

**GRACE BIBLE CHURCH**  
**Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries**

**The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.**  
**The Tree of Life from the week ending 12/10/06**  
**What it means to be initiated into the secret of the mystery. Part 47.**  
**The portfolio of invisible assets. Part 7.**  
**God's Laws for Prosperity.**

We have now completed the first seven general categories of testing which occur in all stages of spiritual growth as a part of your portfolio of invisible assets. We have begun to look at eighth test: **The Prosperity test**. The believer sharing in prosperity can become distracted from doctrine and lured away from the PPOG. There are many believers today who cannot handle any form of prosperity because promotion and recognition cause them to become arrogant and think more highly of themselves than what they ought to think. They forget the source of their prosperity. With freedom and prosperity comes the temptation to trust in the blessings rather than in the One giving the blessings. We become fat, comfortable, and self-sufficient. If we have plenty, we tend to think we have need of nothing. If we do not have enough, looking at the wealth around us, we tend to think that what we need is what others have: more material blessings.

However, if you are a believer in TLJC, you have something that wealth cannot buy or gain. You have something that is absolutely unique and unmatched in all of history; you have a portfolio of invisible assets. This does not mean that with your spiritual prosperity, you will lack natural prosperity; however, there are spiritual and natural laws you must follow to receive natural prosperity from God. God wants every believer to prosper, but He has certain principles to follow in order to receive His highest and best in our lives, including finances. We believe God's promises for eternal salvation; why not believe His word when it comes to finances?

Have you ever asked yourself the following questions: Does God really want me to be financially prosperous? Does God care about what type of house I live in or car I drive? Does the Bible teach us to get out of debt? How can I increase my giving to God if I can't even pay my debts with the money I'm earning now? Is it wrong for Christians to have substantial amounts of money in bank accounts and investments? All of these questions will be answered according to biblical principles and **God's standards for prosperity**.

There are two extreme positions which Christians take today concerning the area of finances. 1) People follow God simply because they want to prosper. We can't bend God's laws to fit our selfish desires. Jam 4:3 *You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your lusts.* 2) The opposite extreme is the belief that financial prosperity for Christians is totally wrong. Many Christians believe that poverty is somehow godly, that financial prosperity destroys humility and will draw us away from God. There is no question that the Bible warns us against prospering in the world's way. In contrast, we can prosper by following God's standards of prosperity, outlined in His word. If we follow these standards, we'll prosper financially, physically, mentally, and emotionally, and there is absolutely nothing wrong

with this kind of prosperity. God created all the wealth on this earth, Hag 2:8 *“The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,” declares the Lord of hosts.* Psa 24:1 *“The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it.”* Psa 50:10 *“For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills.”* Did God create it for unbelievers, for hard-hearted, sinful men and women who curse Him, could care less about Him, deny Him and disobey His word? Look how our Lord put it in Mat 7:7-12 *“Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will he give him a stone? Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”*

God is no different from any other caring father; He wants the best for His children. He wants the world to see prosperous, joyful, loving, happy Christians. If He was willing to give us His only Son, why would He hold anything else back from us? Paul put it like this, Rom 8:32 *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?* Psa 84:11 *No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.* Many great men of God have prospered as a result of following God's standards. For example, Abraham lived a very fruitful, prosperous life, Gen 13:2 *Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.* Gen 24:1 *Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way.* Because of the price paid by Jesus Christ, all Christians are heirs to the same blessings Abraham received from God. Gal 3:6-9, *Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are **sons** of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the nations shall be blessed in you.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.* Gal 3:13-14 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.* Deu 8:18 *“But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth,”* 3Jo 1:2 *Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may PROSPER and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.* Since we are heirs to Abraham, the blessings God gave to Abraham are available to us, if we will follow His standards.

Many people are destroyed by their wealth because they don't obtain or maintain it by following God's standards. However, there is absolutely nothing wrong with being prosperous if we follow doctrinal principles. Psa 112:1-3 *“Praise the Lord! How blessed or happy is the one who respects the Lord, Who greatly delights in His commands. His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, And his righteousness endures forever.”* If someone believes that it is wrong to be prosperous, how can they explain why many of the greatest men of God were prosperous? However, there are certain principles one must follow. First, always keep God first, Mat 6:33. You must be honest with yourself regarding this

point because you will be tested in this area as a part of prosperity testing. Do you follow these basic passages: Pro 3:9-10 *“Honor the Lord from your wealth, And from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.”* Pro 8:17-18 *“I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me. Riches and honor are with me, Enduring wealth and righteousness.”* Pro 11:24-25 *“There is one who scatters, yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, but {it results} only in want. The generous man will be prosperous, And he who waters will himself be watered.”* In contrast, prosperity apart from God brings trouble. Pro 15:6 *Much wealth is {in} the house of the righteous, But trouble is in the income of the wicked.* Pro 22:4 *The reward of humility {and} the fear [respect] of the Lord are riches, honor and life.* Luk 6:38 *“Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”* 2Co 9:6 *Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully.* Pro 15:6 *Much wealth is {in} the house of the righteous, But trouble is in the income of the wicked.*

The world's system of prosperity has its price. It doesn't turn out the way men think it will. Financial prosperity achieved by the world's methods will only bring sorrow, but God's standards will enable us to prosper in every area of our lives without sorrow. Pro 10:22 *It is the blessing of the Lord that makes rich, And He adds no sorrow to it.* Sorrow comes from loving money and from putting it ahead of Him. 1Ti 6:10 *“For you see the love of money keeps on being a root of all sorts of evil, through which certain ones by intensively desiring it have gone astray from doctrine, and pierced themselves with many types of pain.”* When we covet money and materialism, we will go astray from doctrine. However, the love of money isn't limited to the rich. Many people who don't have much money still love it. God's Word warns us against coveting, being greedy, and always wanting more. God hates covetousness. If we want to succeed, God's Word tells us that we should work hard and show the world around us the virtues of hard work.

God has 11 laws for prosperity. 1) Always keep God first, Mat 6:33. 2) Renew your mind so you will understand that God's way for prosperity is different than the world's way. 3) God's laws of prosperity are founded upon the basic fact that He owns everything and we own nothing. 4) God's Perspective on Work and Discipline. 5) The results that diligent study and meditation will produce in our hearts and in our mouths. 6) Having the faith to do what our Father tells us to do. 7) God's laws of sowing and reaping. 8) We can't out-give God. 9) Giving God's way. 10) God's laws of banking and investment (God's laws for storing treasures and withdrawing them). 11) Receiving God's way.

Ultimately God desires for the believer to prosper, but the believer must pass these different momentum tests; 3Jo 1:2 *“Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.”* God wants us to have prosperity, but He doesn't want prosperity to have us! God gave us His precious promises so we can be like Him if we follow them. 2Pe 1:4 *“For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature,”* Prosperity and abundance are part of God's divine nature. He owns the whole world and everything in it. He has given us more than three thousand promises in His Word, so that by these we can partake of His divine nature. God is prosperous and

the very first chapter of the Bible says, Gen 1:26 *“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;”* If God is prosperous, and if He created us to be just like He is, isn't it obvious that He wants us to prosper too?

The more we study God's Word, the more evidence we see of God's plans for our abundance and prosperity. God created great abundance when He created the earth. Gen 1:20-22 *Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens. And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”* This first chapter tells us how God stocked the earth with fish, animals, and birds and how He provided plants and fruit trees. When God finished this, He then created a man, meant to enjoy this abundance and be master over the earth. Gen 1:26 *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”* God provided Adam with great abundance; he had everything he could ever want. However, Adam gave his riches and his earthly dominion to Satan, who was able to steal it from him because of Adam's arrogance. Adam forfeited the abundance and prosperity that God intended for us, his children. Satan stole it and became the ruler of the world, which he still is. Of course that is why God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to earth, to destroy Satan's work. 1Jo 3:8 *The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.* Our Lord succeeded in His mission, Mat 28:18 *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”* Through the work of Christ, God's plans for our prosperity are available if we will follow His laws.

God's standards that we must follow to receive His highest and best are what election is all about. Election is God willing His highest and best for every believer. In 2Co 8-9, these chapters deal primarily with the subject of finances. When 2Co 8:9 tells us that the Lord became poor so that we could be rich, this applies to spiritual riches, but it also refers financial riches and prosperity.

Some Christians believe that our Lord was poor during His earthly ministry. They say that His life was a model for us, and since He was poor we were not meant to prosper. Was He really poor during His three year ministry that changed the earth forever? No! *Mat 11:19 “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard,’* The Greek brings out that He ate fine food and drank good wine; He wasn't poor! Jesus Christ knew God's laws for prosperity. Let's examine the facts. Some people believe that Jesus was poor because He said in Luk 9:58 *“The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air {have} nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”* Jesus didn't have a home where He slept every night because He was the first traveling evangelist. He was constantly on the move! Surely He could have stayed in the home of the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea or in other nice homes where He was welcomed. In fact, Jesus could have produced the money to stay each night in an inn if He had really wanted to. Also, our Lord had twelve disciples and seventy other men traveling with Him. Luk 10:1-3 *Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the*

*laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your ways; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way.*" How can anyone say that Jesus was poor if He was able to meet the needs of such a large group of people? How many poor people run an organization of this size? How many poor people have a treasurer to keep track of their finances? Jesus and His organization had a treasurer, Judas, Joh 13:29 *"Judas had the money box."* Jesus was a complete master of God's laws of prosperity. He used those laws repeatedly to meet His needs.

Jesus Christ had the purest faith that has ever been seen on this earth. As a result, He was able to turn little into plenty. He had absolutely no need for worldly, material assets because He knew that He could apply His faith to God's laws of prosperity in order to obtain whatever He needed. For example, in Mar 8:13-21 *And leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side. And they had forgotten to take bread; and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them. And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." And they {began} to discuss with one another {the fact} that they had no bread. And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you discuss {the fact} that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember, When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up? They said to Him, "Twelve." [There was more than enough for the five thousand!] "And when {I broke} the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they said to Him, "Seven." And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?"* What poor man could provide for others like this? When the tax collectors of Capernaum came to Peter and asked for money, was Jesus able to pay them? He certainly was. Mat 17:27 *"Go down to the shore and throw in a line, and open the mouth of the first fish you catch. You will find a coin to cover the taxes for both of us; take it and pay them."* Our Lord obviously was able to master God's laws of prosperity in order to pay His taxes and Peter's taxes as well.

Now you say, well these were all miracles! When Peter and the other disciples had fished all night and came up empty, Jesus was able to produce so many fish that the nets broke, Luk 5:1-11, Joh 21:1-11. When Jesus needed a donkey to ride into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, He didn't have to rent or buy a donkey. He simply told two of His disciples to go into the village of Bethphage to look for a donkey and its colt tied alongside the road. He told them to take these animals, and if anyone asked what they were doing, to say that the Lord needed them. Mat 21:1-7 *And when they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied {there} and a colt with her; untie {them,} and bring {them} to Me. And if anyone says something to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." Now this took place that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, Gentle, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" And the disciples went and did just as Jesus had directed them, and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid on them their garments, on which He sat. When Jesus needed a room to serve the Passover meal, He didn't go to a hotel to rent one. Instead, He*

sent two of His disciples into Jerusalem and to contact a certain man who would lead them to another man. They should tell this man that they needed a large upper room, and he would take care of everything. That is exactly what happened, Mar 14:12-16. How can anyone claim that Jesus was poor when He was able to obtain transportation and hotel rooms so easily? Also, when Jesus hung on the cross, the soldiers who crucified Him gambled for possession of His expensive, seamless one-piece robe and His other garments. If He was poor during His earthly ministry, where did He get a robe that was so valuable that soldiers gambled for it? The facts reveal that Jesus was not poor.

So you might wonder what the connection is between the miracles performed by Jesus and His financial prosperity. Again, Jesus Christ had the purest faith ever seen, so He was able to turn little into plenty. He had no need for worldly assets because He knew He could apply His faith to God's standards of prosperity to obtain His needs. Perhaps you are thinking, "Yes, but He is the Son of God." What does this have to do with me? Look at Joh 14:12-14 *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater {works} than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do {it.}"* However, the key again is, Joh 14:15 *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."* Jesus Christ followed God's laws of prosperity, and He didn't rely in the least on His own ability. He relied totally upon God's Word and upon God's Holy Spirit living within Him. Because Jesus followed all of God's laws, He enjoyed total prosperity, not just financially, but also in His spirit, soul, and body. In Joh 14:12-15, we can enjoy this same total prosperity in our lives here on earth.

Our Father wants His children to prosper instead of the evil sinners who now enjoy much of the world's prosperity. Look how Job put it, Job 27:16-17, *"The evil man may accumulate money like dust, with closets jammed full of clothing yes, he may order them made by his tailor, but the innocent shall wear that clothing and shall divide his silver among them."* (TLB) Job knew God's laws for prosperity and he used them! Our Father wants us to prosper financially; however, this prosperity isn't "automatic" just because we're Christians. We have to follow His laws of prosperity which are carefully laid out in His book. If we follow these laws, God won't withhold any good thing from us. Psa 84:11 *"No good thing will he withhold from them who walk along his paths"* Psa 68:19 *"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits."*

The Bible teaches that if you are going to be a winner in the spiritual life and receive God's highest and best, which is greater than anything you can imagine, then you are going to have to overcome distractions and opposition. Distractions can come in many areas; you will be opposed by your friends, family members, co-workers and even enemies. You have to learn to overcome opposition and distractions, sent by the kingdom of darkness to try to stop your spiritual momentum and draw you away from the plan of God. For example, Abraham that stayed with his father because of sentimentality, and then his father led him down the path to reversionism. In his case, a change of geographical location was needed because it was the basis for separating Abraham from his family and relatives. When family or relatives hold you back, then family and relatives have to go! Many times families hinder the spiritual growth of believers because the believer is forced to compromise certain standards and convictions that are developed through doctrinal growth. A lot of people cannot seem to handle the family-relative

problem. Our Lord's own family, including His mother, thought that He had lost His senses and was out of His mind! Mar 3:21 *And when His own family heard of this [that He claimed to be the Son of God], they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses."* They did not come to believe on Him and follow His teachings; they came because they thought He was going nuts; He was taking this God thing a little too seriously! In fact, His own family did not believe that He was the Son of God! Joh 7:5 *For not even his brothers were believing in Him.* They did not believe in Him until *after* His resurrection; even His mother was mistaken at this particular time! Mat 12:46 *While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him.* They were outside; they didn't even want to come in and listen to Him. **They didn't want Him to speak to them; they wanted to speak to Him!** Yet Christ overcame all distractions, and that is why He prospered in every way during His earthly ministry. The believer can prosper in the same way if he will follow Christ's obedience to God's laws of prosperity.