚ *Ethical prosperity flows outward in compassion, not inward in consumption. God gives so we can give.*

Answer to Question 3:

We guard against materialism by **practicing gratitude, simplicity, and generosity**, all of which are central to Christian moral formation. Ethical prosperity never **hoards**—it **heals, helps, and gives hope**.

✓ **Takeaway:** The ethical Christian learns to manage wealth, not be mastered by it.

IV. Why Has the Bible Produced Prosperity in Nations?

Key Passages:


- Psalm 33:12 – *“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.”*
- Deuteronomy 28:1-14 – *“Promised blessings for obedience*
- Proverbs 14:34 – *“Righteousness exalts a nation...”*

Discussion:

Nations influenced by **biblical principles**—such as diligence, justice, stewardship, compassion, and accountability—have experienced greater prosperity. The **Protestant work ethic**, valuing hard work and responsibility under God, has fueled education, innovation, and economic growth.

History shows that where **biblical ethics have shaped law, economics, and culture**, societies have flourished. This includes:

- Education systems rooted in truth
- Legal systems valuing justice
- Work ethics based on diligence and honesty
- Charitable infrastructure for the poor

 *Christian moral teachings shaped Western civilization’s views on human rights, labor, property, and innovation.*

Biblical Values That Lead to Prosperity:

- Honesty (Proverbs 11:1)
- Hard work (Proverbs 14:23)
- Stewardship (Matthew 25:14-30)
- Fairness in business (Leviticus 19:35-36)

Answer to Question 4:

The Bible has promoted prosperity by **instilling ethical values that lead to sustainable progress**, such as honesty, accountability, compassion, and diligence. These values create trustworthy systems that attract investment, foster innovation, and promote stability.

 **Takeaway:** National prosperity flourishes where **biblical morality shapes personal lives and public institutions**.

Conclusion & Application:

God is not against prosperity—He is the **giver of it**. What He desires is that our prosperity leads to **worship, generosity, and kingdom impact**. Wealth is a tool, not a trophy. It's meant to **bless, not boast**.

Excerpts from: Christian Ethics. An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning by Wayne Grudem. 2018
Excerpts from: GotQuestions.org

God is not opposed to wealth—He’s opposed to **unrighteous wealth**. Christian prosperity is always framed by **stewardship, justice, generosity, and worship**.



Reflection Questions:

- In what ways have I allowed material things to distract me from God?
 - How am I using my prosperity (however big or small) to glorify God?
 - Am I seeking God’s wisdom in my financial decisions?
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Group Prayer:

“Father, You are the source of every good and perfect gift. Prosper our hands, but more importantly, purify our hearts. Give us the wisdom to honor You with our wealth and to resist the idols of our age. May we prosper with purpose, give with grace, and live with integrity. Amen.”

Key Differences: Prosperity Gospel vs. Biblical Prosperity

Category	Prosperity Gospel	Biblical Context of Prosperity
Definition of Prosperity	Primarily material wealth, physical health, and success as signs of divine favor	Holistic well-being: spiritual growth, peace, contentment, wisdom, provision
Source of Blessing	Often transactional—"sow a seed" to receive a blessing	Covenantal relationship with God; blessings come from obedience and trust
Purpose of Prosperity	Personal gain, luxury, and proof of strong faith	Stewardship, generosity, kingdom advancement, and care for others
Faith & Giving	Used as a formula to manipulate God into blessing you (faith = guaranteed wealth)	Faith and giving are acts of worship, not ways to control outcomes
Suffering & Trials	Viewed as signs of weak faith or lack of blessing	Seen as part of spiritual maturity, refinement, and even God's will (James 1:2–4)
View of God	God is seen as a means to get material success	God is the ultimate treasure—prosperity is secondary to His presence

Biblical Corrections to the Prosperity Gospel

1. God is not a vending machine.

- **Prosperity gospel teaches:** If you have enough faith and give enough money, God *must* bless you financially.
- **Bible teaches:** God is **sovereign** and blesses according to His will and for His purposes (Romans 9:15-16; Isaiah 55:8-9).

♦ *Example: Paul was faithful yet often poor, beaten, and imprisoned (2 Corinthians 11:23–28).*

2. Suffering is not always a sign of spiritual failure.

- **Prosperity gospel implies:** Trials mean you're out of alignment with God's favor.
- **Bible shows:** Suffering often **deepens faith** and reflects the path of Christ (1 Peter 4:12-13; Philippians 1:29).

♦ *Jesus Himself was poor and rejected. Yet He was perfectly obedient (Luke 9:58).*

3. True prosperity begins with the soul.

- **Prosperity gospel prioritizes:** External signs of blessing.
 - **Biblical prosperity emphasizes:** Inner transformation, righteousness, and intimacy with God (Psalm 1:1–3; 3 John 1:2).
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4. Giving is worship, not leverage.

- **Prosperity gospel says:** “Sow a seed to get a harvest.”
 - **Bible says:** “Give generously out of love, not under compulsion” (2 Corinthians 9:7). You give because **you trust God**, not to force His hand.
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Christian Ethic Summary

- The **ethics of biblical prosperity** demand **gratitude, responsibility, humility, and justice**.
 - Wealth is not condemned, but **greed and exploitation are**.
 - The **motive and manner** of pursuing prosperity must align with God’s values of love, service, and holiness.
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Final Thought

**The prosperity gospel puts the gift above the Giver.
The Bible teaches that the Giver is the true gift.**