



**CONFRONTING THE CANCER  
OF THE PERVASIVE  
PROSPERITY GOSPEL**



# I. WHAT IS THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL?

Often referred to as:

- The health and wealth gospel
- The gospel of success
- Word of faith

The basic tenet of the prosperity gospel is that God always wants all his children to experience health, wealth and happiness. Only a lack of faith and/or giving will hinder this.

The motto is “name it and claim it; you get it, if you don’t, it’s your fault.”



## Scriptures often used out of context are:

- ✓ **Luke 6:38** Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”
- ✓ **Deuteronomy 15:4** But there will be no poor among you; for the LORD will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess—
- ✓ **Isaiah 53:5** but he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.



- ✓ **Philippians 4:13** I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
- ✓ **3john 1:2** Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.
- ✓ **Psalms 23:1** The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- ✓ **Psalms 91** – (The apparent promise of long life, protection from sickness, danger and enemies)





✓ **Proverbs 18:21** Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

✓ **Job 36:11** If they listen and serve him, they complete their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasantness.

✓ **Deuteronomy 28:1** “and if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 and all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God. ....7 “the Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you. They shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. ....12 the LORD will open to you his good treasury, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. And you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. ....13 and the Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only go up and not down, if you obey the commandments of the lord your god, which i command you today, being careful to do them,

The background is a light blue gradient. There are several realistic water droplets of various sizes in the corners: top-left, top-right, and bottom-right. The text is centered in a dark red color.

Have you considered the context  
of these Scriptures that we have  
read?

## II. WHY IS IT SO APPEALING?

1. The socio-economic hardships.....desperation to break through the poverty line

✓ Poverty

✓ Unemployment

✓ Diseases

“A ticket out of poverty”



**2.It resonates well with our sinful  
Worldview**



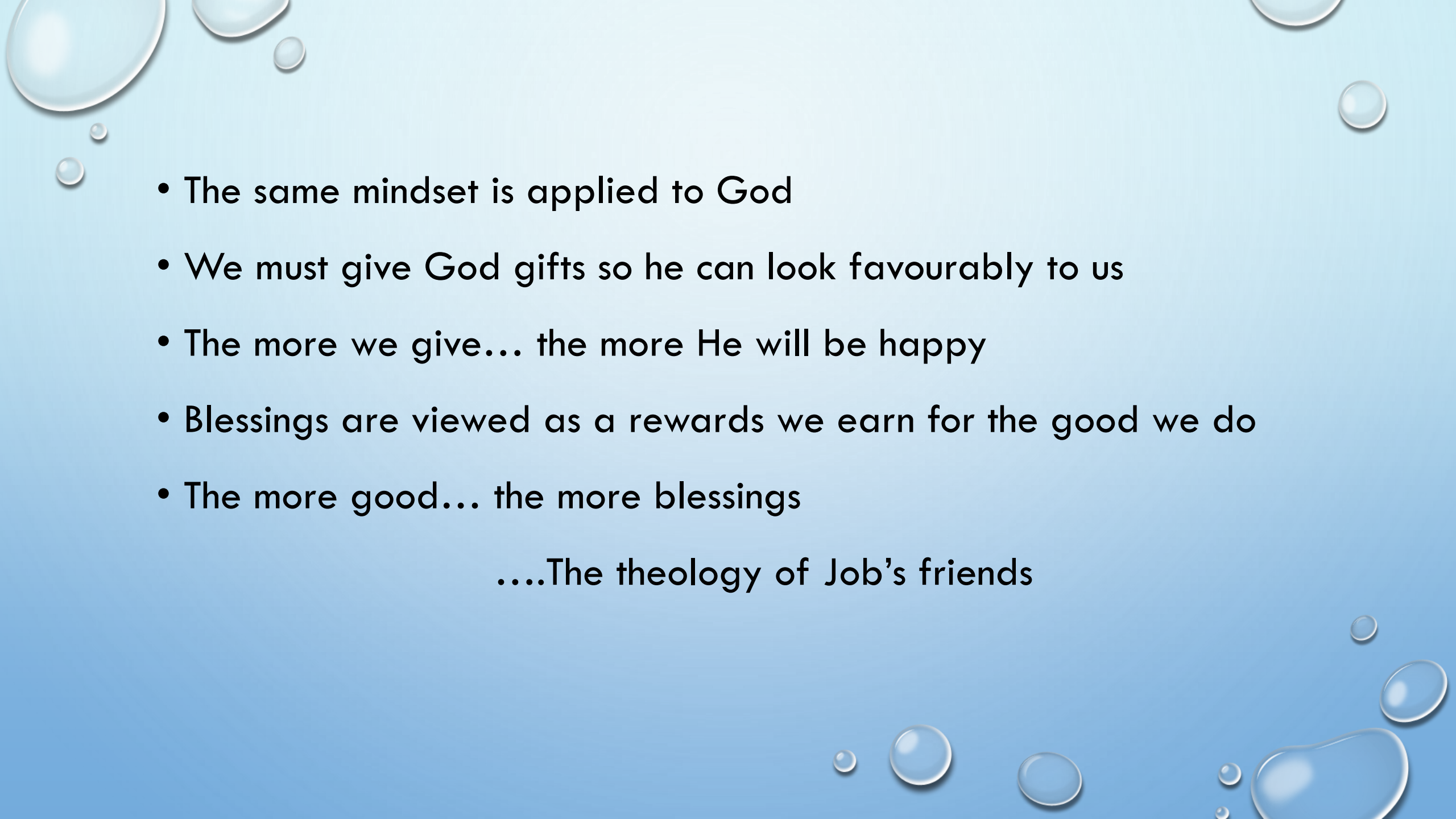
# Worldview Defined

A worldview is a **set of presuppositions** (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or unconsciously) about the **basic make-up of our world**. *(James Sire / Charles Dunahoo)*

What Carlyle means in other words is that Ideas have consequences



- In the African mind, prosperity is associated with the favour and goodwill from the ancestors
- When the ancestors are happy they will bless you with good crops, many children, long life etc.
- When they are angry .... They will send you all kinds of misfortune
- So the trick is to try by all means to please them by means of gifts and sacrifices
- The same mindset is applied to God

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- The same mindset is applied to God
  - We must give God gifts so he can look favourably to us
  - The more we give... the more He will be happy
  - Blessings are viewed as a rewards we earn for the good we do
  - The more good... the more blessings

....The theology of Job's friends

### III. WHY IS IT SO WRONG AND DANGEROUS?

#### 1. It distorts the Biblical view of God:

- God is not Sovereign – He doesn't act, He reacts based on your move

*Daniel 4:35 All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "what have you done?"*

- God can be manipulated
- Faith, according to the word of faith doctrine, is not submissive trust in God; faith is a formula by which we manipulate the spiritual laws that prosperity teachers believe govern the universe. Faith is a matter of what we say more than whom we trust or what truths we embrace and affirm in our hearts.
- Prayer is reduced to just a shopping list rather than communion with God



## **2.It distorts the Biblical view of man,**

- Man's purpose
  - ✓ Happiness OR to glorify God
- Man's problem
  - ✓ Physical....material OR Spiritual
- And man's solution
  - ✓ Stuff OR Salvation

### **3. It distorts the gospel: God needs us**

- Man is not inherently utterly sinful sinner in need of a Saviour
- Man is just a client
- Salvation is not the Sovereign act of God
- Man is pretty much in charge

#### 4. It distorts the Biblical view of Scripture

- It is based on a wrong hermeneutic (interpretation of Scripture)
- Brian Edwards's "Selection, Rejection and Assumption"
  - By selection he means choosing certain passages of Scripture and ignoring all else.

**Deuteronomy 15:4** But there will be no poor among you; for the LORD will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess—

**Deuteronomy 15:11** For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'

- Brian Edwards's "Selection, Rejection and Assumption"
  - By rejection he means minimizing the significance of contrary evidence
  - The suffering of God's people throughout history
    - Job, the prophets, the apostles etc.



- Brian Edwards's "Selection, Rejection and Assumption"
  - By assumption he means arriving at massive conclusions based on minimum evidence.
    - Building a massive theological position on stand alone text

**5. It leads to disappointment and disillusionment and therefore think:**

- God doesn't exist
- If God does exist, he doesn't love me
  - He doesn't care about me

## IV. HOW DOES SCRIPTURE CONFRONT THESE HERESIES?

- “7 So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. 8 Three times I pleaded with the lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 But he said to me, “my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of christ may rest upon me.’ (2corinthians 12: 7-9)
- Jesus warned, “watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15).
- Jesus said, “do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal” (Matthew 6:19).

- Jesus warns, “you cannot serve both god and money.”  
(Matthew 6:24)
- The only disciple concerned with wealth was Judas. Paul warned Timothy about such men in 1 Timothy 6:5, 9-11.
- Believers, especially leaders in the church are to be free from the love of money ((1 Timothy 3:3; Hebrews 13:5).
- The love of money leads to all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10).



- “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,” 2 Timothy 3:12
- **2 Timothy 4:20** Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus.
- If riches were a reasonable goal for the godly, Jesus would have pursued it. (Matthew 8:20)
- Paul said covetousness is idolatry (Ephesians 5:5)
- Paul instructed the Ephesians to avoid anyone who brought A message of immorality or covetousness (Ephesians 5:6-7).

## **V. HOW SHOULD WE CONFRONT THESE HERESIES?**

*“Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.” Jude 1:3*

- Not enough to scream, “Heresy!!!”
- Our curriculum must reflect the challenges we are confronted with
- Integrate within practical theology subjects such as homiletics a reflection on the preaching out there
  - Guide students in evaluating the sermons of the faith preachers
- We must rediscover the Biblical mandate of discipleship
- We must, by our own example condemn the heresy

“33 I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. 34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. 35 In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” (Acts 20:33-35)